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FIFTH INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Concept Note

Hammamet, Tunisia, 4-6 November 2014

The **Fifth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development** will be held in Hammamet, Tunisia, on 4-6 November 2014. The Forum is organized by the Government of Tunisia, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

The Forum will emphasize attaining the three objectives of the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) Initiative of the UN Secretary-General through a regional agenda: ensuring universal **access to modern energy services**, doubling the global rate of improvement in **energy efficiency** and doubling the share of **renewable energy** in the global energy mix by 2030. The Forum will share experiences from all regions of the world.

One of the key events will be a High-Level Dialogue on "International Cooperation towards Sustainable Energy for All" with participation of the Executive Secretaries of UN Regional Commissions (RCs) and ministers responsible for implementing sustainable energy policies. The High-Level Dialogue is expected to adopt a declaration that will reaffirm the roles of key stakeholders in promoting sustainable energy policies and call for joint efforts to achieve SE4All objectives.

The Forum will include a Global Workshop of the UN Development Account (UNDA) project "Promoting Energy Efficiency Investments for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Development", implemented jointly by all five UN RCs. The Workshop will gather government officials and project developers from the regions along with major domestic and foreign investors to facilitate exchange of expertise, lessons learned and best practices and to promote greater investment flows into energy efficiency projects. The event will share experiences with programmes for training on financial engineering and business planning as well as case studies on policy reforms to promote energy efficiency investments and discuss a project pipeline from each region.

A new UNDA project "Promoting Renewable Energy Investments for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Development" will be launched by ESCWA and UNECE. The project is expected to improve capacity of government officials, national financial institutions, national energy experts and project developers to develop renewable energy investment projects in the private and public sectors. The project will also improve capacity for governments to adopt policies and

measures to improve opportunities for banks and commercial companies to invest in renewable energy projects through the development of new financing mechanisms.

Background

The first three International Sustainable Energy Fora were organized by UNECE and ESCAP with participation of UNDP and other international organizations in Central Asia. The Fourth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development took place in Tbilisi, Georgia in 2013. Participants acknowledged the role of government in fostering sustainable energy development and the role of the business sector in implementing energy initiatives, including for development of infrastructure, enhancing cross-border energy trade, and increasing energy efficiency.

Energy efficiency. Improving energy efficiency (EE) is the famous low-hanging fruit that is supposed to be easy to do and contributes to energy security, a better environment, quality of life, and economic well-being for all. EE is the best way of getting more out of our existing resources, supporting economic growth, and reducing the energy costs for all citizens. Despite the multiple benefits, improving energy efficiency remains elusive because of the way markets are designed and structured. Low energy tariff policies, subsidies, lack of information, and lack of investment capital for end-users are among the barriers to deployment of EE. Public investments in improving EE from source to use will be critically important. The Forum will look closely at how these challenges can be addressed.

Renewable energy. Investing in renewable energy (RE) is one way to reduce the carbon intensity of the energy sector. RE technologies are promoted for three principal reasons that are interlinked: a) to reduce the environmental consequences of fossil fuel use; b) to improve energy security; and c) to encourage economic development, innovation, and high-tech manufacturing. These reasons are particularly relevant for developing regions, where much of the population lives in isolated rural communities that lack energy services and suffer poor socio-economic conditions. RE can also contribute to energy security by diversifying the energy mix.

RE is not the only way to address climate change and air pollution. While RE penetration would be an important indicator of progress, sustainable energy policies could also explore the range of alternatives for reducing the carbon intensity of the energy sector and reducing the environmental and social impacts caused by energy and energy poverty. Looking at these broader aspects will be an important objective of the Forum.

Access to modern energy services. Ensuring equitable access to modern energy services for households and public services facilities, including access to adequate electricity supply and clean energy for cooking, health and hygiene is essential to fulfil basic human needs and enable sustainable development. However, access to modern energy services varies widely, and ensuring it requires adequate investments from primary energy supply to final end users. All stakeholders should have fair access to the different segments of the energy markets. A broad view of access includes three aspects: a) physical access, which is connection either to a grid-based service or to an off-grid solution; b) economic access, which is the ability to pay the cost of service; and c) quality of service – if systems are not properly maintained, then quality will deteriorate. Access to energy services can embrace energy services provided through non-grid-connected energy sources, including RE and other distributed energy technologies, as well as through energy services that become available due to energy resources "reallocated" through EE measures. The range of issues associated with the questions of access will be explored by the Forum.