UNECE participates in Vienna Energy Forum 2013

At the high-level Panel on Energy in the Post-2015 Agenda during the Vienna Energy Forum on 28 May 2013, the Executive Secretary emphasized that there could be no sustainable development without sustainable energy.

He said that UNECE promotes a sustainable energy development strategy for the region and works to provide access to affordable and clean energy to all, in line with the Secretary-General’s “Sustainable Energy for All” initiative. UNECE’s efforts also aim at helping member States reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the energy sector’s carbon footprint.

Mr. Alkalaj also pointed out that energy should be linked in an explicit manner to the other development issues, such as poverty, water, food security, gender and climate change, in the post-2015 development goals. For example, energy producers are not sufficiently aware of the effects of their operations on water resources, which can affect agricultural production and ultimately food security. In recent months, UNECE has started working on the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus in its projects on transboundary water cooperation under the UNECE Water Convention.

During the discussion, Mr. Alkalaj called for the adoption of a specific sustainable development goal on energy, which should be universal and focused on the achievement of concrete results promoting access to energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

On the sidelines of the conference, the Executive Secretary met with Adnan Z. Amin, Director General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), to discuss progress on the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalize cooperation between the two organizations. On 29 May, he also met with Kandeh Yumkella, Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and Chair of UN-Energy, to discuss UNECE’s contribution in providing access to affordable and clean energy to all in the region.

On 30 May, UNECE participated in the panel session “Financing the Energy Future We Want”, where it showcased its initiatives enabling a market environment for energy efficiency and renewable energy investments.

UNECE to share its experience under the Water Convention with Latin America

Some hundred participants from across Latin America as well as from two Caribbean countries sharing transboundary waters will gather at a workshop in Buenos Aires on 11 and 12 June 2013 to discuss transboundary water cooperation. The participants will also look into opportunities for benefiting from the wealth of guidance and experience accumulated over the past 20 years in the UNECE region under the umbrella of the UNECE Water Convention.

The Latin American region has almost 30 per cent of the world’s freshwater resources. Moreover, the drainage basins of some 60 rivers and lakes in the region are shared by two or more countries. South America alone holds three of the largest river basins in the world — the Amazon, the Orinoco and the La Plata — and one of the largest aquifers in the world — the Guarani aquifer, shared by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. In Central America, almost 40 per cent of the territory is located within international basins.

The workshop will highlight the benefits of transboundary water cooperation in terms of economic and social development, growth and protection of the environment. It aims to increase awareness of the international legal instruments on water and to
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Economic development in the Mediterranean region will require increased regional integration and the implementation of international best practices in legislation and regulations. On 30 and 31 May 2013, parliamentarians from the region gathered in Geneva to discuss how UNECE and the UN Inter-Agency Cluster could work with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) to support regional trade development priorities. A commitment from all parties for concrete cooperation in support of economic development in the Mediterranean was one of the conclusions of this joint conference organized by PAM and the UN Inter-Agency Cluster.

Among the areas identified where parliaments could benefit from increased support from the UN Inter-Agency Cluster were: trade infrastructure; trade facilitation; trade standards and regulatory infrastructure; energy, investment, trade, transport, and water policies; public private partnerships; secure property rights; better business environments, especially for small and medium-sized companies; productive capacity development; enterprise support institutions; and managing risks in trade and food security.

Potential areas of cooperation between UNECE and PAM (17 out of PAM’s 28 members are UNECE member States) include:
- Energy and water resources management
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Public Private Partnerships
- Secure Property Rights
- Technical regulations and standardization policies
- Trade facilitation and electronic business
- Transport policy and agreements.

Francesco Amoruso, President of PAM, noted that the international character of the crisis requires all of the region’s countries to cooperate further and to implement agreed upon measures in support of trade.

Virginia Cram-Martos, Director of the UNECE Trade and Sustainable Land Management Division, said that UNECE is committed to supporting the implementation of UNECE norms, standards, best practices and conventions in PAM and UNECE member States.

The conclusions of the conference will be submitted to the PAM Annual Assembly.

For more information, please visit: http://www.unece.org/trade/welcome.htm