



Amid Rising Energy Concerns, UN Looks for Solutions that Would Advance Development, Limit Air Pollution and Climate Change

NEW YORK, 1 MAY – Long-term energy solutions that can fuel global development opportunities and reduce air pollution and the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change will be reviewed at the Commission on Sustainable Development's fourteenth session (CSD-14) that will take place in New York from 1-12 May.

Close to 80 ministers as well as representatives from 1,250 major groups or organizations will be attending the meeting.

The Commission is meeting not only at a time of high and rising energy prices, but heightened concerns over energy security and growing alarm over climate change. As big a story, but one that grabs fewer headlines, is that roughly one in four people in the world still lacks access to electricity and 2.4 billion still cook or heat with traditional fuels such as firewood or dung.

"CSD-14 should aim at having a real impact on improving access to reliable, affordable, and clean energy services," CSD Chair Aleksis Aleksishvili (Finance Minister, Georgia) said. "CSD-14 must catalyze concrete action at all levels by all players. Working in partnership, we can make a difference."

The issues before this year's CSD, energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change, are crucial, according to Aleksishvili, for meeting the Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015. Like clean water, reliable, affordable energy is something that people living in developed countries take for granted, until the lights go out and the com-

puters crash. For developing countries, it is essential to basic social and economic development.

Energy use is expected to increase by fifty percent over the next 25 years, and two-thirds of that increase is expected in developing countries. The World Bank estimates that an investment of \$300 billion a year is needed to meet the needs of people in developing countries through more efficient and cleaner sources of energy. The funding gap is currently very wide, and one of the purposes of the CSD is to foster public-private and other forms of partnership to mobilize resources and build capacity to fill the gap.

According to a report released by the UN in advance of the CSD, "Trends in Sustainable Development," there is some good news on the energy front, especially where concerted efforts have been made to address challenges.

Even as energy use continues to rise globally, greater efficiency and a shift to less energy intensive activities have meant that energy consumption has grown at a slower rate than the world economy. And because of cleaner fuels, even fossil fuels, the rise in carbon dioxide emissions is less than the growth in energy consumption. Sulfur dioxide emissions have declined over the past 20 years because of cleaner technologies and greater use of low-sulfur fuels. And fewer people are suffering from lead contamination as leaded gasoline has been phased out almost everywhere. The phase-out of substances that deplete the ozone layer has been a noteworthy success of multi-lateral cooperation.

Climate change remains a major challenge for the international community, as it threatens to undermine efforts to achieve sustainable development, and the most vulnerable to these effects have contributed least to the problem and are often the least able to afford investments in adaptation.

CSD-14 will identify constraints and obstacles and possible approaches to overcoming them that will form the basis of deliberations at next year's CSD meeting, which will adopt specific policy decisions.

More information on CSD-14, including the full press kit, can be found at <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd.htm>.

CSD-14 will be webcast live at www.un.org/webcast

Media representatives without UN credentials who wish to attend CSD meetings should contact: Media Accreditation & Liaison Unit, UN Department of Public Information, Fax: 212.963.4642 Tel: 212.963.2318

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