

Biofuels for Industrial Development and Climate Mitigation:

Challenges and Opportunities for sub-Saharan Africa

(conference programme at: www.gfse.at)

30 November 2006, 11:00-13:00, Vienna

Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, room: "Gruppenraum - Hörsaal"

Chairperson:

- Mr. Heinz Leuenberger, UNIDO Energy and Cleaner Production, Director

Agenda:

- Introductory remarks from Chairpersons (10 minutes)
- Presentation on "Biofuels for Sustainable Industrial Development," Francis X. Johnson, Research Fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute (10 minutes)
- Presentation by the Austrian Energy Agency, www.energyagency.at, (10 minutes)
- Presentation by Mr. Thomas Regitschnig-Kumpan, Director of BioDiesel Vienna, (10 minutes), www.biodiesel-vienna.at
- Short interventions from meeting participants (30 minutes)
- Discussion (40 minutes)
- Closing comments (10 minutes)

Organisational Contact:

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Background:

Biomass that is produced in tropical and sub-tropical climates, such as most of sub-Saharan Africa, has an average productivity that is over 5 times higher than that of biomass grown in the temperate regions of Europe and North America. Liquid biofuels are of special interest, since they can be developed for both domestic markets as well as for export. Now that developing countries such as Brazil and India have led the way by increasing the productivity of their technologies, the technical advantage of OECD countries is becoming less relevant, and there are excellent opportunities for other developing countries to become competitive as exporters of value-added biofuels and related products rather than raw materials. At the same time, climate mitigation efforts have to be cost-effective and biofuels produced in developing countries have much greater carbon reduction possibilities due to their excellent energy balance. Consequently, the Flexible Mechanisms of Kyoto and other international cooperation efforts can take advantage of bio-trade.

It is also important to note that bioenergy industries generate far more jobs than any other energy source – both renewable and non-renewable. Furthermore, these jobs are created mainly in rural areas where poverty is worst, and thus can help to slow down or even reverse migration to urban centres. At the same time, urban centres gain health and environmental benefits from use of cleaner fuels, and also from economic multiplier effects through the need for distribution channels and associated small-scale industries and entrepreneurs. One question that arises is whether efforts to promote exports are compatible with domestic markets and the smaller-scale production that is more likely to create jobs in the communities with long-term income generation potential (i.e., sustainable livelihoods). In other words, there are various paths available for industrial

development with respect to biofuels, with different paths having different distributional impacts, as well as different socio-economic and environmental impacts overall. Different regional strategies will emerge alongside different national priorities in combination with international market developments.

The manner in which biomass resources are utilised in sub-Saharan Africa raises fundamental issues concerning the transition from the current inefficient use of biomass to a more productive use of the tremendous biomass resources that are available. A number of important policy questions then arise as to the extent to which the countries in sub-Saharan Africa develop export markets for biomass and biofuels vs. more focus on local, national, regional, and sub-regional markets.

A workshop will be convened in Spring 2007 with support from a number of donor agencies and in cooperation with UNIDO, with a focus on industrial development options for biofuels in sub-Saharan Africa, while recognising also the linkages to international markets and climate mitigation efforts. This meeting aims to draw out some of the key issues in planning for this workshop. Ultimately the workshop is expected to assist in developing a broader programme of international cooperation for the advancement of suitable technology platforms for biofuels and related products in sub-Saharan Africa.

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