



With breaking stories and  
newswire products from

# UN NEWS CENTRE



## UN report pushes for energy access and efficiency to fight poverty and climate change



Turning to the sun for energy helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

28 April 2010 – Increasing access to clean energy and improving its efficiency will be vital to both enhancing global prosperity and combating climate change, according to a new report by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s advisory group on the nexus between energy and climate.

“We need a clean energy revolution – in developing countries, where demand is rising rapidly, and in the developed world, in order to cut greenhouse gas emissions,” Mr. Ban [said](#) at the launch of the publication in New York.

Some 3 billion people worldwide rely on traditional biomass for cooking and heating, resulting in adverse health effects if used in inadequately ventilated buildings, with 1.5 billion having no access to electricity.

As well as lifting the world’s poorest out of poverty, a well-performing energy system will also propel success towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)) and in spurring industrial development in low- and middle-income countries, according to the report by the high-level Energy and Climate Change Advisory Group.

“The decisions we make today on energy will have a profound impact on the global climate, on sustainable development, on economic growth and global security,” the Secretary-General stressed.

According to the World Bank, countries with underperforming energy systems could lose up to 2 per cent of growth potential annually due to electric power outages, inefficient use of scarce energy sources and others.

The study by the Advisory Group – set up by Mr. Ban last year and comprising 20 business leaders, academics and representatives of the United Nations and civil society – called on nations to commitment themselves to two key complementary goals.

First, it calls for universal access to modern energy services that are reliable, affordable, sustainable, and, if possible, from low-emissions sources by 2030.

“All countries have a role to play,” the group emphasizes, urging high-income nations to make this a development assistance priority and secure financing, middle-income countries to share relevant expertise and experience; and low-income countries to help create the right local institutional, regulatory and policy environment for investments – including by the private sector – to be made.

The other challenge is to slash global energy intensity, measured by the quantity of energy per unit of gross domestic product (GDP), the study notes.

“Developed and developing countries alike need to build and strengthen their capacity to implement effective policies, market-based mechanisms, business models, investment tools and regulations with regard to energy use,” which would reduce intensity by about 2.5 per cent annually and helping to curb carbon emissions in the coming decades.

“These are ambitious goals, but I think they are achievable,” Mr. Ban **told reporters** today at the report’s launch. “And they are necessary.”

At an event earlier this morning, he stressed that tackling the energy challenge cannot be accomplished by governments alone, but will require global cooperation and coordinated action within the UN system.

“And all sectors of society will need to be engaged: the private sector, civil society, international organizations and the world of academia and research.”

Kandeh K. Yumkella, Director-General of the UN Industrial Development Organization (**UNIDO**), speaking to reporters at the report’s launch, highlighted the need to create incentives for a transformation to a “new industrial revolution.”

“Everyone agrees on the need for greater energy efficiency,” which he likened to “low-hanging fruit” that no one has so far picked since the details on achieving the target have yet to be worked out, he said.

Mr. Yumkella, who chairs the Advisory Group, also pointed out the need to ensure that developed countries do not solely extract energy – such as oil and gas – from poor nations, but that they also ensure that developing countries’ energy needs are met to ensure global security.

For his part, Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) and a member of the Group, sought to emphasize how boosting access to and the efficiency of energy will be part of “an integral transition” to a green economy where the world must “produce more with less” and utilize resources less wastefully.

**News Tracker: past stories on this issue**

**UN-supported study reports promising gains towards low-carbon economy**