



UNECE Weekly

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Commission on Sustainable Development : Focus on energy and air pollution

The 14th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD, New York, 1-12 May) addressed a particularly important thematic cluster for achieving sustainable development goals: energy for sustainable development, industrial development, atmosphere/air pollution and climate change. Discussions

UNECE's energy security dialogue

It was consistently noted that energy for sustainable development was the issue binding the thematic clusters for CSD-14/15 together. Looking specifically at the UNECE region, its key challenges were highlighted to be to increase the availability of energy services and reduce the energy-related environmental and health problems, in particular those related to air pollution and climate change. There was overall agreement that a sensible mix of energy from all sources will be needed in order to meet the rising global energy demand with optimal efficiency, with advanced cleaner fossil fuel technologies including carbon



Jose Antonio Ocampo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (left), UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (centre), CSD Chair Aleksisshvili (right)

included a fruitful exchange of ideas on the barriers and constraints as well as progress made in the implementation of sustainable development goals in these areas. The findings will serve as a basis for developing and negotiating policy recommendations at CSD 15 next year.



J.-Christophe Fueg, Federal Office of Energy, Switzerland (left), Viktor Baranchuk, Ministry of Industrial Policy, Ukraine (centre), Eliot Morley, Minister for the Environment, UK (right), during the discussion on implementation in the UNECE region.

An exchange of regional experiences took place through a series of discussions organized by the UN regional commissions. The discussion for the UNECE region started off with the presentation of the outcomes of the Second Regional Implementation Forum, held in Geneva last December.

capture and storage playing a significant role. The importance of developing renewable energy resources and improving energy efficiency in all sectors was stressed. A number of UNECE member countries made positive interventions about the energy security dialogue and energy efficiency work being undertaken at the Commission.



Consumer price indices

From 10-12 May the UNECE hosted a joint UNECE/ILO meeting on Consumer Price Indices (CPIs), attended by participants from not only the UNECE region but also from Africa and Asia and the Arab-speaking world.

The bi-annual joint meetings on CPIs have been held since the 1980s. The CPI is an important key economic indicator used in its own right as a way of taking the temperature on the economy and it is an important target for many central banks. The CPIs are also important inputs in other statistics, for example national accounts. In addition, most people can relate to CPIs, or are affected by them

one way or another; in many countries salaries and pensions etc. are adjusted according to the development in the CPI to compensate for price increases. The meetings examine different ways in which to compile CPIs, and addresses many practical problems, for example how to measure the real price changes on PCs and other IT-equipment, which is difficult since the products are constantly changing.



Last week's meeting discussed both conceptual and practical issues regarding the compilation of CPIs, for

example different ways of calculating CPIs and measurement of so-called core or underlying inflation. The particular problems in calculating a CPI in emerging economies were also addressed.

The international CPI Manual, published in 2004, offers extensive methodological advice for compilation of CPIs and proposes internationally accepted standards and methods to be implemented in national statistical offices with the aim to increase the quality and international comparability of the CPIs. The meeting discussed how to update the Manual in future and how to support its use in statistical offices.*

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CSD (cont)

During side events attention was drawn to specific initiatives to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions arising from energy production and consumption, including the US-led Methane to Markets initiative of the Coal Mine Methane Project Network of which UNECE is a member. UN-Energy (<http://esa.un.org/un-energy/>) also launched its flagship report "Energy in the United Nations – An Overview of what the UN does in energy", providing information on the activities of all UN agencies including UNECE Sustainable Energy Division.

