

CSD-14

Statement by the Scientific and Technological Community

High-level Segment – 11 May 2006

Mr. Chairman,

Climate change is real. The increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, due to human activities, is indeed altering the Earth's climate, bringing about a general global warming. This is documented in the reports of IPCC.

Consequently, the actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which are discussed at this CSD session, are overdue. Urgent action is needed also to design and start implementing strategies to mitigate and adapt to the consequences of climate change which we will not escape, both in relation to environmental impacts and socio-economic consequences.

There is a need for enhanced support to climate related observational networks and research at all levels, in particular international scientific cooperation programmes and assessments. Some of the most important international scientific undertakings were referred to already this morning by the WMO representative.

It is deplorable that in its 3rd assessment report in 2001, IPCC reported that observational networks were declining in many parts of the world. We hope that the launching of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) will lead to more and better climate related data and information. We must make sure that the developing world will also benefit from GEOSS. In this vein, we welcome efforts made to follow-up the climate change related commitments agreed by the G8 summit meeting in Gleneagles, UK, in 2005, including the specific support for climate data and interpretation for Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

Quality of life is strongly related to available energy services. Meeting the world's rapidly growing energy demands during the coming decades will require utilizing a diverse mix of all available and feasible energy sources and technologies. This includes fossil fuels, nuclear energy, renewables, as well as the need for energy conservation and efficiency. In fact it will require drastically increasing the efficiency with which energy is converted, delivered and used.

The world needs cleaner energy technologies, including cleaner fossil fuel energies. Enhancing R & D efforts in the field of modern renewable energies, in order to increase the share of renewables in the world's energy mix is a particularly urgent priority. Countries which decide to include nuclear energy among their energy mix must implement all appropriate regulatory measures addressing the issues of safety, waste disposal and non-proliferation of nuclear materials, including the application of state-of-the-art technologies to this end.

Although energy technologies are rapidly developing, it is widely acknowledged that existing solutions are not yet sufficient for meeting the world's growing energy needs in a sustainable manner. Much more work and innovation will be needed to bring about in the future a more revolutionary change of energy technologies for heat, fuels, and electricity. An example is hydrogen use in cars and public transport. These advancements must be supported with great urgency.

The Scientific and Technological Community has identified in its Discussion Paper presented to this CSD session a list of obstacles to accelerate progress in the areas of energy, air pollution, climate change, also in the context of industrial development. We would like to highlight here only two of these obstacles which must be addressed with priority:

- The need for major capacity building efforts in science, engineering and technology. The North-South gap in S&T capacity continues to widen. Governments concerned in developing countries should increase public investments in higher education and in R & D. North – South S &T cooperation should also be enhanced significantly, as well as relevant South – South cooperation.
- The need for enhanced R&D funding. For instance, government investments in renewable energy resources have been declining since the mid-1980s. In this respect we welcome initiatives such as REN21 and offer to provide scientific advice and input. To this end, we are launching in 2006 an International Science Panel on Renewable Energies and organizing an International Conference on Engineering for Sustainable Energy in Developing Countries, to take place by mid-2007.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the S & T Community is committed to work nationally and internationally with governments, the private sector, all our Major Groups partners, and all relevant stakeholders towards finding scientifically sound and thoroughly engineered solutions to the problems addressed in this CSD cycle.

Thank you.