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**UNECE CONTRIBUTION TO CYCLES OF THE COMMISSION
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ***

**CHAIR'S SUMMARY: UNECE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FORUM ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (GENEVA, 15-16 DECEMBER 2005)**

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Regional Implementation Forum*

The Second UNECE Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development took place in Geneva on 15-16 December 2005. As a basis for the discussions, the secretariat had prepared a background document (ECE/AC.25/2005/3). The outcome of the discussions is reflected in the Chair's summary below, which will be submitted to and presented at the Fourteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), New York, 1-12 May 2006.

In accordance with the CSD's multi-year programme of work, the Forum assessed the region's progress in implementing sustainable development commitments in the areas of energy for sustainable development, atmosphere/air pollution, climate change and industrial development as well as cross-cutting issues.

* Late submission since the Regional Implementation Forum was held only on 15-16 December 2005 and Chair's Summary completed in early January 2006.

I. OVERVIEW

1. In preparation for the 14th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD14), UNECE member States, representatives of civil society, United Nations and other international bodies met in Geneva to review the region's progress in implementing World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) commitments focused on the CSD14/15 thematic cluster of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change.
2. This cluster is critical for our efforts to achieve global sustainable development. The UNECE Regional Implementation Forum considered progress within the region, as well as its contribution at the global level. In doing so it addressed significant interlinkages and cross-cutting issues.
3. The Forum discussed obstacles and challenges to implementation, but also ways to overcome them. Our assessment is that the region is not yet on track to deliver its WSSD commitments. But our discussion offered valuable insights into what can be done to accelerate progress, within the region and globally.
4. There have been a number of important milestones since the WSSD, including the Bonn Conference on Renewable Energy and the subsequent meeting in Beijing, the Energy for Development conference in the Netherlands, the G8 Gleneagles Action Plan on energy, climate change and sustainable development and, of course, the Eleventh Session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP11) and the First Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (MOP1) in Montreal, all of which CSD can build on.
5. The key challenges we face are to increase access to energy services to meet basic human needs and achieve sustainable industrial development, while reducing energy related environmental and health problems, in particular those related to air pollution and climate change.
6. Regional and national differences significantly alter implementation experiences and priorities. This is apparent inside the UNECE region, as well as globally. It is important that the global review of progress takes full account of these differences and that CSD14/15 recognises the contribution of the regions.
7. The thematic issues need to be considered in the context of the overarching objectives of sustainable development: eradicating poverty, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and protecting the natural resource base for economic and social development
8. Energy for sustainable development is the issue that binds this thematic cluster together. Both within the UNECE region and globally, intensified efforts are required to steer us onto a markedly and truly sustainable energy path.
9. This Summary was produced in consultation with the Vice-Chair and Co-Chairs, informed by the wide range of inputs by the diverse UNECE membership and stakeholders. It

aims to capture the main challenges to progress so far, together with key opportunities to expedite implementation of our commitments.

II. ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(a) The Challenges

10. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) includes goals on access to energy services for sustainable development to facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and on diversifying energy supply, including through substantially increasing the global share of renewable energy sources.

11. With more than 1.6 billion people still lacking access to electricity worldwide and 2.4 billion using traditional biomass, improving access to reliable, affordable and environmentally sound energy services is still a major challenge to poverty eradication and achieving the MDGs. Availability of energy is not in itself a critical concern to most countries of the UNECE region. Nonetheless, energy poverty exists in the region as a result of affordability; energy takes a significant component of disposable income.

12. Improving access to energy services to meet basic human needs and achieve sustainable industrial development should be a top priority for CSD14/15. UNECE countries share a large responsibility in tackling this task through their official development assistance (ODA) and partnerships.

13. However this should not overshadow the equally high importance of the energy related environmental issues and the issue of energy security both in the UNECE region and the rest of the world.

14. Energy efficiency and energy savings have been identified as a key priority contributing to sustainable energy and an area where the UNECE region can make particular progress. Energy efficiency measures yield a net cost benefit as well as many ancillary economic and environmental benefits. In this regard these provide an excellent win-win option. However, barriers need to be overcome for energy efficient measures to deliver their full potential; this requires education and awareness raising, sometimes fostering behavioural change, regulatory and energy pricing reforms, emissions trading, and particularly the establishment of adequate financing instruments. Demand for transport was identified as being particularly challenging.

15. The supply of energy will remain a major challenge as worldwide demand continues to grow, despite some decoupling of energy demand and economic growth. Security of supply is of particular concern to the UNECE region, and needs to be reinforced by diversifying both geographical and fuel sources, securing adequate investment in production, transport and distribution infrastructure, and deepening political dialogue between producer and consumer countries.

16. Diversification of supply needs to include significantly increasing the share of renewable energy, in line with the UNECE regional commitment ahead of WSSD, decreasing the environmental impact and carbon intensity of fossil energies and improving the energy

efficiency of energy transformation and networks. Fossil fuels will continue to provide the bulk of supplies for the foreseeable future, but their use can be reduced step by step.

