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for Developing a Sustainable Energy Sector  
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**CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT: THE WORLD SUMMIT  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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**Capacity Building for Energy for Sustainable Development**  
**The World Summit on Sustainable Development**

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The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held to review and assess progress made in achieving the goals set out in Agenda 21 at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development held ten years ago in 1992, as well as to decide on a plan of action for the future. Agenda 21 defined and covered an enormous subject area by dividing the overall issue by sector. Sectors elaborated on include atmosphere, urban settlements, agriculture, fresh water and oceans, to name a few. However, energy was not included as a separate item or chapter – being too controversial a topic for agreement to be reached at the time. It is one of the achievements of the past 10 years and of the Summit, that energy was explicitly considered by an intergovernmental body at the international level, and an agreement was reached.

Deliberations on energy generated lively interest not only by various government delegations, but by those interested from civil society, industry groups and associations, energy experts like yourselves, and ordinary citizens including those who could not be physically present in Johannesburg. This keen interest in energy arises partly because it is so vital for achieving sustainable development – its use is necessary for economic growth but it is associated with adverse impacts on the environment, often referred to as negative externalities by economists.

In addition, it has an important economic value in its own right. Many many people worldwide are employed either directly or indirectly by energy and/or transport -related industries. Energy is a necessary component in the production process for most goods and its importance will increase as the trend toward globalization increases and more primary, intermediate and final goods are transported long distances. And for oil and gas producing areas, such as the ESCWA region, revenues from energy account for a significant portion of national GDPs and domestic funds available for development purposes. All of these factors make energy important in efforts, plans and programmes aimed at achieving sustainable development – that is, in promoting socio-economic development with minimal adverse impact on the environment.

As you know there was a considerable lead up to or preparatory process to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Many countries prepared assessments based on their own sustainable development goals, given their national specificities, and these were fed into a regional process. At the regional level, expert roundtables were held that identified important issues at the regional level. In addition, and with sponsorship in part by the regional commissions, intergovernmental meetings were held at the regional level. In the ESCWA region, the expert or thematic roundtable was held in Beirut in early 2001. It considered energy as one of seven priority themes and recommended capacity building for renewable energy and energy efficiency. The intergovernmental meeting at the ministerial level was held in Cairo in late 2001 sponsored by ESCWA, UNEP and the Arab League.

Generally the regional process covered the gamut of sustainable development issues, and in the ESCWA region energy was considered important as a natural resource to be used carefully. Your governments noted that there is a shortage of nonrenewable sources of energy, that energy use is important in combating poverty in the region and that sustainable development requires sound management including sustainable production and consumption patterns and intra-regional cooperation and integration. Your ministers agreed to set a joint Arab work programme to address, in part, economic and environment policies that take into account the need to conserve energy, reduce rates of energy consumption and mitigate associated negative impacts on the region.

At the international level, deliberations on energy for the World Summit on Sustainable Development actually began earlier when the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development held in 2001 considered the topics of energy, transport and atmosphere. Agreements reached at that time actually provided a sound basis, and often served as a starting point, for Summit deliberations on energy. Key issues relating to energy were identified as accessibility of energy, energy efficiency, renewable energy, advanced fossil fuel technologies, nuclear energy technologies, rural energy and energy and transport, and the Commission made specific recommendations on each issue.

The Commission also identified a number of overarching issues that were seen as relevant to all of the key issues, and capacity building was included in this category. It declared that it is important that institutions, infrastructures and human resources in developing countries be strengthened and that technological leadership in developing countries be enhanced through public and private cooperation that supports sustainable development objectives. It called for a focus on capacity building in the area of energy by the international community including by the United Nations regional commissions.

As you may know, a number of outcomes resulted from the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the Political Declaration, the Plan of Implementation and the Type II Partnerships have direct relevance to your topic at this expert group meeting. The political declaration, which represents a message by heads of states, gave due consideration to energy and to capacity building. It recognized access to energy as a basic requirement of human dignity, that energy uses lead to adverse environmental consequences, the need for capacity building to alleviate poverty, and it committed to addressing the energy deficit among developing countries.

The Plan of Implementation adopted at the Summit represents the way forward for achieving sustainable development and it utilizes the Secretary General's Millennium Declaration as a foundation or guide to set out the map for the way forward. The Millennium Development goal of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015 and the goal of protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are two goals specifically relating to energy in the Plan. Improving access to reliable and affordable energy services is cited as central to reducing poverty, and capacity building as part of energy-specific efforts as well as in cooperative efforts for access to energy in general poverty reduction programmes is recommended in the Plan.

