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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has already been stressed by many speakers that developing countries have contributed little to global warming, but stand to be the hardest hit from the impacts of climate change. Indeed, uncertainties related to changes in weather systems, food production and climatic zone distribution will be most difficult to cope with for developing countries.

The immediate problem for low-income countries in relation to energy, however, is the absence of the most basic energy services for large segments of the populations. What does climate change mean for the 2 billion people who cook on small open fires and wood stoves? What does it mean to the almost 2 billion people who cannot turn on an electric light, or any household appliance in their home? What does it mean for the millions of children -- especially girls -- who do not attend school because they are needed to collect wood, dung or other fuels to meet subsistence energy needs.

UNDP pursues energy as an instrument for socio-economic development, addressing local, national, and global environmental problems at the same time. UNDP has taken a strong position in advocating the importance of energy for development, most recently in the context of the General Assembly Special Session to review UNCED. Its publication "Energy after Rio: Prospects and Challenges", launched on this occasion, examines how current energy systems not only represent serious threats to the atmosphere but are unsustainable in social, environmental and health terms as well. As long as poor communities lack access to modern energy services, there will be no development. Hence, the urgent need for developing countries to improve their energy systems.

There is no reason why developing countries should copy the mistakes of industrialized countries and build energy systems that threaten the global environment. Options, other than fossil fuels are available. During the last decade, commercially viable, environmentally sound technologies have emerged -- and keep emerging -- which fundamentally changes the picture for energy decision-makers. Opportunities to make energy systems more sustainable lie primarily in three areas: more efficient use of energy, enhanced use of renewable energy sources and introduction of new and better performing technologies. Such policies are essential to meet climate change concerns. But they are mostly needed to meet the energy needs of poor people and to sustain economic growth.

One serious limitation when promoting sustainable energy has been the tendency to focus on stand-alone technology projects. Changing the energy system of a country requires tackling with a whole set of issues, such as fiscal frameworks, institutional capacity and financing tools (to enable purchasing power for small businesses and households). We believe that it is essential to keep these issues in mind when discussing proposals on technology cooperation and joint implementation.

Developing countries are already contributing to the global solution: fossil fuel subsidies for example, were cut by 50 percent between 1990 and 1996 in 14 developing countries. Many developing countries are also actively promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy, but much more can -- and should -- be done.

Industrialized countries have a major responsibility to assist developing countries in



implementing sustainable energy strategies. Most of the energy investments in the years to come will take place in developing countries and will provide opportunities for technological leap-frogging. It is therefore imperative to operationalize the global compact reached at UNCED. Sound technology choices, environmentally conscious pricing and trade policies, technical assistance, investment decisions and new partnerships with the private sector are all needed to reach this achievement.

However, resources for technical assistance to developing countries have regrettably decreased in recent years. At the same time, awareness about the urgent need to address problems of poverty, environment degradation and climate change is increasing. Imagine what could be achieved if OECD countries were to remove subsidies in support of fossil fuels and these resources were channelled into capacity building and technology cooperation support for developing countries.

UNDP is working on, and expanding its work, on sustainable energy in many of its country cooperation programmes. In addition, a new initiative was launched earlier this week – UrbanTech 21 – a partnership with science and the private sector to facilitate access to cutting-edge technologies in response to local environmental problems – and at the same time – mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

As one of the three GEF implementing agencies, UNDP has continuously worked to support the UNFCCC. UNDP is now responsible for a GEF portfolio of more than US\$200 million under the climate change area. These projects are now an integral part of current UNDP programming activities. They have leveraged more than US\$200 million of co-financing, either from national funding sources, UNDP programmes or other bilateral contributing countries. We are supporting the efforts of nearly 80 developing countries to prepare their initial national communications through Enabling Activities projects. UNDP attaches a very high priority to a successful replenishment of the GEF, as it will allow to further support developing countries efforts in the right direction.

Success in Kyoto is essential, not only because climate change is important, but also because development and poverty alleviation are essential, and cannot be achieved unless there are major changes in the world's energy systems. Climate change concerns can -- and should -- be addressed in the process of building a new sustainable approach to energy. The main lesson learnt by UNDP is that climate change alone is unlikely to be the key motivating factor in regions where basic energy services are not adequate to support national development. This dual dimension of the problem remains to be further developed. UNDP already works, and is prepared to increase its activities in this direction.

Thank you for your attention.