

Statement by Saudi Arabia

Statement on Energy for Sustainable Development
Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD-15
New York – Tuesday, February 27, 2007

As this is the first time Saudi Arabia takes the floor, allow me to congratulate you on your tenure. My delegation look forward to working under you leadership and guidance to reach positive and pragmatic outcome of CSD15.

I also thank the distinguished panelists for their valuable and enriching presentations. At the offset, I would like to associate myself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Pakistan on behalf of G77 & China.

Mr. Chairman,

None of the goals or aspirations under the three pillars of sustainable development is achievable without access to energy.

More Energy : More Development , No Energy : No Development

Adequate and affordable energy supplies have been key to economic development, and the transition from SUBSISTENCE agricultural economies, to modern industrial and service-oriented societies.

Countries have different definitions of their own sustainable development objectives and priorities, reflecting national resources and needs, aspirations, and social and economic conditions.

Sustainable development strategies are therefore structured to accommodate a wide range of definitions of what “desirable sustainable development” can encompass;

However, at the end, politicians must try to strike the right balance in their strategic call about “what is necessary and what is universally desirable”.

All forecasts, whether they use computers models or crystal balls, agree that world energy demand will grow by 50-60% over the coming 25 years. And the picture they have on meeting this growth is not much different from the past. Fossil fuels will continue to dominate the energy supply into coming decades. Outlooks differ in exact numbers (for the share of fossil fuels) but they range between 75 to 85%.

The real challenge in the future is in meeting the growing thirst for energy, which is only driven by development needs. To meet these needs, all energy sources are going to be essential, each playing its role and share in the mix in a complementary manner, rather than a competitive way.

Saudi Arabia along with other countries in the Middle East has the smallest share in terms of global energy demand (about 4%), however, that region is expected to be producing the largest portion of the fuel to meet these growing energy demands.

This will require huge capital investment and a lot of infrastructure expansions. Energy producers seek the right market signals before committing such major financial resources.

We heard from Mr Qabazard that there is uncertainty surrounding over 200 billion dollars of investments (required by 2020). These uncertainties arise from policy choices and directions.

Renewable energy makes up less than 3 percent of the global energy mix, versus over 80% of fossil fuel energy. Yet, we heard from Mr. Pandey that 1 out of 4 dollars spent on energy is going to renewables, (that is 25%).

The role of renewable energy in the future energy mix is important and their role will continue to grow particularly for providing supplies to remote and rural areas. However, investment in cleaner fossil fuel technology needs to be improved.

Technology such as CO2 Capture and Storage, which has the potential to reduce global CO2 emissions by 9–12% by 2020, and 21–45% of global CO2 emissions by 2050.

The world seeks energy services that are: Reliable, Affordable, Economically feasible, Socially Acceptable, and Environment Friendly. We can strive to meet all these criteria, but if we can't, the priority order of these will differ from one region to another; and one country to another.

(For the 1.6 billion people without access to energy, I believe that the priority is simple)

Mr. Chairman,

We have heard many speeches and interventions on energy needs, clean energy, and renewable energy. We fully agree on the importance of all these issues. We have a challenge, and in choosing our direction in our quest to meet this challenge, we must be realistic. And reality tells us that fossil fuels are going to be with us for a long time. With that reality we have a responsibility, a focus and emphasis cleaner fossil fuel technologies, including CO2 capture and storage, is a necessity. This is a clear message that CSD15 needs to bring forward.

Energy markets are extremely volatile, and market signals have a big impact on resource availability and allocation. We need carefully weigh the signals that we transmit from here in CSD15.