



UN Sustainable Development Commission to focus on energy solutions that can fuel development and cut poverty, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions

New York, 30 April - Policy measures to advance long-term energy solutions that can fuel economic and social development while reducing air pollution and the greenhouse-gas emissions responsible for climate change will be considered by more than 2,000 government delegates and representatives of non-governmental organizations attending the Commission on Sustainable Development's fifteenth session (CSD-15), to be held from 30 April to 11 May.

Close to 80 government ministers are expected to attend the Commission, which will attempt to chart a sustainable course of action on the interlinked issues of energy, climate change, air pollution and industrial development.

While energy issues have dominated headlines, often overlooked is the fact that roughly one in four people in the world still lack access to electricity, and 2.4 billion still cook or heat with traditional fuels such as firewood or dung.

"We will never achieve sustainable development goals as long as a third of all people do not have modern energy services," says CSD-15 Chair, Mr. Abdullah Hamad Al-Attiyah, Minister of Energy for Qatar. "As long as women and children have to forage for firewood, as long as students cannot read after sunset, and as long as new businesses and industries cannot get the power they need to operate, we cannot expect to achieve development that is economically, socially and environmentally balanced."

Noting the gravity of the challenges ahead, Mr. Al-Attiyah said the task for this year's CSD session is to decide specific policy options and practical measures that can work. "I am optimistic about the future," he said. "The coming decades will witness significant investments in energy infrastructure, as well as in industrial development. We must seize the opportunity to make a difference by making the right policy decisions and choices."

This year's CSD will mark the 20th anniversary of the landmark Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future*, that put sustainable development on the map. To mark the anniversary, former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland is planning to address the high-level portion of the meeting on 9 May.

The Brundtland Commission gave 'sustainable development', an unwieldy term that has since gained general acceptance, its most widely used definition—"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Five years after the Brundtland report, 108 heads of state and government met at the landmark Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro where they endorsed "Agenda 21," a comprehensive programme of action for global measures in all areas of sustainable development.

Energy Concerns High

Energy use is expected to grow by fifty per cent over the next 25 years, with two-thirds of that increase in developing countries. But there are a multitude of competing national and global energy issues that need to be addressed, including access to affordable energy, as well as reliable and clean energy supplies.

Per capita energy consumption in developing countries is still only between one-third and one-fifteenth of what it is in developed countries, but industrial development and economic growth are increasing the global demand for energy. Energy consumption on a per capita basis in developing countries will continue to remain far lower than in developed countries.

Countries are expected to rely on fossil fuels to meet their energy needs through 2030 and beyond, and emissions of CO², the dominant greenhouse gas, are expected to more than double by 2030. Developing countries, which have contributed least to the atmospheric build-up of carbon dioxide, are the ones at greatest risk and least equipped to deal with the effects of climate change.

There are areas where multilateral cooperation can make a difference. The IEA estimates that an investment of about \$400 billion a year in energy infrastructure is needed to meet the needs of people in developing countries. New technologies can help provide energy services to more people in a more efficient manner.

Countries already identified many areas where progress can be made at last year's CSD, which reviewed progress and identified obstacles with regard to access to clean energy services for the poor, industrial development in Africa, and the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, countries agreed that international cooperation was essential to promote efforts to meet the challenges posed by climate change in small island developing states and in the least developed countries, such as threats posed by rising sea levels, and increased periods of floods and droughts.

The CSD is unique in that it brings together government delegates and representatives of major civil society groups, including, women, children and youth, indigenous people, non-governmental organizations, business, academia, local authorities, scientists, and workers and trade unions.

More information on CSD-15, including the full press kit, can be found at:

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm>

CSD-15 will be webcast live at:

www.un.org/webcast

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Highlights of CSD-15 include:

- 30 April Opening of the CSD, including a press briefing with Chairman Abdullah Hamad Al-Attiah (Qatar)
 - 1-8 May Partnership Fair featuring interactive discussion sessions and information desks
 - 3 May Launch of the World Bank's *State and Trends of the Carbon Market*
 - 4 May Launch of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report on policy recommendations (in Bangkok)
 - 8 May Launch of the World Bank's *Little Green Data Book*
 - 9 May Opening of the High-Level Segment (9 to 11 May), including addresses by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, marking the 20th anniversary of the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development Report, *Our Common Future*.
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