



Sustainable Energy in Arab Countries

AFED Annual Conference, Sharjah-UAE, 28-29 October 2013

Briefing Document to Moderators, Speakers, and Panelists

Special Thematic Session by ESCWA on Sustainable Energy in GCC countries.

General introduction:

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) will be organizing a special thematic session at the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED)'s Annual Conference in Sharjah, UAE, on 28-29 October 2013. The conference, which convenes under the topic "Sustainable Energy in Arab Countries" will be gathering a large number of leading experts, who will be exchanging views and experiences on the subject.

The AFED 2013 Annual Report titled SUSTAINBLE ENERGY IN ARAB COUNTRIES highlights the need for a more efficient management of the energy sector. The Arab energy sector is playing and will continue to play a vital role in socio-economic development in the Arab countries, especially those endowed with vast hydrocarbon resources. These hydrocarbon resources have been for decades fueling, as well, the global economy. In addition, many Arab countries are blessed with huge potential of renewable energy resources such as solar and wind that have not been adequately utilized yet. Despite that, there are nearly 36 million Arabs with no access to modern energy services. Renewable energy resources could play a major role in improving energy access and eradicating poverty, particularly in rural and remote areas.

ESCWA's special thematic Session focuses on the challenges facing the Arab energy sector while taking into account shifting trends in growth in demand due to climate change mitigation. It also aims at exposing different courses of actions to help facilitate transition to sustainable energy in the region particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Among ESCWA Member countries, the GCC countries are among the highest fossil energy producers in the world, and at the same time, they are large oil and gas consumer countries. The situation is unsustainable on several levels, and driven by systemic inefficiencies in patterns of energy consumption and production, particularly affecting the water sector which is already very scarce and increasing reliance on oil- or gas-fuelled desalination.

Panelists are free to use a power point presentation as support, and to be prepared to present their views on the topics, and to share their remarks during the discussions, the aim behind this being to make discussions as interactive as possible. Accordingly most of the session' time will be devoted to questions/answers.

Special Thematic Session: Sustainable Energy: Examples of the GCC Countries- Is Energy Intensity a useful tool for GCC countries?’’

Setting

Time: Tuesday, 29 October 2013, **14:00-15:30**

Duration: 90 minutes

Proposed chronology:

1. Introduction of the topic and speakers by the moderator (7 min)
2. Presentations of panelists (8 min each)
3. Discussion between panelists led by moderator (35 min)

MODERATOR:

Roula Majdalani, Director, Sustainable Development and Productivity Division, ESCWA

PANELISTS:

Manfred Hafner, CEO, International Energy Consultants (IEC), Professor of International Energy Studies at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University

Jamila Matar, Director of Energy, League of Arab States

Maher Aziz Bedrous, Author of the Mitigation Chapter in AFED Energy Report, Former Under Secretary of Electricity and Energy, Egypt

Glada Lahn, Research Fellow, Energy, Environment and Resources Division, Chatham House, UK

Emmanuel Bergasse, Energy Policy Expert, experience in several large international projects for the International Institutions.

El Habib El Andaloussi, Chief of the Energy Section, ESCWA

Themes of session:

1. The present situation of 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 Arab countries.
2. 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.
3. 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.