

UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting,
New York, 26 February - 2 March 2007**

Highlights of Side Events

26/02/2007

Progress in the Marrakech Process on Sustainable Consumption and Production

The presenters from DSD/DESA focused on the challenges and opportunities the process provides to respond to governments' different levels of economic developments. In order to be as inclusive as possible and responsive to different levels of economic development, regional processes have been initiated. The process is divided into five phases. The first phase focuses on identifying the needs and priorities, leading to regional strategies. In the second phase concrete projects and initiatives are being implemented, which are in the following phases monitored and evaluated. The regional process of Africa is supported by one of the seven task forces, which are sponsored by EU countries. The lessons learned so far emphasize that it is crucial to allow for a majority of stakeholders to participate, in particular civil society networks, the private sector and multiple ministries in particular from developing countries. It was noted that especially women need to be included as agents of change, and that the whole production process of products is evaluated. Linking the process with the Millennium Development Goals, the Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto protocol, National Sustainable Development Strategies as well as other international commitments is crucial to raise the awareness and highlight the relevance of the process for society at large. The Stockholm International Expert meeting in June this year will be an important milestone to take on these challenges and develop a strategy for the future of the Sustainable Consumption and Production process.

Sustainable Energy: Future Prospects for Development in North and South, Including Poverty Reduction

The International Network for Sustainable Energy (INFORSE) aims to show scenarios in which future energy needs can be fulfilled solely by renewable energies and measures of energy efficiency in order to fully cut out the use of fossil fuels. Observed positive trends at a micro scale are studied by INFORSE in detail to make recommendations on how these developments can be replicated at a larger scale. The aim of this exercise is to illustrate to governments and support claims of NGOs that it is possible to fully rely on a mix of renewable

energies. The vision for the EU to fully phase out of fossil fuels was detailed by a number of case studies, in particular for Denmark and Lithuania. It was advocated that both countries have unfulfilled potentials to increase the supply by renewable energies, in particular wind energy, and cut their energy use by reforming means of transport. In particular for Lithuania a great potential lies in the increased use of biomass. The regional coordinator of INFORSE for South Asia highlighted that a vision to provide basic energy services in the region to all by 2050 can only be realized by a decentralized grid, adequate technical solutions, financing options and linking the services of energy supply to income generating activities. The presenters highlighted that INFORSE's assumptions differ from the global energy outlook produced by the IEA, by employing a more optimistic scenario in which technology is the major advocate for change, ultimately allowing decoupling economic growth from energy use.

27/02/2007

Energy Efficiency Solutions Showcase

The side event, hosted by the US Government, highlighted practical approaches to energy efficiency, which have a potential for replication and up-scaling. In the first part of the session public sector energy efficiency initiatives were introduced. The electricity utility for South Africa (ESKOM), focuses on demand side management, with innovative approaches in industry and household awareness to energy saving. The organization 'Promoting an Energy-Efficient Public Sector' recognizes the large potential of the public sector to reduce energy use, through energy efficient buildings, purchase of products, highlighting also the potential for cost savings and stimulating market responses for energy efficient products. Watergy promotes water and energy efficiency, working mainly with municipal water system providers to save energy in providing water, managing leaks, using more efficient pumps, automating processes and monitoring processes to identify opportunities for energy and water savings. The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEP) focuses on buildings, the legal context of energy supply as well as the commercial and industrial sector. The German national programme focuses on energy efficiency, decreasing energy use and renewable energy production across industries, public services and households.

The second part of the session focused on the establishment of minimum energy performance standards and developing energy efficiency endorsement labels and energy information labels. The Collaborative Labeling and Appliance Standards Program (CLASP) illustrated how labeling and standards can have a significant impact on reducing greenhouse gases and energy use. The Energy Star Product Labeling is a voluntary programme by the US environmental protection agency and department of energy covering a wider range of products, with the aim to facilitate consumer choice and promoting energy efficient products. In the discussion it was highlighted that it would be important to have an international standard on energy efficiency for products to facilitate consumer choice and promote energy savings globally.

Action oriented conference outcomes for renewable energy

The session introduced initiatives created as a follow up of outcomes of conferences, focusing on providing case studies on renewable energies and energy efficiency. The CSD Matrix has been created as an information tool to capture case studies in a short and accessible format to complement the review and negotiations undertaken by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. The matrix is based on information submitted by governments and major groups and compiled by the secretariat of the CSD.

The Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), acts as a follow up to the International Conference for Renewable Energies in Bonn in 2004, aiming to provide a network, in which ideas are shared and action is encouraged to promote renewable energy worldwide.

There was a strong feeling of endorsement for both actions, which are seen as complimentary to each other, as they provide useful examples on how implementation can be achieved. Practitioners expressed great interest in both initiatives and were keen to share and learn from experiences.

28/02/2007

Capacity Development for the Expansion of Energy Services for the Poor

Organized by UNDP, the event introduced practitioners from several continents highlighting the challenges of access to energy and its environmental implications. Inadequate institutions, inability to pay for services, a centralized energy grid in many countries, difficulty in transferring adequate technologies, and lack of investment pose real obstacles.

The development of capacity at all levels of government is central to achieve a high level commitment to sustain donor driven efforts as well as to enable local institutions to promote an efficient allocation of funds and maximize the impact of energy supply for socio-economic development. Successful examples exist, which are being replicated on an enlarged scale. The involvement of women in energy projects provides a route for empowerment.

The achievements in building capacities of governments to draw up Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), need to be supported by building capacities on how to implement PRSPs. Generating and sustaining political commitment can be achieved through regional networks, monitoring at the national level. This seems to be crucial as past examples have shown that commitment is in certain cases directly related to the allocation of resources.

01/03/2007

Importance of Energy Efficiency and Renewables for Development

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) is an active, global public-private partnership, created at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002, that structures policy and regulatory initiatives for clean energy, and facilitates the financing of energy projects. REEEP consists of an active network of 8 regional secretariats and more than 3,500 members, funding more than 50 projects in 44 countries, which address market barriers to clean energy in the developing world and economies in transition. Three case studies in China, Mexico and the CIS highlighted the importance of REEEP to create an enabling environment and overcome market barriers to introduce and facilitate the promotion of energy efficiency technologies and renewable energies.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced joining REEEP and funding its activities with the equivalent of 3.7 Million Euro, pointing out that the bottom up, demand driven approach of REEEP to ensure energy security is commendable. The concrete actions to implement projects of energy efficiency and renewable energies were widely commended. Furthermore it was proposed that REEEP should expand its very successful operation to also support projects with industries. A clear commitment on actions rather than words was brought forward in the meeting.

02/03/2007

Effective Stakeholder Participation in Reaching Sustainable Development and CSD-15 Goals

The event aimed to identify opportunities and challenges to strengthen public participation in environmental issues. Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, calling for the participation of all concerned citizen on environmental issues, has started to strengthened stakeholder participation in environmental decision making. Governments are appreciating the advantages to involve all stakeholders effectively in discussions in order to achieve truly sustainable decisions.

The Aarhus convention emphasizes three dimensions of participation: the right to obtain information, the right to fully participate in environmental decision making and the right to redress to court if necessary.

UNITAR has been actively involved to promote participatory approaches with a wide range of actors. Case studies from South Africa, Brazil, Latin America put forward several recommendations on how to overcome a gap between civil society and government expectations for public participation processes. Participation must be institutionalized and guaranteed by law. In addition capacity on effective participation needs to be provided to both civil society actors and government representatives. Spaces for dialogue need to be provided and have proven to be successful between NGOs and business interests.