

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SIDE EVENT Side Event May 3rd, 2007, New York

Tackling Climate Change: Cooperation between the Developing and Developed World

Energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change were the major themes of the two-week session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development 15 (UN CSD15), which took place in New York City in May. In addition to the official program, CSD-15 included side events sponsored by UN agencies, governments and other international organizations. Side events provide opportunities for the exchange of information and viewpoints among participants.

On May 3, a side event was hosted, “Tackling Climate Change: Cooperation between the Developing and Developed World.” The side event focused on how the developed and developing world can cooperate to realize a viable sustainable energy future based on renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies, and to ameliorate the consequences of global climate change.

Scott Sklar, President, The Stella Group Ltd and side event moderator, opened discussions by noting the convergence of trends that are now making renewable energy a viable option. In addition to the technical and economic viability of renewable energy, other factors are being clearly recognized. Fossil fuel demand is outpacing supply. More agile, self-healing grids delivering energy close to sources are being created as a response to energy security concerns. The multiple adverse impacts of fossil fuel burning on both air quality and global climate on human health and the environment are now being explicitly acknowledged. Dave Renné, principal project leader at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, presented results from the 2006 ASES report developed by Dr. Chuck Kutscher titled “Tackling Climate Change in the U.S.: Potential U.S. Carbon Emissions Reductions from Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency by 2030” <http://www.ases.org/climatechange/> and discussed how these steps could be applied to the developing world. Isao Yukawa, Advisor and past President of Kyocera Solar Group in Kyoto, reviewed the urgency of addressing climate change, and described how his company is striving to accelerate the transition to renewable energy worldwide. He reminded the audience that, as Kyocera’s motto says, “to respect the divine, we must be good stewards of the earth.” Mark Radka, Chief of the Energy Branch at UNEP’s Division of Technology, Industry and Economics in Paris, emphasized the importance of capacity building and developing infrastructure and support systems, noting that essential activities are discussed in the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) report, and are reflected in UNEP’s effort in 13 developing countries to develop solar and wind data to remove information barriers and enhance capacity building (<http://swera.unep.net/>). Travis Bradford, **Founder, President, and Director** of the Prometheus Institute for Sustainable and author of “Solar Revolution” dispelled myths about solar energy (i.e., that it is expensive, it has too long a payback, and that there is not enough sun in some area) and outlined how financing and policy making can help accelerate the transformation to renewables. Scott Sklar closed the presentation by remarking that the

majority of private investment in new energy is in renewables and energy efficiency, and that even though there are some “growing pains” in the industry, the ingredients for success worldwide are already in place. The presentations were followed by a lively question and answer discussion among the 40 or so participants at the event.