



On 29 October 2013, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized a special thematic session on “Sustainable Energy in the GCC countries: is Energy Intensity a useful tool for GCC countries?” at the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED)’s Annual Conference in Sharjah, UAE. The conference convened under the topic “Sustainable Energy in Arab Countries” and included a large number of leading experts for exchanging views and experiences on the following subjects: Transition to Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Challenges in Arab Countries, Energy for Development-OFID Experience, Energy-Water Nexus and Future Initiatives, Energy and Growth: Alternative Approach and Management, Future of Oil and Gas in a challenging Global Outlook, Public Private Partnership (PPP) and Financing the Transition to Sustainable Energy, Sustainable initiatives in the Context of Efficient Resource Management

It is a well known fact that more countries are bidding for fewer energy resources and the resource limitations by now are seriously undermining economic performance. It is also well known that the energy challenge can only be addressed through sound energy mix policies at national and regional levels, where Renewable Energy (RE) and Energy Efficiency (EE) strategies and tools represent the cornerstone of the energy mix.

Among ESCWA Member countries, the GCC countries are along with the highest fossil energy producers in the world, and at the same time, they are large gas and oil consumer countries. This

situation is unsustainable, and is driven by inefficiencies in patterns of energy production and consumption, mainly affecting the water sector and increasing the reliance on oil-or gas-fuelled desalination.

ESCWA's special thematic session discussed the challenges facing the Arab energy sector energy particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, with a focus on energy intensity as a tool for monitoring the performance of the productive sectors.

The topic was introduced by Dr. Roula Majdalani, the Director of the Sustainable Energy and Productivity Division in ESCWA. The session was also attended by key panelist including: Manfred Hafner, the CEO of the International Energy Consultants (IEC), Jamila Matar, the Director of Energy at the League of Arab States, Maher Aziz, the Author of the Mitigation Chapter in AFED Energy Report, Glada Lahn, a Research Fellow at the Energy, Environment and Resources Division at Chatham House, UK, Emmanuel Bergasse, an International Energy Policy Expert, France, and El Habib El Andaloussi, the Chief of the Energy Section at ESCWA.

Key panelists covered Oil and Gas economics, Power and Energy infrastructure, Energy security risks, Sustainable Energy Policies, Energy Efficiency Indicators, Regional perspective on the Arab Strategy for RE and EE. The themes that were addressed in the session include: i) The present situation in the energy sector in the Arab countries. Views of experts on saving oil and gas in the GCC countries. The regional perspective of the Arab strategy for developing renewable and energy efficiency in the Arab countries. ii) The concept of energy intensity and why is it used as a tool for sustainable energy programmes, where has energy intensity been a useful planning and monitoring tool, significant limitations posed by energy intensity for promoting sustainable energy in GCC countries, and alternatives to energy intensity, how to move beyond energy intensity, and what indicators are appropriate for the Arab region. iii) How GCC countries might cooperate to speed up energy savings through collaborative efficiency and renewable measures, and how can an integrated approach to energy policies formulation reduce energy consumption and increase overall production in key sectors of economies of GCC.

Views were presented on sustainable energy policies in GCC countries, and the potential of an energy policy road map for the MENA region.

The Session also presented the impact of an integrated approach in improving energy efficiency, and discussed energy intensity as a tool to measure progress in GCC countries. The round table discussed and identified key issues in the Energy intensity parameters, ideas for enhancing regional cooperation to achieve energy sustainable policy in the Gulf and the rest of the Arab region. The meeting concluded the need of integrated socio-economic and energy/climate strategies for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies deployment and policy priorities to be implemented.