The Summit agreement on energy for sustainable development also called for an increase in capacity building with regard to all aspects of energy as defined by the key issues identified in 2001, the promotion of networking between centers of excellence that could improve capacity building, and special assistance for developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing states. This assistance would be to meet their capacity needs for training, technical know-how and strengthening national institutions in reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy, including promoting energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy and advanced technologies including advanced and cleaner fossil fuel technologies. Furthermore the Plan calls for support of efforts to strengthen national and regional energy institutions or arrangements for enhancing regional and international cooperation on energy for sustainable development, in particular assisting developing countries in their domestic efforts to provide reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services to all sections of their populations. The Plan also calls for strengthening regional and national activities for the promotion of education and capacity building regarding energy for sustainable development.

We strongly believe that the WSSD Plan of Implementation provides a sound and strong basis and justification by the international community at the heads of state level for your work related to

capacity building for energy for sustainable development in the ESCWA region. We wholeheartedly support your efforts in this area.

A third major accomplishment of the Summit is the development of WSSD Partnership initiatives. The focus on partnerships was intended to strengthen participation by major groups identified in Agenda 21, NGOs, the private sector and national, regional and international institutions and encourage them to initiate and/or become involved in activities aimed at achieving sustainable development. While partnerships were included in Agenda 21, there was much stress on their importance at the Summit, as it was widely acknowledged that sustainable development cannot be achieved by UN action alone, by government actions alone, or by any one group, but that a broad-based cooperative effort world-wide is needed. These partnerships are non-negotiated arrangements by groups and institutions interested in working together on a specific issue or to solve a certain problem pertaining to sustainable development. Partnerships are international or regional in focus, and comprise two or more groups committed to action with necessary funding arrangements firmly in place. A large number of partnerships were announced at the Summit dealing with a wide range of sustainable development issues, including energy, and often aimed at capacity building.

There was also a focus – often within the Partnerships – on the WEHAB areas identified by the Secretary General prior to the Summit. The WEHAB areas are water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity. In the weeks leading up to the Summit an interagency task force undertook efforts in each of these areas with a focus on providing guidance as to how partnerships in these areas could be most effective. In the area of energy, “A Framework for Action on Energy” was published and presented at the Summit. It identified indicative targets, examples of activities and actions to address cross cutting issues related to energy.

For example, for the goal of reducing poverty the framework for action elaborated on the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty by half and specified that 800 million to one billion people should be provided access to energy services by 2015. Examples of activities to be undertaken in pursuit of this specific target include building local capacity through involvement of community-based organizations and relevant energy service providers. Actions to address cross-cutting issues under this target include capacity building for development planners, energy officials, and local government on the role of energy in meeting poverty reduction objectives and sectoral planning goals (such as health, education, and agriculture), focusing on concrete policy objectives and financing strategies.

Another example relevant to the ESCWA region falls under energy efficiency improvements in which a target for improvements in end-use energy efficiency was identified ranging from 25-40 per cent in residential and commercial buildings, industry, agriculture and transport sectors with revisions after five years. Examples activities include building of capacity and expertise related to the use of financial incentives and development of regulatory and market frameworks to promote end-use efficiency. Furthermore, actions recommended to address cross-cutting issues were building institutional and human resources capacity to formulating energy efficiency policies and regulation.

The Framework of Action on Energy provides an excellent guide to translate the formal outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development to action-oriented programmes and projects. It provides practical approaches to solving the energy-related problems needed for achieving sustainable development, and relates capacity building actions to those issues where it is most needed. We recommend its use as a guiding tool for all regions working on energy and sustainable development issues, including those, such as ESCWA, that specifically focus on capacity building.

More than 35 non-negotiated or Type II Partnerships were announced at the Summit in the area of energy including many directly focused on capacity building. They include the

- Global network on energy for sustainable development
- Country profiles on sustainable energy development
- Partnership for cleaner fuels and vehicles for cleaner air
- Global village energy partnership
- Mini-hydro power in rural and remote areas
- Renewable energy based public private partnership for rural electrification
- Indicators for sustainable energy development

Details about these and other WSSD Partnerships can be found on the website <[http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/sustainable\\_dev/type2\\_part.html](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/sustainable_dev/type2_part.html)>

Many of these partnerships welcome new partners and would be very pleased with interest by the ESCWA region, its member countries and/or NGOs and relevant private sector groups interested in participating and contributing to its activities. New Partnerships are also welcome and information regarding criteria and their listing as official WSSD Partnerships is also available on the website.

In closing, let me stress the importance that the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs places on capacity building in efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development in general and for energy in particular. The World Summit on Sustainable Development reiterated its importance at the level of heads of states. Capacity building was originally raised at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and its role was reaffirmed each year at the annual sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The World Summit, however, directly tied capacity building to energy for sustainable development and paved the way for future work at the international, regional – including the ESCWA region – and national levels.

For additional information on

Sustainable development: < <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/>>

Energy Issues and CSD9: < [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd9/csd9\\_2001.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd9/csd9_2001.htm)>

The World Summit on Sustainable Development: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/index.html>

WSSD Partnerships: < [http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/sustainable\\_dev/type2\\_part.html](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/sustainable_dev/type2_part.html)>