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Special Report on Selected Side Events at the Fourteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14)

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Events convened on Thursday, 4 May 2006

Energy Security and its Implications for the Poor

Presented by UNDP

Nebojša Nakićenović, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, discussed energy security and its implications for the poor from a global perspective. He highlighted key issues concerning energy security and reliability, including that high and volatile energy prices are unaffordable for the poor and hinder development of least developed countries. Nakićenović said that providing clean liquid petroleum gas is essential for achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and avoiding over-dependence on imports is essential for development of energy security. He emphasized the immensity of the challenge, and suggested that the key to addressing this is by finding a way forward that addresses all issues simultaneously.

Abul Barkat, University of Dhaka, highlighted the case of rural Bangladesh and emphasized that: attaining all of the MDGs is not possible without concentrating on people in rural areas and focusing our resources on those who are marginalized; to attain MDGs electricity can be the most appropriate avenue for energy; and without committed partnerships, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger with electricity as a means is not possible.

Nandita Mongia, UNDP, discussed the Regional Energy Programme for Poverty Reduction for the Asia Pacific region, saying it looks at improving access to energy services to the poor and how the oil price crisis impacts them. She said the study examined private financing, cross border energy trade, and the impact of oil in a country gap analysis. She noted that although macroeconomic impacts from rising oil prices are observable, micro-effects such as higher transportation costs, which affect access to health care and education, are affecting the poor. Mongia also emphasized that the fight for energy for all contributes to the fight for the MDGs.

Jose Carlos Gomes Costa, Brazilian Ministry of Mines and Energy, highlighted his country's current energy security dispute with Bolivia, and provided an overview of the Brazilian Energy Program "Light for All". He said the program's goal is to disseminate electricity to 12 million people by 2008, by extending transmission lines and decentralizing power generation using local and renewable sources whenever possible. He emphasized interest in possible joint solutions to transform the newly provided electricity into money in order to improve communities.

Discussions: Participants addressed many issues including: the need to extend the focus on energy and electricity to overall development issues; the need to look to the traditional energy sector to achieve MDGs; and the reality of achieving energy security in the framework of the MDGs.



Nandita Mongia, UNDP



Thomas Johansson, University of Lund, Sweden



Jose Carlos Gomes Costa, Brazilian Ministry of Mines and Energy



Nebojša Nakićenović, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis left to right



Abul Barkat, University of Dhaka



Increasing Access to Energy Services for the Poor

Presented by UNDP

Minoru Takada, UNDP, introduced the side event, emphasizing that there are serious barriers to achieving the MDGs as well as providing the required energy services.

Kipyego Cheluget, East African Community (EAC), discussed regional energy access to modern services in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. He discussed the Regional Development Strategy, noting its focus on energy and highlighted its targets for 2015 including enabling the use of modern fuels for 50 % of those who presently use traditional biomass for cooking, as well as access to electricity at the community level. He said that the three

countries' leaders endorsed the Strategy, and emphasized the need to scale up modern energy services in East Africa to achieve these targets.

Edgar Blaustein, economist, discussed strengths and weaknesses regarding the ability of public authorities to provide the poor with access to energy services. He said that energy is necessary for sustainable development, underscoring public action as vital. He also highlighted threats, saying it is difficult to create a virtuous circle of development, and referred to the questions of whether energy services would contribute to economic growth and social progress for assessment. He acknowledged that there is a lot that can be done to engage the private sector, but that CSD-14 can be used to support international efforts in favor of public authorities.

Stephen Gitonga, UNDP, described the experience of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme in expanding access to modern energy services at the community level. He highlighted channeling resources directly to poor communities as a challenge, and said that the programme overcomes these challenges by, inter alia: trying to work in partnerships in the financing of diverse community-based projects; and capturing and disseminating lessons from community level experiences. One of the lessons learned, said Gitonga, is that social capital is an abundant resource that can be tapped for expanding access to modern energy services.

Metsi Makhetha, UNDP, called for increasing access to energy services, and moving from commitments to action. She said that these goals are possible to achieve, but acknowledged that the energy access agenda needs to be viewed as a process. She stressed the need to focus on access, not technology, emphasizing the importance of the government establishing a relationship with their people. She spotlighted the ECOWAS/UEMOA whitepaper, saying that a political commitment exists to promote access to energy services in order to meet MDGs.



From left to right: **Edgar Blaustein**, economist, **Kipyego Cheluget**, East African Community (EAC), **Metsi Makhetha**, UNDP, and **Stephen Gitonga**, UNDP.



Metsi Makhetha, UNDP, emphasized that for commitment to be translated into action, data must be made available that is useful for policy makers



Edgar Blaustein, Economist, highlighted the ECOWAS-UEMOA whitepaper, saying that there is growing awareness among public authorities of the need for access to energy in rural and peri-urban areas



Participants during the Side Event

More information:

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