



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

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Developing Countries: Transition to Renewable Energy

Presented by International Solar Energy Society (ISES)



Yogi Goswami, ISES, said that currently about 13 or 14 percent of energy comes from renewable energy and that in 2030 the percentages are predicted to remain the same although renewable energy use will increase, due to increased energy consumption

More information:

<http://www.ises.org>
<http://whitepaper.ises.org>
<http://www.ise.fraunhofer.de>
<http://www.uonbi.ac.ke>
<http://www.nrel.gov>
<http://www.unngocsd.org>
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Yogi Goswami, ISES, emphasized that the transition to sustainability must begin immediately, saying the technologies exist to support the conversion safely and economically. He introduced a white paper "Transitioning to a Renewable Energy Future," which reveals that proven and successful policies are more important than ideology, that stable and long term policies are crucial, and provides examples of comprehensive policy models that have worked and could potentially be transferred to other countries.

Joachim Luther, International Science Panel on Renewable Energies (ISPRES), introduced ISPRES, noting that its international planning group members were appointed by the International Council for Science. He highlighted ISPRES's mission to improve the effectiveness and coherence of national, regional and global research and development efforts, and stressed that the organization does not address energy policy development.

Evans Kituyi, University of Nairobi, described how research and development on distributed electricity generation could help deliver electricity internationally, notably in rural areas. He addressed the need to examine how a mini-grid can serve a community better, and how localized grid operation concepts can be smoothly integrated into a centralized supply management.

David Renné, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, described the Solar and Wind Energy Resource Assessment project (SWERA), and said it provides: solar and wind resource data and maps, a geospatial toolkit, a SWERA archive, and country-level energy analysis. He noted that: resource maps and data facilitate renewable energy policies; policy mechanisms further accelerate renewable energy project development; and that expanded project development builds capacity for sustainable and replicable renewable energy growth.

Roma Stibravy, Chairperson of the UN NGO Committee On Sustainable Development, urged people to use the organization as a resource in terms of sustainable development and renewable energy. Paulette Middleton, Panorama Pathways, urged that no country should be left behind in the transition to a renewable energy future and highlighted the challenge of institutionalizing the triple bottom line, ensuring that social and environmental benefits are taken as seriously as economic profits.

Participants discussed: the challenge of closing the gap between renewable energies' current potential and lack of funding by international finance agencies; how policy and long-term government commitments are vital for renewable energy; the accuracy of the white paper; and the important role of all renewable energies.

Reducing Energy Consumption and GHG Emission from Urban Transport

Presented by the International Association of Public Transport (UITP)

Mark Radka, UNEP, noted that current patterns of transport services are inextricably linked to energy demand, greenhouse gas consumption and climate change. Radka said that auto ownership rates are rising dramatically, noting that public transit systems can be 50 times more space efficient than private vehicles. He emphasized the importance of low-cost transit, especially in developing countries, and said that many cities currently face the choice of either developing infrastructure and policies that cater to cars, or opting for more efficient approaches to transport.

Philippe Attey, Chairman of the African Association of Public Transport, discussed the energy effectiveness of urban collective transport in Africa. He noted that many African cities are experiencing pollution and permanent congestion. He then addressed the need for: urban collective transport policies with adequate management and financing instruments; more robust methods to measure, monitor and control pollution in large African cities; and a forum on the sustainable development of urban collective transport in Africa.

Gerd Johnsson-Latham, Swedish Ministry of Sustainable Development, emphasized the need for a coherent approach to sustainable transportation, saying it is vital for sustainable development. In noting the country's goal of reducing its dependency on fossil fuels by 2020, she said tax reductions, exemptions, and subsidies are the most effective way for this to be achieved. In closing, she addressed the continued need to develop more cost-efficient technologies concurrently with Sweden's current use of renewable energies, and the importance of considering the social aspects of transportation.

Maria Ljung, Stockholm Public Transport, said that oil dependency and CO2 cause environmental, security and supply problems, noting the financial implications of these. She suggested that in order to reduce transportation's dependency on fossil fuel, an increase of energy efficiency and use of biofuels is needed. She described Stockholm's example of ethanol and biogas bus fleets, and highlighted the Bus Buyers Consortium as a way to spur their development.

Heather Allen, UITP, highlighted the Bringing of Quality to Life report and addressed the total external costs of congestion, air pollution and traffic accidents in Europe as costing €560 million. She underscored the importance of taking into account density of network and affordability for developing public transportation, noting that city buses are as much as 50% more energy efficient with an average of 35%.



