

Committee on Sustainable Energy

21st Session, 28, 29 November 2012

CHAIRMAN's Summary

Item 3

- Of the major challenges and opportunities for sustainable development, the critical role of energy was highlighted in the Rio+20 final document "The Future We Want". Energy is where social and economic development intersects with environmental sustainability. The SE4All initiative has three overarching goals: universal access to electricity, doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency and doubling the rate of the share of renewable energy. Commitments totalling over \$50 billion have been made, and the challenge now is how to turn those commitments into reality.
- Measuring and monitoring progress to achieving the goals of SE4All are important challenges. The statistical foundations in certain countries are currently weak, with a lack of good energy statistics—and energy statisticians in some countries. However, there is growing methodological clarity on reporting. It will be important to ensure that decision-makers have the information they need to modify and adopt policies and programmes along the way. Normative instruments including capacity building were highlighted.
- The long-term strategic priorities of the Russian Energy Strategy 2030 are: energy security, energy efficiency of the economy, budget efficiency of the energy sector, and environmental safety of the energy sector.
- For the EU, achieving sustainability targets means setting legally binding targets. The EU is playing an active role both in the SE4All initiative and in the Millennium Development Goals. The challenge there is to gradually move into concrete projects in energy efficiency and renewable energy, but without a functioning legal framework it will remain difficult for the private sector to step in and development aid will not suffice alone.
- To double the rate of energy efficiency improvements, as called for by the SE4All initiative, it is imperative to recognize that prices are important, and the real impacts of subsidies should be understood. Energy efficiency is a tool of economic and social development -- it is about productivity gains, about health, about an increased well-being.
- Natural gas has an increasingly important role in the sustainable energy mix, especially given the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources with regards to power production. Some global energy issues where

natural gas may play a critical role are: energy security and access; competitive energy, and sustainable energy systems. With recent developments in previously unconventional gas reserves in the US and elsewhere, the prospects for long-term natural gas use appear promising. Resources are more evenly distributed across all continents.

- Coal will remain an important primary fuel for the foreseeable future.
- According to the IEA, nearly half of new electric generating capacity worldwide in the recent past has been based on renewable energy. In terms of cost, renewables constitute the cheapest option in many places, although still cannot compete with the cheapest options such as coal. If traditional biomass is excluded, increasing the share of renewable energy up to 30% would mean to more than triple its share in the total final energy consumption. The regional and national dimensions of the effort vary considerably across world regions, countries and sectors. Major challenges for RES deployment include geopolitical, regulatory, financial and technical issues and suggested possible solutions to avoid potential obstacles and risks.
- The challenges for industrialised countries and those with emerging economies will be different: efficient and more sustainable of energy (using expensive technology) for the “rich” countries; and massive increase in energy consumption in “emerging” countries as energy is provided to the poor. With regards to nuclear energy it was noted that while Europe has a trend in phasing out of nuclear, the rest of the world apart from Japan is moving on.
- The rule of law, proper implementation of regulation and transparency are essential for a greater involvement of the private sector. Creating a stable and transparent regulatory framework will facilitate investments in infrastructure and interconnections and support the integration of regional energy markets.