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AIR POLLUTION / ATMOSPHERE

Integrated approach to addressing air pollution and atmospheric problems

- Air pollution is the result of a diversity of causes and factors:
 - the use of traditional biomass, poor quality fuels, poor combustion technologies, energy production and industry with inadequate abatement technology, transport, etc.
- As a consequence of this varied background:
 - air pollution is closely related to other themes of CSD14 and 15: energy, industrial development and climate change as well as to the crosscutting issues of the JPOI, especially poverty eradication, sustainable consumption and production, education, health and gender equality. Furthermore, air pollution is linked to other policy areas, such as transport, urban planning and land-use management.
- The EU believes that the interlinked character of the CSD14 themes provides us with part of the solution to the problem of air pollution; this interlinked character calls for an integrated approach in addressing these issues in order to maximise synergies. There are numerous win-win opportunities such as access to sustainable energy, modernisation of industrial installations and measures to reduce greenhouse gases and air pollution. We should focus more on maximising these co-benefits.
- Additionally, this integrated approach means that all sectors of society should be taken into account to find the least costly measures. Not only energy production or industry need to be considered, but also other sources of air pollution such as agriculture, transport, including shipping and aviation, domestic small scale heating, etc.
- Nevertheless, in spite of the potential opportunities that an integrated approach can provide, we know that
- there are substantial differences between countries and regions not only when it comes to the causes of air pollution but also in terms of the capacities and resources to address the challenges.
- A substantial body of knowledge on effective abatement technologies is available and could reduce the impact of air pollution at a relatively low cost, but in most cases lack of human and financial resources seems to be the main obstacle for applying this technology.
- Consequently, good governance, appropriate administrative, economic and legal frameworks, a knowledge-based approach in which education plays a key role as well as access to adequate human, technical and financial resources constitute the elements of an appropriate integrating frame for addressing air pollution.

- Indoor air pollution is taking a particularly heavy toll on human health in developing countries, particularly in rural areas: more than 1.5 million people - mainly children and women – die prematurely every year due to indoor air pollution from low-quality fuel and poor combustion technology.
- In this regard, access to affordable clean energy and heating technology is crucial. Poor health undermines the attempts to meet the MDGs, including the possibility for children to obtain primary education. Targets and objectives could be considered for access to safe, affordable and sustainable energy services, as is the case for access to safe water and sanitation. This requires focused efforts and adequate financial backing by national governments, donors and the private sector. There are also clear links between providing access to sustainable energy services and climate change and land-use management as the traditional use of biofuels often has a strong negative impact on the local natural resources such as forests.