Gerd Johnsson-Latham, Swedish Ministry of Sustainable Development, noted that in Sweden, the energy efficiency in housing construction and industrial production is lost by increase energy use in transportation



Philippe Attey, Chairman of the African Association of Public Transport, described how African cities have changed from a network system of urban collective transport, to urban sprawl where badly maintained cars are the main source of transport due to rapid urbanization

More information:

<http://www.unep.fr/energy>
<http://www.uitp.com/uatp/structure-en.cfm>
<http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/2066>
<http://www.sl.se>
<http://www.ethanolbus.com>
<http://www.uitp.com/home/index.cfm>

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Sustainable Energy: Where We are Now and Where We Can Be

Presented by INFORSE & HELIO International

Laura Williamson, HELIO International, described how her organization helps ensure that energy systems and policies contribute to sustainable and equitable development. She profiled HELIO's Sustainable Energy Watch report series, carried out by locals from 18 countries worldwide, according to eight social, environmental, economic and technological indicators, emphasizing the need for indicators to be simple and easy to understand.

Williamson expressed alarm that several countries have recently switched from being net exporters of energy to net importers. She further noted that adoption of renewable energy sources has been highly variable, and that the reports have highlighted discrepancies between government commitments and related actions.

Ibrahim Togola, HELIO International, presented on Energy and Development in Africa, emphasizing the lack of access to energy. He said that while oil consumption has increased, per capita electricity consumption has decreased, and further noted that the cost of oil has imposed a financial burden on African countries.

Gunnar Boye Oleson, INFORSE, described the social, environmental and economic imperatives that should guide the sustainable development of energy. He noted that compared to the developed world, developing countries have little to gain through increased energy efficiency, as they consume a relatively small amount to begin with. He said that INFORSE's vision for the EU includes having 12% of energy derived from renewable sources by 2012. He described what is necessary to meet these ambitious goals, and closed with an invitation to other countries to use this model to pursue sustainable energy.

Participants discussed what the CSD and the UN system in general can realistically contribute to solving the problems identified in the presentations. One participant discussed the merits of the Dutch proposal for countries to voluntarily pledge access to modern energy. Participants also discussed the need to decouple economic growth from energy consumption, and to reconsider the economy as a human construct that is ultimately dependant on the environment. There was consensus that effective citizen involvement is needed to hold governments to their stated commitments, guided by concrete targets and timelines. One participant cautioned that unless a social transition strategy is developed during the move to a renewable energy economy, there could be widespread hardship. Another participant emphasized the need to integrate gender equity into energy transition strategies.



Laura Williamson, HELIO International, described the benefits of citizen involvement in utility boards



Ibrahim Togola, HELIO International, noted that cultural barriers may exist to the introduction of alternative fuels

More information:

<http://www.inforse.org>

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Energy Infrastructure Development in India

Presented by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Fayez Malek, CIDA, opened the side event and provided a brief overview of CIDA's energy development work in India.

Willy Kotiuga, SNC Lavalin, presented the CIDA-supported Energy Infrastructure Services Project and the Demand Side Management for Climate Change project (DSM). He emphasized that collaboration and coordination between donors and funding agencies has been key to the success of the project, which aimed to develop an effective energy sector to catalyze economic growth.

He described CIDA and India's Ministry of Power's collaboration with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the UK Department for International Development to provide assistance to the Electricity Boards in four states (Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh) and national agencies concerned with energy, to address high system losses of power. Kotiuga emphasized the importance of tailoring their approach to each situation and working closely with local governments.

He noted positive developments associated with the project, including the establishment of corporate planning groups in each state, an increased understanding regarding where system losses are occurring, and improvements in the quality and supply of energy rural areas. He highlighted some of the project's outcomes, including energy savings, development of gender equality consideration, and poverty reduction strategies.

Hakim Zahar, Econoler International, gave a presentation on DSM in the state of Madhya Pradesh. He noted that both electricity rates and awareness of energy efficiency had been historically low. Emphasizing the importance of "learning by doing," he described how the project had identified sectors money-losing sectors. He described savings achieved and GHG emissions reduced through the introduction of more efficient street lighting and agricultural pumps, and concluded that the DSM project has demonstrated a sustainable "win-win" situation for India's energy sector.

Discussion: One participant questioned how rising rates have affected energy access; another sought to understand the role that corruption has played.



Willy Kotiuga, SNC Lavalin, described the benefits that the energy infrastructure services and DSM projects have had for the states of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh

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