

## **Six countries dominate clean energy patents, UN-backed study finds**



30 September 2010 – Innovations in clean energy technologies are concentrated in six countries – Japan, the United States, Germany, the Republic of Korea (ROK), France and the United Kingdom – according to a new United Nations-backed study.

The study, jointly produced by the UN Environment Programme (**UNEP**), the European Patent Office (**EPO**) and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (**ICTSD**), found that the six nations, led by Japan, hold nearly 80 per cent of all patents in the field of clean energy.

It looked into some 400,000 patent documents and aimed to examine the effect of patents on the worldwide transfer of such technologies, including solar photovoltaic, geothermal, wind and carbon capture.

The report also contains the first-ever survey on licensing practices in the clean energy arena.

“Far from being a drag on economies and innovation, international efforts to combat climate change have sparked technological creativity on low-carbon, resource-efficient Green Economy solutions,” said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

“The challenge now is to find ways in which these advances can be diffused, spread and transferred everywhere so that the benefits to both economies and the climate are shared by the many rather than the few.”

*Patents and clean energy: bridging the gap between evidence and policy* found that patent activity surged with the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, showing that political decisions can be crucial in stimulating the development of technologies considered to be crucial in confront climate change.

Patenting rates in several clean energy technologies have grown 20 per cent annually since then, outpacing traditional energy sources of fossil fuels and nuclear energy, the study said.

It also found that there is limited licensing activity in developing countries, but 70 per cent of survey respondents said they are prepared to offer more flexible terms when licensing in poorer nations.

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