



**66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
Special Event of the Second Committee (Economics & Finance)**

“Food and energy security and energy efficiency”

**2 November 2011
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

CONCEPT NOTE

Reducing “Energy Poverty” is increasingly acknowledged as the “Missing Development Goal”. This is because access to electricity and affordable modern energy sources is a basic requirement to achieve sustainable living standards and development. It is essential for lighting, heating and cooking, as well as for education, modern health treatment and productive activities and hence, food security and rural development. Yet 1.4 billion people lack access to electricity, and 3 billion people – about half of the world’s population - rely on unsustainable biomass-based energy sources to meet their basic energy needs for cooking and heating. At the same time, almost one billion people are suffering from hunger and malnutrition and 1.4 billion people live on less than \$1.25 a day.

Secure energy and food supply are interlinked. Both are essential for sustainable development and effective poverty reduction. Access to energy is central to increasing agricultural production, and farming systems that combine food and energy crops present numerous benefits to poor rural communities. For example, food sources such as maize or sugarcane are the main ingredients for producing biofuel which could help increase the alternative energy mix in world energy supplies and promote the growth of a resource-efficient low-carbon economy. At the same time, the usage of sustainable energy in agricultural farming processes could significantly increase harvest crop yields to satisfy market demand and improve overall living standards. Sustainable energy is required not only for sustainable production of agricultural produce, but also for the sustainable consumption of food. Energy is essential in cooking and heating of food.

Establishing sustainable consumption and production requires resource efficiency. Energy efficient technologies and agricultural farming techniques can increase agricultural productivity, while reducing the cost of energy inputs and converting agricultural waste into biomass or biofuel promote alternative cost-reducing methods of farming.

Small-scale farmers are globally the largest farmer group and of key importance to local and national food security in developing countries. Promoting action to safely integrate, intensify and increase food and energy production for this large group of producers holds the best prospect to improve both local (rural) and national food and energy security and reduce poverty and environmental impact at the same time.

Energy also plays a central role in improving food supply chain efficiency, and linking producers to markets cost-effectively. At the same time, the linking agricultural markets to larger energy markets provide an important opportunity for smallholders to diversify into higher value products, especially in areas where food cannot be grown economically. The safe integration of food and energy production can, therefore be an efficient way to improve national food and energy security and simultaneously reduce poverty in a climate-smart way.

A number of initiatives are already underway by the UN system to address the issues of food and energy security and energy efficiency.

Questions to guide the discussion

With a view towards advancing understanding about the linkage of food and energy security, the following questions are intended to guide the discussion:

- What are successful examples of an approach that combines the use of traditional and scientific knowledge to maintain healthy eco-systems that integrate food and energy production and respect natural resource constraints?
- How can agricultural productivity be increased through energy efficient technologies and agricultural farming techniques?
- How can biofuel production be an important component of a broader strategy to increase the income of poor agricultural producers and labourers and enhance food security?
- What safeguards need to be in place to ensure that the poor benefit from the integration of food and energy production?
- What next steps are required to move towards greater integration of the energy and food sectors?

Expected Outcome

The special event on food and energy security is expected to contribute the analysis and policy debate regarding food and energy security that is taking place under the Second Committee. In this respect, the special event seeks to provide inputs to the ongoing consultations on Second

Committee resolutions regarding these issues. In addition, it will contribute to the Rio+20 preparatory process by identifying policy options and recommendations concerning food and energy security which are environmentally sustainable in the long run. A summary report will be prepared and made available as an input to the rio+20 process.

Proposed format

The special event will be chaired by H.E. Mr. Abulkalam Abdul Momen of Bangladesh, the Chair of the Second Committee and moderated by H.E. Mr. Vince Henderson, Permanent Representative of Dominica to the United Nations. The panel will be composed of three distinguished experts who will speak on their areas of expertise. Following their presentations, the moderator will lead a discussion on the issues between the experts and the members of the Second Committee.

Chair:

H.E. Mr. Abulkalam Abdul Momen, Chair, Second Committee, 66th General Assembly

Moderator:

H.E. Mr. Vince Henderson, Permanent Representative of Dominica to the United Nations

Panellists:

Mr. Vineet Raswant, Senior Technical Advisor, Policy and Technical Advisory Division, IFAD

Prof. Vijay Modi, Columbia University, and a member of the Secretary-General's High-level Group on Sustainable Energy for All

Ms. Eve Crowley, Deputy Director, Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division, FAO