

***“Global Bioenergy Partnership: Putting the Gleneagles Plan into Action”***

Kühlungsborn (Germany), 7 June 2007

Media Club, 5.00 – 6.00 pm

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Bioenergy can reduce climate change and alleviate poverty -  
The Global Bioenergy Partnership is committed to realising this potential**

7 June 2007, Kühlungsborn/Rome - “Bioenergy can play a key role in addressing growing concerns about petroleum price fluctuations, energy security and climate change,” said Corrado Clini, Chair of the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) today at a press conference in Kühlungsborn (Germany), on the occasion of the G8 Summit.

“We need the right frameworks to ensure that bioenergy is fostered in a sustainable way, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, protecting biodiversity and the local environment, and protecting food security,” Clini added. “The Global Bioenergy Partnership brings together countries, international agencies and private and civil society representatives to work towards this goal.”

“Bioenergy offers new growth and employment opportunities for many rural areas in developing countries, but safeguards must be put in place to protect the most vulnerable and hungry”, said FAO Assistant Director-General Alexander Müller .

Many poor rural dwellers, including the food insecure, may benefit from new biofuel development opportunities. They could become biofuel producers, find jobs in larger biofuel enterprises or could benefit from new business opportunities arising from an improved local agriculture and energy infrastructure. More labour intensive biofuel technologies could bring greater employment opportunities for poor unskilled workers.

**Ensuring sustainability**

Bioenergy development should ensure environmental, social and economic sustainability throughout the entire production chain. “Developing specific sustainability criteria for biofuels is essential for steering bioenergy development in the right direction.” said Urban Rid, Director General in Germany’s Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

Environmental sustainability requires the responsible use of agro-chemicals, prevention of soil erosion, protection of biodiversity, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants, and the appropriate management of scarce water resources.

“The Global Bioenergy Partnership has an important role to play in developing an international framework to ensure sustainability. The German government is already working towards establishing sustainability criteria, but the growing trade flows in bioenergy and bioenergy feedstocks require a coordinated international response,” emphasised Rid.

A biofuel boom in developing countries could also affect food availability and access to food, Müller said. “Diverting land away from food to biofuel production could increase prices of basic staple foods and could affect the food security of the poorest rural and urban households that often spend a considerable part of their income on food.” Competition for land could also result in land use conflicts.

### **Reducing trade barriers**

Clini called for favourable trade rules and the dismantling of current trade barriers to ensure that developing countries can capitalise on the opportunities arising from biofuel production.

“The productivity of bioenergy feedstocks in tropical areas is up to five times greater than in Europe or the US where demand for biofuels is rising rapidly. Local use of biofuels can offer a direct benefit in terms of reduced import bills from fossil fuels. At the same time, reducing and eliminating trade barriers and phasing out trade-distorting subsidies would increase export chances of developing countries.”

### **The Global Bioenergy Partnership**

The Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) was established to reflect the commitments taken in the 2005 G8 Gleneagles Plan of Action and is reporting on its activities at the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm. GBEP promotes a global high-level policy dialogue on bioenergy and facilitates international cooperation; it supports national and regional bioenergy policy-making and market development. GBEP also favours efficient and sustainable uses of biomass and develop project activities in the bioenergy field; and it fosters exchange of information, skills and technologies through bilateral and multilateral collaboration.

GBEP includes all G8 countries, China, Mexico, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Energy Agency (IEA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Foundation, World Council of Renewable Energy (WCRE) and European Biomass Industry Association (EUBIA). Brazil, Tanzania and the World Bank are participating as observers.

Italy currently chairs GBEP and FAO hosts its secretariat.

#### **Useful links:**

Global Bioenergy Partnership: [www.globalbioenergy.org](http://www.globalbioenergy.org)

German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety: [www.bmu.de](http://www.bmu.de)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

Italian Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea: [www.minambiente.it](http://www.minambiente.it)