(b) Opportunities for further progress

17. The UNECE region has a leading role to play in increasing research, development and deployment of energy technologies, reducing unit costs and making these technologies available to developing countries. We also need to improve the deployment of existing technologies, for which there is a growing market as fuel prices rise. In the longer term, new technologies will be needed to achieve sustainable energy supplies. International cooperation and unencumbered trade are essential to enable the required technology development and transfer. Market orientated instruments such as Joint Implementation, Clean Development Mechanism and International Emissions Trading, can contribute to such a process.

18. It is estimated that \$16 trillion in investment is required between 2003-2030 to meet projective energy demand by converting the world's resources into available supply. CSD can address many issues related to energy and investment, including investment frameworks, governance, the role of the international financial institutions (IFIs), regulation and pricing. Market signals are crucial for energy investment decisions, hence the need to ensure predictability through well-designed regulatory frameworks.

19. Energy issues need to be better integrated in development planning, reflecting the interactions between energy policies and those addressing economic development and the environment, including climate change and atmospheric pollution, health, industrial and regional development.

20. In order to make progress, it will be important to take full account of gender equality issues associated with energy, notably the health impacts of indoor air pollution; as well as to provide education, information and, particularly in developing countries, capacity building.

21. CSD15 will also need to take a decision on an effective and meaningful review and follow-up of outcomes of CSD14/15 on energy, especially on a review arrangement for a worldwide substantial increase of renewable energies, as envisaged in the JPOI and the Beijing Declaration.

III. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

(a) Challenges

22. Industrial development is an engine for poverty eradication and economic growth, which needs to be based on economically, environmentally and socially sound policies. Adopting such policies enables a mutually reinforcing relationship between environmental protection, competitiveness and social cohesion, necessary to avoid unsustainable development that negatively impacts on the global climate, damages ecosystems and undermines people's health and livelihoods.

23. In an increasingly globalized world, we need to take account of all factors influencing industrial development; and of social issues, including high levels of unemployment, that can

arise from industrial restructuring, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

(b) Opportunities for further progress

24. Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) is essential to achieving sustainable industrial development. Developed countries need to take the leading role in this, as called for in the JPOI, but SCP is of growing interest to developing and transition countries, given the opportunities to develop in ways that make cost effective use of available resources and minimise negative impacts on human health and the environment. This requires programmes that improve access to affordable, clean and efficient technologies, backed by cooperation between countries on regulatory and administrative issues.

25. UNECE member States are active in the Marrakech Process to change unsustainable consumption and production patterns, as are many other developed and developing countries. The September 2005 Marrakech +2 meeting in Costa Rica discussed barriers and constraints to SCP, identifying further progress required in the areas of leadership, incentives, dialogues, tools, education, capacity building and urban planning. There was also consensus on acknowledging the importance of the costs of inaction. The recommendations and outcomes of Marrakech and its Task Forces need to be pursued in an active and practical way.

26. Cleaner production centres have an important role to play in developing policies, which take account of local conditions, building capacity at the local level, and transferring knowledge and technology. Capacity building and education have a vital role to play in raising consumer awareness, which in turn leads to greater demand for environmental products and services.

27. Engagement with business is critical for achieving sustainable development. There is a need for further development and promotion of corporate social and environmental responsibility and accountability in support of this role. This should include capacity building for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), which have an important contribution to make to economic development, but are not always aware of their social and environmental impacts or obligations.

28. In order for industrial development and a well functioning labour market to be sustained it is important to enforce International Labour Organization core labour standards. Similarly, it is essential to ensure gender equality through training, education and financial assistance, enabling women's entrepreneurship to thrive.

IV. AIR POLLUTION, ATMOSPHERE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(a) Challenge

29. Air pollution causes serious adverse effects on human health and the environment. It also has an overall negative impact on social welfare and the economy. The poor, in particular women and children, are disproportionately affected by health impacts. The causes, levels and impacts of air pollution vary considerably between countries and regions and are closely associated with the other CSD14/15 thematic issues.

30. Progress has been made in the region to reduce air pollution but urbanization, as well as increased levels of transportation and energy use, have led to a rise in air pollution globally, negatively affecting human health and causing environmental degradation including climate change.

31. In less developed countries, indoor air pollution from the use of traditional fuels for heating and cooking is a specific concern. According to WHO, 1.6 million people worldwide, most of them women and children, die every year as a result of respiratory conditions associated with indoor air pollution.

32. In both developed and developing countries ambient air pollution is a growing public health concern. In addition to domestic sources, transport, industry and power production are all contributing factors. In the UNECE region, increasing levels of transport are a significant cause of air pollution.

33. Climate change poses a serious and long-term challenge that has potential to affect every part of the globe, undermine poverty eradication efforts and threaten the achievement of the MDGs.

