

United Nations



Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Energy

First Session

New York, 8 March 1999

REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE AD HOC INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON ENERGY

(New York, 8 March 1999)

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I. Introduction

The Director of Division for Sustainable Development, DESA opened the meeting noting that the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development had welcomed the report on preparations for CSD-9 presented at its thirteenth session in New York, 8-9 March 1999. It was also noted that the IACSD had expressed appreciation of the number of initiatives undertaken so far in preparing for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development which will have as its sectoral theme energy/atmosphere and as its economic theme energy/transport. Discussions focused on the agenda items dealing with the preparations.

The Task Force had before it a provisional agenda, the report to the IACSD on the United Nations system-wide work plan on energy for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the informal information note by the Secretariat on the initiation of preparations for the ninth session of the CSD on issues related to sectoral theme: energy.

II. Elaboration of a common system-wide approach to energy and sustainable development

Members of the Task Force agreed that a common system-wide approach to energy and sustainable development must be inclusive rather than exclusive. The approach can be top-down whereby direction is provided by the member states and governing bodies, and bottom-up so that the impetus comes from UN agencies and entities themselves, but at this point the bottom-up approach is more practical. The common system-wide approach should be synergetic in nature and activities undertaken be complementary and mutually-supportive. It was noted that duplication of work should be avoided. For example, the work of the UNFCCC should not be undertaken by other agencies. Coordination and information sharing is a prerequisite for such a system.

There was discussion about the scope to be covered in the common system since energy is a broad topic. Some members of the Task Force suggested that it might be appropriate to narrow the focus to renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency. Others were of the opinion that this might be construed as prescribing policy. Members agreed that it is more important to point out the advantages and disadvantages of all energy options in the common approach. The impact of energy from a social, economic and environment perspective should also be reflected. In addition, due consideration of the role of stakeholders, including the scientific and academic communities, should be made using consultative mechanisms.

III. Preparations for intergovernmental deliberations on energy at the ninth session of the Commission for Sustainable Development

Task Force members reviewed activities currently underway and/or planned by them in preparation for the ninth session of the Commission for Sustainable Development. They cover a wide range of normative, analytical and technical assistance on energy-related aspects of social, economic and environmental conditions. It was noted that some agencies have undergone significant

restructuring recently and changes in activities have resulted. Examples of work undertaken on a collaborative basis include the World Energy Assessment (WEA) and various technical assistance projects implemented at the national level.

To enhance coordination and promote synergies among these activities and to better prepare for the ninth session of the CSD, it was decided to establish an electronic network. Task Force members agreed to provide updated information on work on-going and envisioned so that a matrix of UN activities geared toward CSD-9 could be established. The information could also be used for reports drafted by DSD for the CSD process. An overall work plan, including time-lines, could be communicated via the network.

IV Supporting the Work of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development

It was noted that interaction with the members of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development would be useful in identifying and elaborating on relevant energy issues for consideration by the Committee. Many of the Task Force members participated in the first session of the Committee as observers and the afternoon session of the Interagency Task Force meeting was dialogue session between the Committee and the Task Force. The Committee sought input from the Task Force to its deliberations on how best to contribute to the ninth session of the CSD. The Task Force noted that the Committee may also play a role in follow-up to the ninth session of the CSD.

V. Other matters

The Task Force decided to meet again in September/October 1999 possibly in Vienna. The agenda will include follow-up on preparations for the ninth session of the CSD and a review of the first draft of the WEA.

Annex I

Agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Overall scope of activity:

(a) Elaboration of common system wide approach to energy and sustainable development;

(b) Preparations for intergovernmental deliberations on energy at the ninth session of the Commission for Sustainable Development; and

(c) Supporting the work of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development.

3. Other matters
4. Provisional agenda for the next meeting of the Task Force
5. Venue and date(s) of the next meeting of the Task Force
6. Adoption of the report of the Task Force

Annex II

List of participants

United Nations, its entities and programmes

Economic Commission for Europe	S. Slavov
United Nations Development Programme	T. Johansson
United Nations Environment Programme	J. Christensen M. Radka
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	J. DiSano (Chair) K.N. Mak K. Abdalla (Secretary)

Specialized agencies and related organizations

Food and Agriculture Organization	G. Best
International Atomic Energy Agency	H.H. Rogner
World Health Organization	Y. von Schirnding
United Nations Industrial Organization	C. Gurkok
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	L. Marques
United Nations Population Fund	V. Ponniah