



The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations

Statement by

Thórir Ibsen

**Director, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs
Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

at the

**Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for the Fifteenth Session of the
United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development**

**International Seminar on the Hydrogen Economy
for Sustainable Development
Reykjavik, Iceland, 28-29 September 2006
Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations**

New York, 26 February 2007

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations
800 Third Ave. 36th fl. - Tel 212-593-2700. - Fax 212-593-6269**

Mr. Chairman,

It is a privilege and honour to present to you and distinguished colleagues at the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD 15, the conclusions and recommendations of the International Seminar on the Hydrogen Economy for Sustainable Development, held in Reykjavik on 28 and 29 September 2006.

The seminar was co-organized by the Government of Iceland and the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs, and was attended by over 80 participants from 20 countries. It was convened to provide an opportunity for energy policy makers and representatives from governments, industry and academia from both developed and developing countries to exchange information on progress in the development and application of hydrogen energy technologies.

I will not enumerate all the conclusions and recommendations presented in the summary document, but it is worth touching on a few of the most salient issues.

Firstly, participants were of the unanimous view that alternative energy resources and technologies must be found if the world is to meet the energy needs of the present generation in a sustainable manner. Towards that end, production and use of hydrogen (H₂) offers alternative energy pathways to sustainable development. Hydrogen can be produced by any primary energy source providing a flexible energy carrier which can substitute fossil fuels. The recent development of fuel cell technology opens new opportunities for hydrogen use. Furthermore, participants concluded that a hydrogen economy may offer an attractive opportunity for countries that lack indigenous fossil fuels but possess ample renewable energy resources.

While participants were keen as to the potential and value of hydrogen, they also recognized the challenges ahead in advancing a hydrogen economy. Among others they noted;

- That the costs of hydrogen energy technologies will have to be significantly reduced;
- Public education and capacity building must be substantially strengthened;

- Visionary thinking is required along with intensive R&D efforts, and increased cooperation across academic disciplines, industrial sub-sectors and national borders; and
- Further steps must be taken to develop indigenous renewable sources of energy.

To meet these challenges, participants noted;

- The role of international energy technology partnerships such as the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy (IPHE) for the development of the hydrogen economy and collaborative projects;
- The possibility of outsourcing of research and development work on hydrogen energy technology to developing countries and to countries with economies in transition. This would decrease cost and stimulate capacity building in developing countries.
- The need for hydrogen demonstration projects in developing countries;
- The importance of international codes and standards was recognized as a precondition for the development of the hydrogen energy industry and investments in hydrogen energy infrastructure for international trade;
- The need for building capacity in cleaner energy systems, including the production and utilization of hydrogen, and the early transfer of these technologies to developing countries; and
- The role of networking and regional cooperation, both North-South and South-South cooperation among centres of excellence and research.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Social and Economic Affairs for the co-operation in preparing this successful seminar. The full summary of conclusions and recommendations is available as a document of the Fifteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.