

Joint Statement by ESCAP and UNECE

ESCAP and ECE are pleased and proud to continue our deep collaboration in the area of sustainable energy. This year, 2012, is the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All. The subject of sustainable energy for all has been taken up with great effort and in some detail by the Secretary General's High Level Group on Sustainable energy for All, and the result of the group's work has been endorsed by Heads of State at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20).

Role of Regional Commissions

As noted in the Rio +20 outcome document, regional and sub-regional organizations, including the UN Regional Commissions, have a significant role to play in integrating the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in our respective regions. There is strong support for effective operationalization and implementation of sustainable development and for facilitation of development policies, plan, and programs. Rio +20 urged us to prioritize sustainable development through, among other things, efficient and effective capacity building, development and implementation of regional agreements and arrangements, and exchange of information, best practices, and lessons learned. Those are precisely the areas where the collaboration between ESCAP and UNECE, and indeed with our other sister Regional Commissions, has been most effective. This forum is an excellent example of that collaboration, including the applied efforts of UNDP.

Heads of state welcomed regional and cross-regional initiatives for sustainable development, hence encouraging even more activities of this sort, and they recognized the need to ensure linkages among global, regional, sub-regional, and national processes to advance sustainable development. In this light, Heads of state encouraged enhancement of the UN Regional Commissions in our respective capacities to support Member States in implementing sustainable development.

Major Themes of Sustainable Development Related to Energy

Achieving sustainable development will involve changing unsustainable patterns and promoting sustainable patterns of production and consumption. This is to be done in a cross-cutting way across the range of development challenges. Sustainable energy for all necessarily involves an integrative, collaborative approach in addressing challenges in a range of sectors, including water resources management, transport, and urban development.

- In the area of water, there is a recognized need for development of integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans that ensure sustainable water use. Such a need necessarily embraces cross-border issues and incorporation of hydropower management and development into the integrated water resource management plans.
- Developing sustainable transport systems, including energy efficient multi-modal approaches, notably public mass transportation systems, clean fuels and vehicles, and improved transportation systems in rural areas will have a clear impact on energy balances, and vice-versa. There is a recognized need for integrated policy-making at the national, regional, and local levels for transport services and systems to promote sustainable development.
- By 2050, 70% of the world's 9 billion people will live in cities, up from 50% of today's 7 billion. Urban dwellers will rise from 3.5 billion today to 6.3 billion by 2050, the equivalent of 270 cities the size of greater Paris in 35 years. City-based energy consumption was 75% of the world total in 2009, and that figure is set to increase as urbanization rises. It is of utmost importance to expand the number of metropolitan regions, cities, and towns that are implementing policies for

sustainable urban planning and design in order to respond effectively to the expected growth of urban populations in the coming decades.

Sustainable Energy for All

Energy plays a critical role in development, as access to sustainable modern energy services contributes to poverty eradication, saves lives, improves health, and helps provide for basic human needs. Energy is a key input to all economic activity. Heads of state committed to facilitating support for global access to modern energy services.

Those countries that are committed to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies have invited others to remove market distortions, including restructuring taxation and phasing out harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts.

Heads of state also reaffirmed their support for policies and strategies using an appropriate energy mix to meet developmental needs. The mix would include increased use of renewable energy sources and other low-emission technologies, more efficient use of energy, greater reliance on advanced energy technologies, including cleaner fossil fuel technologies, and sustainable use of traditional energy resources. It was noted that governments play a critical role in creating the enabling environments that facilitate public and private sector investment in relevant and needed capital and technology. Heads of state recognized the importance of promoting incentives for and removing disincentives to energy efficiency and diversification of the energy mix, including promoting research and development.

The Secretary General's initiative on Sustainable Energy for All focuses on access to energy, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. The initiative can serve as a model for public/private engagement with the UN system:

- The High Level Group set a Framework for Action and defined a Global Action Agenda.
 - The Framework for Action identified the value of participation, the benefits of collaboration, the structure of commitments, and the guiding principles of the initiative.
 - The Global Action Agenda identified high priority opportunities for engagement organized into 11 action areas ranging from appliance efficiency to innovative finance.
- The initiative has secured endorsement of the Sustainable Energy for All vision from every part of the world. The outcome document of Rio +20 asserted: "We are all determined to act to make sustainable energy for all a reality".
- SE4All inspired more than 100 commitments to action, amounting to tens of billions of dollars – from governments to provide technical assistance and de-risk private investment and from business to make the large-scale investments needed to bring about change in the world's energy systems.

Next steps include:

- Working with national governments on the design and implementation of country-level plans to develop local capacity, create the enabling conditions to attract private investment, and facilitate access to technical assistance and resources
- Developing the high-impact opportunities into concrete actions through constructive engagement with multi-stakeholder partnerships

- Match-making public and private partners and reducing investment risks through targeted use of public and philanthropic capital.
- Monitoring progress, sharing best practices and lessons learned, and communicating with global stakeholders on a regular basis.

Ongoing Areas of Focus

Heads of state invited all relevant agendas of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations to support Member States in capacity-building for developing resource-efficient and inclusive economies, including through (among other items):

- Sharing sustainable practices in various economic sectors
- Supporting cooperation for the transition to a resource-efficient economy
- Promoting public-private partnerships

ESCAP and ECE look forward to continuing and deepening our collaboration, including with ESCWA, ECLAC, and ECA, across the range of our activities in sustainable energy. As needed by our respective member States, our activities could comprise energy efficiency (to double the rate of update of energy efficiency investments and energy intensity improvements); renewables (to accelerate the uptake of cost-effective renewables in the energy mix, advanced fossil (to improve the overall efficiency of the sector, improve the average thermal efficiency of fossil fuel-fired power stations, and reduce the net carbon intensity of the energy sector); meet new challenges in electricity and enable next generation technology (HVDC, superconductivity, smart grids/cities/vehicles, distributed generation, storage, synchronization, wireless transmission); and enhance the contribution of natural gas to the transition to a sustainable energy future.

ESCAP and ECE also look forward to working with the participants in this third international energy efficiency forum to ensure a cost effective transition.