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Energy-efficient lights can save countries billions, massively cut emissions – UN report



1 December 2010 – Countries across the world can massively reduce their carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and save billions of dollars in energy costs, according to a United Nations report released today at a major climate change conference in Mexico.

The 100 Country Lighting Assessment, produced by the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), quantifies the emissions reductions and cost savings that can be achieved by shifting from obsolete incandescent lamp technology to compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) in 100 countries that have not yet initiated a transition to energy-efficient lighting.

“In reality, the actual economic benefits could be even higher,” said Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, referring to the report’s findings, which highlight multi-billion dollar savings and emissions reductions of many millions of tonnes.

“A switch to efficient lighting in Indonesia, for example, would avoid the need to build three-and-a-half coal-fired power stations costing \$2.5 billion and similar findings come from other country assessments,” Mr. Steiner said.

The findings were compiled by the “en.lighten Initiative,” a UNEP-led partnership that involves lighting companies OSRAM and Philips.

“We believe that the ‘en.lighten initiative’ is an excellent example of a new category of public/private partnerships that will help accelerate sustainable growth in emerging and developing countries,” said Harry Verhaar, Senior Director, Energy & Climate Change, Philips Lighting.

Lighting accounts for around 20 per cent of global energy consumption, according to the International Energy Agency. A switch to energy-efficient lighting is perhaps the simplest way to achieve the sort of quick victories needed in the fight against climate change.

CFL bulbs produce the same amount of light as old incandescent light bulbs but use 75 per cent less energy than incandescent bulbs which waste 95 per cent of their energy by emitting heat. CFLs also last up to 10 times longer.

The Assessment was launched in the Mexican city of Cancún, where delegates from around the world have gathered for the 16th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The UNFCCC is an international treaty which considers what can be done to reduce global warming and to cope with whatever temperature increases are inevitable.

The findings come in the wake of a UN-led report released last week that said that nations can deliver almost 60 per cent of the emissions reductions needed to keep global temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius only if the pledges made at last year’s Copenhagen climate change conference are fully met.

Under the Copenhagen Accord, commitments and pledges were made on emissions up to 2020, but these are widely seen to be insufficient to meet the 2 degree warming limit.

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