A model for reducing transboundary air pollution

Discussions on air pollution/atmosphere and climate change emphasized the need for integrated approaches. Air pollution problems were far from solved, even in developed countries, and greenhouse gas targets were often difficult to achieve. Since many of the emission sources and even some of the gas emissions were known to contribute to air pollution and to climate change, integrated approaches for arriving at control measures could provide cheaper and more effective solutions. It was also necessary to link such emission controls to sustainable energy and industrial development, especially in

those regions that were undergoing rapid development. Some pollution sources, such as ship and aircraft emissions, and motor vehicle emissions in many countries, needed future attention. In the main sessions, and in more depth at CSD side events, attention was



drawn to the importance of the various regional air pollution control agreements and initiatives in operation or under development. UNECE's Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution is the oldest such regional agreement and was described by the Secretary-General as "a model for reducing transboundary air pollution" in his report to CSD. The need was stressed for continued outreach activities by the Convention and for collaboration between regions to promote progress on a more global scale.

SMEs enhance energy efficiency

With regard to industrial development in the UNECE region, participants emphasized the importance of improving the capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to enhance energy efficiency and reduce pollution. The role of cleaner production centres in assisting SMEs was highlighted, as was the need for increased support for SMEs in technology transfer, eco-labelling, education, and industrial capacity-building. Other issues emphasized were the enforcement of ILO core labour standards, corporate responsibility in industry and the need to move towards sustainable consumption and production patterns.

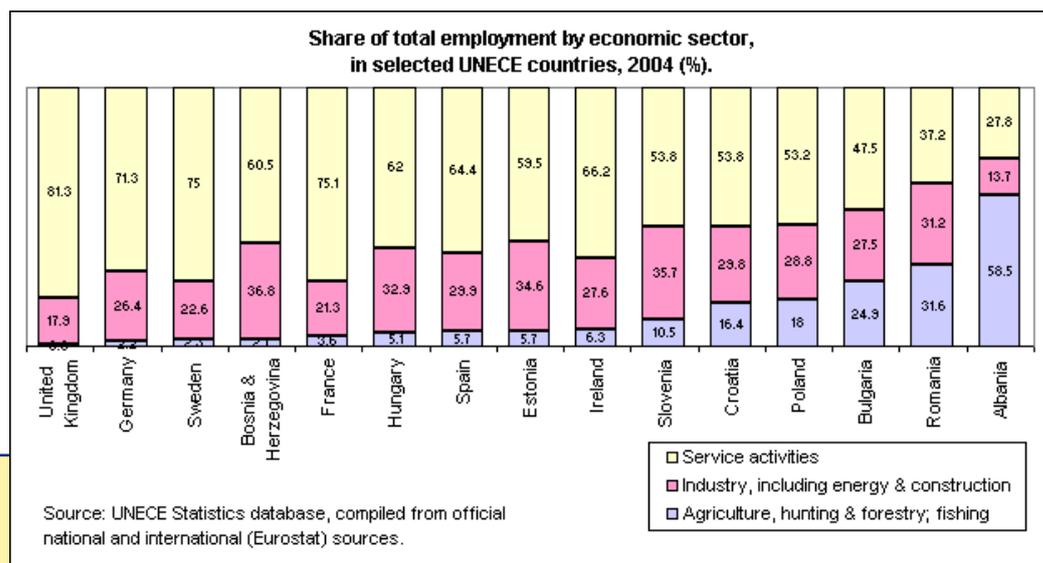
Education for sustainable development

In the margins of the CSD discussions, UNECE together with UNESCO held a side event on one of the cross-cutting issues on the CSD's agenda, namely Education for Sustainable Development. The presentation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development received a positive feedback from participants as a regional model for implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. **

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Facts and figures

Sectorial profile of employment in selected UNECE countries



Note: France, refers to 2003.

In almost all UNECE countries, services is the largest economic sector, employing more than 50% of workers. The primary sector generally employs a smaller proportion of the working population.

At one end of the scale, in the United Kingdom more than 80% of the population works in the services sector, while less than 1% is employed in agriculture. However, employment in the primary sector is still predominant in some countries, such as Albania (58%).

Coming up ...

15-19 May

Working Party on Passive Safety

15-19 May

Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

17-19 May

Working Group on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

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