

Expert Group Meeting
Preparations for the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum
21-23 November 2012
Bangkok

Opening Statement
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Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Energy security has been a topic of concern for some time as it has a significant impact on the much needed economic growth for poverty reduction and on local, regional and global environment. Regional cooperation has long been identified as one of the effective means to address enhancing energy security.

Energy security is traditionally confined as a national security matter and for some time, it has not been brought to the UN fora. However, as challenges relevant to energy security among countries become common and there is an emerging understanding that regional cooperation could facilitate in the strengthening of national energy security. This topic, despite of the controversy, has now been brought to a number of international fora.

ESCAP conducted the Theme Study on Energy Security and Sustainable Development that was deliberated at the 64th session of the Commission in 2008, it was the first attempt to address this issue in comprehensive and integrated manner by linking various aspects of energy security issues ranging from energy trade, connectivity, energy and environment, energy economics, as well as widening access to energy services, energy technology and innovation, promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy. Each topic on its own merits an in-depth study and policy discussion for regional cooperation. While different countries define energy security differently, from the

United Nations perspectives, it is clear that there is a need to link and integrate sustainable development into energy security.

The need to look at energy security policies more holistically, to support the economic growth necessary to address poverty reduction, to pursue economic competitiveness, to strive towards environmental sustainability poses challenges to the policy makers of the region. The outcome of the Rio+20 also reflects the need to further integrate sustainable development into the economic sectors including the energy sector. While many of us would like to believe that so much work has been done in promoting the integration, it is evident that more needs to be done.

The Secretary-General's initiative on Sustainable Energy for All is also a recognition, in which the Secretary-General sees the need to further address the inter-linkages between development, in particular poverty reduction as well as environmental sustainability and energy.

The resolution that was adopted at its 67th session of the Commission in 2011 also looks at energy security and sustainable energy. It is clear that strengthening sustainable use of energy is an integral part in enhancing energy security. With more people having access to energy services contributing actively to the economic growth, in an economy that uses energy efficiently and becoming more reliant on modern renewable energy, the country will be able to move closer in achieving the MDGs while also attaining a higher level of energy security.

Further, it would be critical to address how to promote a more efficient energy trade mechanism in the region. The region is endowed with energy resources but intra-regional trade has not fulfilled its full potential. With an effective energy trade agreement and mechanism, it would be possible for the region to increase the volume of energy development. Such an agreement and mechanism would also provide a strong

foundation to address the linkages between energy security and the sustainable use of energy through regional cooperation.

To support the sustainable use of energy towards enhancing energy security in the region, it would be important to also consider effective institutional mechanism, innovative financing, and effective policy and legal framework to make a more energy secure society. In this respect, energy economics such as pricing and subsidies play an important role. While it is politically a challenging issue to discuss the role of energy subsidies and pricing, it is also clear that more policy work is necessary to somehow internalize externalities so that energy efficiency and renewable energy could be better promoted.

One of the objectives of this particular EGM is to seek your advice on the relevance of these issues and how to reflect them in the expected outcome documents of the upcoming ministerial meeting, the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The ESCAP resolution 67/2 Promoting regional cooperation for enhanced energy security and the sustainable use of energy in Asia and the Pacific was adopted against this background in 2011 to request the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to convene the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum in 2013 to discuss the progress achieved in the Asia-Pacific region in addressing the energy security challenges at the regional, national, and household levels, and to facilitate continuous dialogue among member States with a view to enhancing energy security and working towards sustainable development.

This year, together with the UN-Energy Asia-Pacific, and with subregional organizations and ESCAP's subregional offices, member States of each of the five subregions have been discussing on challenges and opportunities in enhancing energy

security and promoting the sustainable use of energy. The latest consultation meeting just completed last week in East and North-East Asia in Incheon.

We are pleased to welcome the representatives from each of the five subregion to review and discuss the outcomes of the subregional consultation process and to start developing the contents of the expected outcome documents of the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum together with the experts in this room. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the delegates, experts and agency representatives for coming to this meeting to share your perspectives on energy security and the sustainable use of energy in developing the planned outcome documents for the APEF.

The Government of the Russian Federation deserves a special thanks as they have strongly supported a consultative process at each subregion and this particular EGM. Upon receiving valuable inputs and advice from this EGM, the secretariat will do its best to work with the member Governments towards a successful outcome of the APEF.

It is my wish to be able to get the key messages of the Ministerial Declaration and the Elements of the Regional Action Plan with your active participation. I wish you a successful deliberation during this EGM.

Thank you.

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