

International Energy Efficiency Forum
28-30 September 2010, Astana, Kazakhstan

Opening Address

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Mr. Vice Minister,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to the International Energy Efficiency Forum, which is held parallel to the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific. First of all let me express gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting our Forum and to mention that next year Astana will be the venue for the 7th Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” organized by the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

It seems very appropriate that the energy efficiency forum is held in the framework of the conference on environment and development. Increasing energy efficiency and wider use of renewable energy helps in solving numerous environmental problems related to air pollution and to climate change. It is also a way to provide more people in more places around the world with better and more reliable access to energy. It has been widely recognized that investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy are among the most cost-effective ways to reduce global carbon emissions. Global estimates show that efficiency

improvements alone could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 to 40 per cent. Our Forum intends to look at options and possibilities for such investments to happen and what governments, international organizations and businesses can do for this purpose.

The UN Economic Commission for Europe is doing significant work in this direction. Several major projects are implemented by the Sustainable Energy Division. “Financing Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Investments for Climate Change Mitigation” is implemented in 12 countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe and Central Asia – our host country Kazakhstan is one of them – and is aimed at launching a market-based investment fund for energy efficiency and renewable energy. Another project deals with development of the renewable energy sector in the Russian Federation and in countries of the CIS. Global Energy Efficiency 21 Project aims at sharing experiences between the countries of various world regions and between the UN regional commissions and developing global strategy for energy efficiency investments. The Housing Unit of the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division has developed the Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region, which has been recently approved and recommended for implementation by the countries of the region. Wood energy is one of the areas of work of the Timber Section of the Trade and Timber Division.

I would like to emphasize the productive cooperation between the four international organizations, which collaborated in organizing

this Forum: ESCAP, UNDP, UNEP and UNECE. This cooperation goes far beyond this particular event and is intended to bring more benefits to the countries and people, which these organizations serve. I would like to thank our colleagues for the work they have done in preparing the Forum and wish all the participants to have interesting and fruitful discussions and to come up with ideas and suggestions that can be implemented after the Forum.

Thank you for your attention.