**Helen Clark: Supporting actions to address climate change**

*Opening Remarks for Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, on the occasion of the* *UN-DESA, UNDP, UN Regional Commissions Side Event: “Supporting Global, Regional and National Actions to Address Climate Change”*

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Thank you for joining us for this side event focusing on actions required to expand access to affordable energy issues, actions which will expand access to affordable energy, improve energy efficiency, and move towards more sustainable and clean energy solutions.

Let me first make some opening remarks on the importance of achieving a more affordable and sustainable energy supply for the benefit of both the environment and development.

In 2009, 1.4 billion people still had no access to electricity, another one billion only had access to unreliable electricity networks. The implications are enormous: families forego entrepreneurial endeavors, children cannot study after dark, health clinics do not function properly, and women are burdened with time consuming chores such as pounding grain or hauling water, leaving them with less time to care for children or engage in income generating activities.

Further it is estimated that kitchen smoke leads to around 1.5 million premature deaths every year, more than the number of deaths from malaria each year.

Energy, therefore, plays a central role in addressing two of the world’s great challenges: fighting poverty and addressing climate change. Smart energy policies have the potential to fight poverty and address climate change simultaneously.

This was recognized at the Millennium Development Goal Summit in New York in September where Member States committed to “increase their use of new and renewable energy sources; make more efficient use of traditional sources; promote access to modern, reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy services; and enhance national capacities to meet growing energy demand”.

To do all that, Member States understood that international co-ordination would need to be improved – in particular to “promote the development, and dissemination of affordable and sustainable energy technology on mutually agreed terms”.

Helping member states to make good on this commitment will require action at all levels.

At the country level, targets for universal energy access should be set and incentives for clean energy investments put in place. With political will, much can change. More than US$ 250 billion is being spent annually, for example, for fossil fuel subsidies in developing countries, which in many cases are not particularly well targeted. National targets should be set as well for adopting clean cooking fuels and devices.

The UN can and does support national efforts.  UNDP does its part, in particular, by strengthening countries’ ability to:

* integrate energy access within national development strategies;
* mobilize and expand financing options including through micro-finance, public-private partnerships, and carbon finance; and
* deliver modern energy services at the local level.

In the last ten years the size of UNDP’s overall energy portfolio has doubled and demand for this work continues to grow.

Our collective challenge is to take what works to scale – with the goal of universal global access to energy. This will require mechanisms which better enable us to learn from experience and apply lessons learned, and it will require strong leadership backed by broad-based public support for clean energy transitions.

Earlier this year, the Secretary General’s Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change argued that while achieving universal access to modern energy services is undoubtedly ambitious, it is achievable.

According to the World Energy Outlook 2010, the additional investment required to provide universal access to energy in 2030 amounts to $756 billion or $36 billion per year. That is less than three per cent of the projected global cumulative investment in energy up to 2030.  The resulting increase in global CO2 emissions is estimated to be 0.8 per cent, assuming modest energy needs and the application of cleaner technologies.

The UN General Assembly’s decision to designate 2012 as the year of “Sustainable Energy for All” in New York last week offers the opportunity to generate public support and momentum at all levels.

An equitable climate regime is also essential. Developing nations need support to pursue paths to development which don’t inflict the heavy burden on our climate and environment which the traditional path has inflicted. Progress here in Cancun on issues of technology transfer, and climate finance will certainly help the sustainable and affordable energy agenda.