(b) Opportunities for further progress

34. The UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its protocols have been effective across large areas of the region in reducing air pollution. UNECE can share its experience of such work, which could be helpful for other regions. Collaboration between regions, especially between UNECE and Asia and North Africa, will be essential to tackle the newly perceived problems of intercontinental transport of air pollution. There is a need to address emissions causing air pollution from maritime and aviation transport, which are becoming proportionately more significant sources in the region.

35. Further cooperation is required between countries, agencies and with business on taking forward examples of good practice and stimulating dialogue on innovative policy, planning and technology development.

36. International cooperation is required to put ourselves on a path to slow, stop and reverse the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. There is widespread satisfaction at the outcomes of the December 2005 UNFCCC conference in Montreal, including agreement by all countries to participate in dialogue under the UNFCCC on a global effort to tackle climate change beyond 2012.

37. Urgent action is required to meet our objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving the global environment, cutting air pollution and enhancing energy security in conjunction with efforts to eradicate poverty. By addressing these issues in an integrated fashion, including the need for action at all levels, CSD can complement the efforts of the UNFCCC and other fora in meeting these challenges. An important focus will be promotion of sustainable energy technology and investment in support of climate change objectives.

38. Recent studies of linkages between air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions have shown significant savings can be achieved through integrated approaches; these should be

developed further, taking special care to explore trade-offs, e.g. the use of wood for fuel increasing particle emissions.

V. INTERLINKAGES AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

39. There are clear and significant interlinkages between the themes of this cluster that need to be addressed if progress is to be accelerated and sustained. In addition, CSD11 identified a number of cross-cutting issues, including the means of implementation, which need to be tackled.

40. To achieve real and sustainable progress in all of these areas we need to adopt an integrated approach, for example in planning and transport policy, which takes account of social, economic and environmental considerations. Pursuing sectoral commitments in isolation can compromise the achievement of other policy objectives.

41. Means of implementation, including financial resources, are critical both in the UNECE region and globally. For developing countries, particularly least developed countries, provision of adequate ODA is essential, as is effective support through international organizations and mechanisms including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which needs to be properly replenished.

42. However, each country is responsible for its own development and can benefit from creating the right investment climate, including through improved governance, ensuring the rule of law, respect for human rights and gender equality.

43. The integration of each of the thematic issues into national policies and programmes is very important. This includes national sustainable development strategies, for which WSSD agreed a 2005 target; and comprehensive development strategies (such as poverty reduction strategies), for which the recent UN World Summit agreed a target of adoption by 2006.

44. National governments need to deploy a mix of policy instruments, combining best regulatory practice, market mechanisms (including internalising external costs and tackling energy subsidies) and voluntary measures. A similar mix is required at global level, working within a “loud, long and legal” framework of multilateral commitments, as discussed in the context of G8 talks on energy, climate change and sustainable development.

45. The development of affordable and environmentally sound technologies is essential for progress across the thematic cluster. Further efforts are needed on research, development and deployment, technology support, transfer and access.

46. To enable governments and stakeholders to implement commitments, capacity building is essential both within the UNECE region and in developing countries, including through education and the provision of information. The UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development provides a model that could be useful for other regions.

47. Women and children are disproportionately affected by indoor air pollution and are less likely to receive education or gain employment as a result of being assigned domestic tasks and responsibility for fuel wood collection. Pursuing gender equality is therefore intrinsic to our efforts.

48. Meaningful implementation requires early and sustained engagement with a range of actors, including the IFIs, public and private sectors, civil society and partnerships. CSD14 has much to gain from events as diverse as World Bank Energy Week and the regional preparatory meeting planned by EECCA countries' civil society groups.

49. In particular, we need to establish how to promote the investment necessary for countries to get onto a sustainable energy path. This requires dialogue with private financiers (about conducive investment environments); the World Bank (for example, about their small grants programme); and with development agencies and partnerships.

50. Voluntary multi-stakeholder partnerships such as the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), Renewable Energy and Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition (JREC), Renewable Energy Financing in the Mediterranean (MEDREP), Collaborative Labeling and Appliance Standards Program (CLASP), Vinyl 2010 and the Adriatic Action Plan 2020, some of which gave presentations to the Forum, have a major contribution to make as a complement to intergovernmental commitments.

51. Identifying "champions" for particular kinds of implementation activity could spur further action. These can be included in a matrix of policy options and practical measures, along the lines proposed by the Chair of CSD14.

VI. OUTCOMES OF CSD 14/15

52. The CSD14 global review session needs to catalyse interactive discussion between a range of governments and stakeholders. It should generate a focused outcome that highlights the priority issues requiring attention during the CSD15 policy year.

53. CSD15 will need to agree implementation measures, both negotiated policy guidance and complementary non-negotiated outcomes, which add value to what is being done in other fora. Such measures should be concrete and quantifiable, directed at expediting and monitoring action to close gaps in implementation and deliver shared commitments. In this regard, it will be important to decide on effective review and follow-up arrangements, including the use of relevant targets and indicators and the Chair's matrix.
