

CSD-15 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 30 APRIL 2007

On Monday morning, CSD-15 began its consideration of the thematic cluster for the 2006/07 implementation cycle – energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution and atmosphere, and climate change. After completing the election of officers and adopting the agenda and organization of work, delegates heard reports on intersessional activities and made general statements. Interventions focused on identifying priorities for CSD-15 and ways to ensure its success. Following a brief introduction to the Chair's draft negotiating document, delegates engaged in an interactive discussion with Major Groups on practical measures and options relevant to the thematic cluster. In the afternoon delegates considered regional perspectives.

OPENING PLENARY

CSD-15 Chair Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah (Qatar) opened the plenary with a brief overview of the outcome of CSD-14 and of the CSD-15 intergovernmental preparatory meeting, and suggested that the CSD-15 focus on areas where it could add value.

Delegates formally approved Vice-Chair-designate Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado (Brazil) as Latin American and Caribbean States' representative on the CSD Bureau, the other Bureau members having been elected in 2006. Delegates also approved the CSD-15 provisional agenda and organization of work. The meeting observed a minute of reflection to wish recovery for Ambassador Viveka Bohn, tragically injured in an accident in Africa.

José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, expressed hope that CSD-15 would craft thoughtful and focused policy decisions, including on access to modern energy services for eradicating poverty.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Pakistan, for the G-77/CHINA, called for the full implementation of commitments made at recent summits and the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, emphasizing that progress in the environmental field should be matched by progress in other areas. He indicated continuing obstacles, including lack of financial, human and technical resources in developing countries. He also requested the Chair to present a compilation text of proposals made so far with attributions of their proponents.

Germany, for the EU, proposed monitoring implementation, introducing time-bound targets, initiating an international agreement on energy efficiency, and devoting time to review and follow-up on energy in CSD's sessions in 2010/2011 and 2014/2015. He also highlighted the impact of climate change

on security. The US said the international environmental governance system has been prolific in negotiating multilateral environmental agreements, and recommended turning the many pages of text into action on the ground. SWITZERLAND said the CSD has not lived up to expectations, and needs to add value to, not just repeat, what has been done in the past.

The AFRICAN UNION said special consideration should be given to the most vulnerable countries, and noted the importance of inter-ministerial processes and partnerships such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) highlighted its members' vulnerability to natural disasters and described the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), the first regional disaster insurance facility in the world.

INTERSESSIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

AUSTRIA reported on the Sixth Meeting of the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy (GFSE-6), which focused on Africa and highlighted the need for increased emphasis on hydropower, national refining capacities and regional integration.

JAPAN reviewed the results of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), which highlighted the need for local buy-in, and the importance of regional cooperation and public-private partnerships.

NORWAY summarized the results of The Oslo Conference on Good Governance and Social and Environmental Responsibility, which highlighted the importance of respecting human rights and decent work standards, applying environmentally and climate-change friendly business practices, and improving transparency.

The EU reported on the Ministerial Conference on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, which discussed best practices and possible options for the future role of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

DENMARK reported on conclusions reached at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) of Environment Ministers, including the need to decouple economic growth from energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions, and the importance of biofuels, renewable energy and low carbon energy alternatives.

INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Chair Al-Attiyah introduced the draft negotiating document contained in E/CN.17/2007/9, noting that a revised text, based on comments and discussions, will be issued on 2 May. He then initiated an interactive discussion with Major Groups.

WOMEN emphasized the need to mainstream gender issues into energy decision-making, promote business opportunities and ensure easy access to credit. CHILDREN AND YOUTH called for time-bound measurable targets for energy efficiency, energy savings, energy access and renewables. She suggested integrating sustainable development into educational curricula.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE noted the need for robust policy and regulatory frameworks, corporate accountability, participatory decision-making and respect for human rights.

NGOs highlighted the importance of time-bound targets for energy efficiency and renewables, relevant funding, and a review mechanism. LOCAL AUTHORITIES noted the need to create incentives for renewables and energy efficiency, development of alternative fuels, greenhouse gas reduction targets and support for public transit. WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS stressed the importance of democratic governance, decent work standards, a planned energy transition so as to protect workers, sustainable production systems and green jobs.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY underscored the significance of, *inter alia*, open markets, trade liberalization and protection of intellectual property rights. She called for commitments and actions from all quarters on climate change, and emphasized the role of partnerships. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES noted the need to consider all energy sources, including safe and secure nuclear energy systems. He added that industrial development in developing countries must be assisted by capacity building and clean technology transfer. FARMERS called for cost-competitive sustainable energy technologies, access to the necessary capital and risk-minimization measures. She also stressed the need for governments to internalize climate vulnerability into agricultural policies and ensure that farmers can earn carbon credits.

ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, CANADA, the EU, FRANCE, INDIA, ITALY, the NETHERLANDS, PAKISTAN, SOUTH AFRICA, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND and the US underscored the importance of contributions from Major Groups, and expressed support for specific suggestions.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

CSD-15 Vice-Chair Frances Lisson (Australia) invited representatives of UN regional commissions and regional organizations to offer their perspectives.

AFRICA: The ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA provided details of Africa's policy priorities. On energy for sustainable development, he called for a coordinated institutional response to promote pro-poor energy policy and suggested nuclear energy as an option. On industrial development, he highlighted the importance of technology transfer, corporate social responsibility and reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers. On climate change, air pollution and atmosphere, he recommended enhanced policy coherence, including regional mitigation and adaptation strategies, and mainstreaming climate change in poverty reduction strategies. On cross-cutting issues, he highlighted the need to develop capacity in Africa and to mobilize public and private finance.

The AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK called for, *inter alia*, improving institutional and policy frameworks, promoting market penetration of renewable energy sources and more efficient use of Africa's resources. Highlighting the role of the African Development Bank in financing the energy sector, he explained that it contributes to the World Bank's Framework for Clean Energy and Development. He underscored the overriding need for public and private investment. COTE D'IVOIRE questioned whether hydroelectricity is appropriate for a continent suffering water shortages. ZIMBABWE commended both banks' efforts, but questioned the real effect of their work, as measured by the affordability of energy for the average family. NGOs said that nuclear power is neither clean nor safe and should not be considered a viable policy option. SENEGAL noted that developing countries should benefit from projects that have local capacity for dealing with climate change.

ASIA-PACIFIC: The ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC highlighted the challenge of balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability in the Asia-Pacific region. He discussed, *inter alia*, the importance of regional cooperation in achieving energy security, and the need to promote environmentally-sound technologies for small and medium-sized enterprises and to strengthen financial intermediaries for CDM projects.

The ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK outlined the major pillars of the energy programme for the Asia-Pacific region, which includes energy, carbon market and sustainable transport initiatives, the establishment of regional knowledge centers, and adaptation projects relevant to SIDS and Asian coastal cities. JAPAN said policies to address energy mixes should take into account national circumstances. INDIGENOUS PEOPLE underscored the need to include indigenous and local communities in national multi-stakeholder processes.

EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA AND OTHERS: The UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE) noted that the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution can serve as a model for other regions. Another representative of UNECE outlined its policy objectives of energy security, environmental concerns and liberalization of energy markets. He discussed the Energy Efficiency 21 project to develop and finance energy efficiency programmes in Eastern Europe, and an intergovernmental forum to promote cleaner energy from fossil fuels.

SAUDI ARABIA and IRAN stressed that energy security is not just security of supply but also security of demand. WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS highlighted the problems of public-private partnerships. The US suggested that the partnership programmes to phase-out leaded gasoline in sub-Saharan Africa could be duplicated in the UNECE region.

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN: The ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN reflected on opportunities for regional cooperation. He highlighted cooperation on energy efficiency and renewables as well as regulatory instruments for industry. On climate change, he emphasized the analysis of sub-regional impacts, post-disaster assistance and dialogue with the financial sector. He also identified cross-cutting issues, including the need for harmonization and cooperation to integrate policies. UNDP stressed South-South cooperation in areas such as biofuels and clean development technologies. CHILE welcomed cooperation among UN agencies, stressed the gender dimension of these issues, and noted the positive impacts of privatizing energy companies. ARGENTINA noted the value of regional meetings in helping countries develop a collective approach. FARMERS highlighted the linkages with poverty and the potential role of bioenergy.

WESTERN ASIA: The ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA outlined policy options for Arab countries, including: enhanced investment in oil and gas exploration and production activities using cleaner technologies; reduced tax in developed countries on imported fossil fuels, along with a carbon tax; sustainable transport programmes; and compensation for losses due to industrialized countries' climate change actions.

The UNION OF ARAB BANKS focused on energy issues, noting the need for multi-stakeholder dialogue involving banks, investors, governments, and intergovernmental organizations to identify responsibilities, timelines and risk. JORDAN noted his country's strategic objective of reaching 10% of energy needs from renewable energy by 2011. EGYPT emphasized the importance of diversifying the energy portfolio, which he said should include nuclear energy.

IN THE CORRIDORS

At the close of the first day of CSD-15, signs of impatience were detectable. Some delegates were heard complaining of the "déjà vu" nature of most interventions from the floor. In their view CSD-14 and the IPM provided ample opportunity to present positions on every conceivable aspect of the thematic issues. Delegates were now ready for the "proper" draft negotiating text expected on Wednesday (the summary produced by the IPM is considered by some as a "factual wish list" rather than a functional basis for negotiation). The G-77/China's request for a compilation of all proposals indicating their "proponents" is seen as a sign that the Group is bracing itself for hard bargaining, reportedly in two parallel drafting groups, in the days ahead.