



UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Fifteenth session
30 April -11 May 2007
United Nations Headquarters
New York

Background Notes on the Ministerial Roundtables

During the High-level Segment of CSD-15, there will be two ministerial Roundtables on 9 May 2007, one focusing on energy for sustainable development and industrial development, the other air pollution and climate change. The Roundtables will provide further opportunities for thematic discussions among Ministers, focusing on how to expedite implementation.

At the request of the Chairman of CSD-15, the Secretariat has prepared two background notes on the Roundtables, including a few questions, to facilitate discussions. Ministers may choose to address any of these questions and should not feel obliged to address all of them. Ministers may also address any aspects of the issues they think relevant to the discussions.

The Roundtable discussions will be informal and there will be no delivery of official statements. Interventions will be limited to 3 minutes to encourage interactive discussions.

Background Note
Roundtable on Energy for Sustainable Development and Industrial Development
(9 May 2007, 4:00-6:00 pm, Room 4)

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development has considered the thematic cluster of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change at its 14th and 15th sessions. At its 14th session held last May, which was a review session under the Commission's multi-year programme of work, the Commission identified obstacles and constraints in the thematic areas. At this 15th session, which is a policy session, the Commission will take policy decisions on policy options and possible actions to overcome these barriers and constraints. This Roundtable, focusing on energy for sustainable development and industrial development, provides a further opportunity for Ministers to have a focused, yet informal, discussion on how to expedite progress in implementation.

The Commission's review on energy for sustainable development and industrial development has raised a number of points, including the following:

- There is wide agreement that improving access to modern energy services is crucial for alleviating poverty, achieving sustainable development goals, and achieving all of the MDGs. Delivery of modern energy services in developing countries, particularly in Africa, needs to be strengthened and supported. While the public sector has borne the primary responsibility of providing energy services to the poor in the past, the role of the private sector has become increasingly important. Innovative public/private partnerships may provide models to improve and scale up modern energy service delivery in the developing countries.
- Improved dialogue, partnerships and initiatives can effectively address need for stable energy markets. The interdependence in global energy markets has been highlighted by their recent volatility, and improved market stability can have a positive impact on sustainable development prospects in developing countries, in particular on energy importing LDCs and SIDS.
- Greater diversity in the energy mix can contribute to achieving sustainable development goals in developed and developing countries.
- Governments and industries in industrialized and in newly industrializing countries need to devise and implement policies that create a growing market for energy efficient products and services and promote the use of advanced and cleaner technologies, including renewable energy technologies. Active promotion of energy efficiency can stimulate industrial development, technological progress and the creation of new job opportunities in both industrialized and in developing countries. Increased international cooperation can facilitate technology diffusion and deployment and international trade in energy efficient products.
- Sustained industrial development has been a major contributor to economic growth and poverty reduction over the past half century, notably in Asia, but it remains elusive in many developing countries. Limited supplies of human capital, poor infrastructure, weak

government institutions and high investment risk have been important constraints to industrial development.

- Globalization of industrial production networks has given prominence to multinational corporations and large developed-country retailers. Their global supply chains provide an important avenue for transfer of technology and know how across borders, including sustainable product and production technologies, improved labour standards, and strengthened environmental management practices.
- Corporate environmental and social responsibility and accountability policies inform managerial decision making of leading companies, but it is still unclear how wide and deep the commitment is and how responsive CSR measures are to the concerns and priorities of developing countries.

These points relating to energy for sustainable development and industrial development help provide the context for the Roundtable discussions. Ministers are invited to address any of the following questions:

1. How can we effectively mobilize financial resources and scale-up investments to meet the urgent need for modern energy services in developing countries including, in particular, Sub-Saharan Africa? What roles do the public and private sectors have for providing modern energy services to those too poor to pay?
2. How can the international community effectively address the special needs of energy importing developing countries especially the LDCs and SIDS?
3. What are the most effective policies and tools to assist developing countries in implementing national energy efficiency programmes?
4. Which policies have proven most effective in diversifying and upgrading industries of developing countries? Do countries have the space under international trade rules to pursue such policies today?
5. What specific types of capacity building are needed in developing countries to help them avail of new production opportunities opened up by globalization and, eventually, by further multilateral trade liberalization?

There will be no list of speakers and no delivery of written statements during the Roundtable. Ministers are invited to speak candidly to encourage interactive discussions. The Chairman will provide an oral summary at the end of the Roundtable.

Background Note
Roundtable on Air pollution/Atmosphere and Climate Change
(9 May 2007, 4:00-6:00 pm, Room 2)

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development has considered the thematic cluster of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change at its 14th and 15th sessions. At its 14th session held last May, which was a review session under the Commission's multi-year programme of work, the Commission identified obstacles and constraints in the thematic areas. At this 15th session, which is a policy session, the Commission will take policy decisions on policy options and possible actions to overcome these barriers and constraints. This Roundtable, focusing on air pollution/atmosphere and climate change, provides a further opportunity for Ministers to have a focused, yet informal, discussion on how to expedite progress in implementation.

The Commission's review of air pollution/atmosphere and climate change has raised a number of points, including the following:

- A comprehensive long-term strategy to mitigate climate change requires integrated and coherent policies that encompass all the critical sectors of the economy, including finance, energy, transport, water, agriculture, forests and health. The response to climate change thus needs to be firmly positioned in the broader context of sustainable development.
- The natural systems, as emphasised in the IPCC reports, are already being affected by climate change, with adverse impacts on the sustainable development efforts of developing countries.
- Significant resources will therefore be needed to enhance adaptive capacities of developing countries, in particular LDCs, SIDS and African countries. Yet the World Bank estimates that currently less than one per cent of ODA and concessional lending is allocated to adaptation.
- The transfer of clean and climate-friendly technologies is essential in order to enable developing countries to effectively mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts.
- The carbon market is expected to play an increasing role in reducing greenhouse emissions.
- Indoor air pollution in both rural and urban areas is a leading cause of illness and mortality for women and children in developing countries. Policies and actions are necessary to accelerate the access to cleaner fuels for heating and cooking, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Transport emissions are a major source of carbon dioxide emissions globally, and of air pollution in urban areas, particularly in fast-growing cities in developing countries. Innovative policies and incentive measures are required further to reduce vehicular

emissions, including through the use of cleaner fuels, development of new technologies, enforcement of emission standards, and support for public transport systems.

- Regional cooperation to address trans-boundary air pollution proved successful in some regions, notably Europe and North America through emissions trading and regional environmental agreements

These points help provide the context for the Roundtable discussion. Ministers are invited to address any of the following questions:

1. Poverty eradication and economic growth are the overriding priorities of developing countries. What policies and concrete actions can we take to ensure that measures to combat climate change and to achieve other sustainable development goals are compatible?
2. What policies and actions are required to increase the financial resources available, including through market-based mechanisms, such as the carbon market, to achieve climate change objectives and other sustainable development goals?
3. Despite a great deal of research, vulnerability assessment and policy development there is a sense in many quarters that real action on adaptation is lagging. What concrete actions and policies can be employed to accelerate implementation of adaptation measures?
4. Regional action, national policy, and various partnerships have all demonstrated ways to tackle air pollution. What policies and actions do we need in order to replicate and scale-up such success stories?

There will be no list of speakers and no delivery of written statements during the Roundtable. Ministers are invited to speak candidly to encourage interactive discussions. The Chairman will provide an oral summary at the end of the Roundtable.