



United Nations

UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 327 — 13-17 July 2009

UNECE joins Seal the Deal

The road to Copenhagen

On 9 July 2009, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged every head of state or government to do more to address climate change. His statement was issued following the announcement made by the leaders of the G8 industrialized economies and the 17 participants in the Major Economies Forum (MEF) on Energy and Climate indicating that they “recognize the scientific view that the increase in global average temperature above pre-industrial levels ought not to exceed 2°C,” and noting that they “will work between now and Copenhagen, with each other and under the Convention, to identify a global goal for substantially reducing global emissions by 2050.”

The Secretary-General welcomed their commitments, but emphasized that, “In order to achieve such a global goal, developed countries must lead by example in making firm commitments to reduce their emissions by 2020 in the order of the 25 to 40% below 1990 levels that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change tells us is required. It is disappointing



UNECE joins Seal the Deal, the UN-led information Campaign which aims to galvanize political will and public support for reaching a comprehensive global climate agreement in Copenhagen in December.

to note that thus far, the mid-term emissions targets announced by developed countries in the MEF are not in this range”.

Reaching a deal by the time the Copenhagen meeting ends on 18 December will depend not only on political negotiations but also on public pressure from around the globe. Among other activities, including mobilization actions in 100 cities around the world on the occasion of Climate Week, to be held on 20-26 September 2009, “Seal the Deal!” will encourage users to sign an online petition which will be presented by the Secretary-General to world leaders in Copenhagen. The petition will serve as a reminder that world leaders must negotiate a fair, balanced and effective agreement in Copenhagen, and that they must seal a deal to power green growth, protect our planet and build a more sustainable, prosperous global economy that will benefit all nations and all people.

In the run-up to Copenhagen, UNECE will organize a series of events on various aspects of climate change and encourages its partners to contribute to Seal the Deal! ■

For more information visit <http://www.sealthedeal2009.org>.

The Financial Crisis and its Impact on Global Public Health

Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary, participated in the Dialogue of the Executive Secretaries of the UN regional commissions with ECOSOC which took place on 10 July as part of ECOSOC’s substantive session (Geneva, 6-30 July).



The dialogue’s theme this year was “Regional perspectives on the global economic and financial crisis, including the impact on global public health”.

In his address, Ján Kubiš stressed that “the current financial and economic crisis has impacted the UNECE region to a much greater degree than the other regions. It will be the only region to experience severe

negative growth in 2009. And the modest recovery which should take hold in late 2009–early 2010 will not prevent unemployment continuing to rise to reach double-digits throughout the region. In the longer run, increased deficits and debt will mean that government budgets will remain under increased strain and funding for public health initiatives may be reduced.”

He added that “the impact of the crisis on public health systems will be strong throughout the region, and especially in the 18 countries eligible for Official Development Assistance. There is generally a high correlation between the size of the economic decline and the increase in mortality rates.”

Turning to the contribution that UNECE can make to help mitigate these negative effects, he mentioned the regulations to limit the maximum admissible level of vehicle emissions for various gaseous pollutants (which have resulted in an abatement of some 97% in the last three decades) and the preparation of a toolkit of trainer modules on how to use public-private-partnerships, including one devoted to the health sector and specifically relating to the construction of hospitals. He also highlighted UNECE’s involvement in fostering road safety (traffic accidents are the tenth cause of death and disability worldwide, and the first for 15-19 year-olds, and traffic fatalities per person are 4 times higher in some countries than in others in the region), which includes legal instruments, good practices and programmes covering the main areas of road safety: infrastructure, vehicle design and the human factor.

Finally, he recalled that UNECE has negotiated five multilateral environmental agreements which provide the framework in which countries can agree on common solutions to the transboundary problems affecting health and the environment. ■

Information Service
UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
CH - 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0) 22 917 44 44
Fax: +41 (0) 22 917 05 05

E-mail: info.ece@unece.org
Website: <http://www.unece.org>

Update on carbon capture and storage



The vice-chairman of the UNECE's Committee on Sustainable Energy, Nick Otter, has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute (GCCSI), created in April by the Australian Government to accelerate the deployment of carbon capture and storage technology, to share information and to help drive global cooperation in this field.

CO₂ capture and storage (CCS) is one of the methods that could be used to help achieve targets set for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, in combination with other mitigation measures (e.g. fuel switching, energy efficiency and renewable energy).

CCS would present the benefit of reducing CO₂ emissions of industrial factories, oil refineries, power plants, etc. without requiring major changes to the production process nor waiting for drastic changes in the energy supply infrastructure. It would thus help manage the transition to a future carbon-free energy system.

CO₂ is already being captured in the oil and gas and chemical industries. Several plants capture CO₂ from power station flue gases for use in the food industry but only a fraction of the CO₂ in the flue gas stream is captured. Further research will therefore be needed to develop significant and cost-efficient technologies.

Another problem to solve is that once captured, the CO₂ would need to be stored securely for hundreds or even thousands of years, in order to avoid it reaching the atmosphere. There are two potential storage options – storage in the oceans or in geological formations.

There are currently considerable uncertainties about the science of ocean storage, as well as complex legal issues. Underground storage of CO₂ in geological formations has

taken place for many years as a consequence of injecting CO₂ into oil fields to enhance recovery. Potential suitable geological formations include

- Depleted and disused oil and gas fields
- Deep saline aquifers
- Deep unminable coal seams

UNECE considers CCS within the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Production from Coal and Other Fossil Fuels. An expert Forum on Carbon Capture and Storage was organized in November 2008 as a contribution to discussion on the subject. ■

For more information contact Gianluca Sambucini (info.energy@unece.org).

FACTS AND FIGURES

Countries urged to continue progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals

The [Millennium Development Goals Report 2009](#) was launched in Geneva by the United Nations Secretary-General on 6 July. Less than six years away from the 2015 deadline to achieve the MDGs, it warns that despite many successes, overall global progress has been too slow for most of the targets to be met by 2015. Furthermore, the full repercussions of the global economic crisis are yet to be felt.

The report highlights that in the UNECE region, the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are making progress toward improving labour productivity, achieving universal primary education and increasing women's political representation (see the chart below). However, there are still significant challenges to overcome, such as reducing poverty and combating an increased prevalence of HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and tuberculosis in CIS countries.

The report, which presents annual global progress towards the MDGs, has been prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division on the basis of inputs provided by the members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators. It can be downloaded from the MDG Indicators website at <http://mdgs.un.org> in English, French and Spanish and will be available shortly in the other UN official languages.

For more information on the work of the UNECE Statistics Division to strengthen the capacity of member countries to monitor and report on MDGs contact support.stat@unece.org. ■



Source: Millennium Development Goals Indicators (<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>)