

Press Release

Time to Act! – International Cooperation on Energy Efficiency

Working Together for a Low-carbon Economy

Geneva, Palais des Nations, 28 May 2008 – More than 150 participants from five continents gathered today in the Palais des Nations to spur global action on energy efficiency.

“We know that energy efficiency is the best way to address rising energy prices, make our companies more competitive and reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” said André Mernier, Secretary General of the Energy Charter Secretariat. “Today we are gathering to find ways for governments and industry to work together to make energy efficiency happen faster.”

Mr Brice Lalonde, French Ambassador for Climate Change Negotiations, gave a keynote address emphasising the importance of energy efficiency in meeting climate change goals. “We will need to reduce emissions by 60% or more, and we don’t have a lot of time. Renewable energy and other supply technologies will be important, but energy efficiency is the lowest cost abatement, and it is here now.”

Mr Marek Belka, Executive Secretary of the UNECE, stressed the crucial role of energy efficiency in European energy security. “Inefficient use of energy means producer countries have fewer hydrocarbons to export, while importing countries need more. A new dialogue on energy efficiency is needed to support large new energy efficiency investments. In producer countries, revenues from increased oil and gas exports could repay these investments.”

The Energy Charter Secretariat, the IEA and the UNECE are the three co-sponsors of the event. Together they have years of experience analysing energy efficiency actions in developed, transition and developing economies. “Learning from each other’s experience will continue to be important. But we can also look at specific areas where it is harder for individual countries to act alone,” said Mr Richard Bradley, Head of the Energy Efficiency and Environment Division of the International Energy Agency. “This could be due to lack of international standards for traded goods, the risks of delivering advanced technologies before markets understand them, or concerns over international competitiveness, for example.”

The conference will identify priority areas for international cooperation on energy efficiency, and work with governments and industry on frameworks for action. These action frameworks will identify key practical steps for government and industry to promote the necessary investment, technology uptake and other steps needed to make significant and rapid improvements in energy efficiency.

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