

**Press conference for the presentation of a report by the  
Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP)  
“A Review of the Current State of Bioenergy Development in G8 +5 Countries”**

Rome (Italy), November 13<sup>th</sup> 2007

Media Centre – Fiera di Roma

10.15 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Bioenergy growth must be carefully guided and coordinated  
to reduce dependence on crude oil and promote sustainable development**

*Rome, November 13<sup>th</sup> 2007* – The Global Bioenergy Partnership released the Report “**A Review of the Current State of Bioenergy Development in G8 +5 Countries**” today in Rome at the 20<sup>th</sup> World Energy Congress (WEC – Rome 2007).

In 2030, energy sources and fuels produced from non-fossil biological matter (biomass) is forecast to satisfy 20% of global energy demand, rising to 30%-40% in 2060. In particular, liquid biofuels such as biodiesel and ethanol may make up 8% of world demand for liquid fuels in 2030, with consumption rising fourfold to 36 million metric tonnes a year from today’s level of about 8 million tonnes.

Corrado Clini, Chairman of the GBEP and Director General of the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, commented: “Developing bioenergy represents the most immediate and available response to a number of key challenges and opportunities: coping with record-high crude-oil prices; the need for oil-importing countries to diversify their energy sources and suppliers; the chance for emerging economies in tropical regions to supply the global energy market with competitively priced liquid biofuels; meeting growing energy demand in developing countries; and reducing carbon-dioxide emissions as part of the battle against climate change.

“Bioenergy is already a real alternative to fossil fuels and at the same time, as demonstrated by Brazil’s example, can become the driving force for development in some of the world’s poorest regions. That’s where the Global Bioenergy Partnership is playing a crucial role”, Clini added.

Capturing the full potential of biofuels means overcoming environmental and social constraints and removing trade barriers, which are hindering the development of a worldwide market. Several critical factors need to be analysed and resolved, including the conflicts between bioenergy production on the one hand and, on the other, the protection of the environment, and food security.

“Bioethanol derived from corn (maize) is able to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions by about 13%,” commented Clini. “This may not be sustainable when you consider the farmland that’s being used for the initial production, the quantity of water consumed, the emissions of nitrates during the treatment and conversion processes as well as the fact that it’s competitive only with crude oil prices above \$80 a barrel. By contrast, bioethanol from sugar cane can cut carbon-dioxide emissions by about 90% and is competitive with oil as low as \$30.”

Alexander Müller, Assistant Director-General of FAO's Natural Resources Management and Environment Department, commented: "Bioenergy offers new growth opportunities in developing countries, but it's important to guarantee the livelihoods and well-being of the most vulnerable. We must ensure that the price of food for the poor does not exceed their ability to acquire and use it for their own food security. The Global Bioenergy Partnership, especially in light of the renewed mandate received from the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm, Germany in June, aims to promote sustainable bioenergy development.

"Today's report," Müller added, "is a survey of the production of energy from biomass in G8 +5 countries and highlights the advantages and challenges posed by one of the future's most promising sources of alternative energy."

The GBEP report finds that bioenergy is already available, ready to provide immediate solutions and further technological advances in a relatively short time. As regards research and development, so-called second-generation biofuels derived from cellulosic biomass (rice husks, sugar-cane bagasse, agricultural residues and municipal waste) or from micro-algae are likely to start providing large amounts of ethanol and biodiesel in an environmentally friendly way within the next 10 years. This growth in bioenergy needs to be carefully managed and coordinated if we are to make the most of its benefits and resolve its challenges.

"The GBEP report will help to guide the partnership's future work towards a sustainable development of bioenergy," Müller said.

*The Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) is an international initiative established to implement the commitments taken by the G8 +5 Countries (Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, India, Italy, Mexico, Russian Federation, South Africa, the UK and the USA) in the Gleneagles Plan of Action in 2005. Its goal is to "support wider, cost-effective biomass and biofuels deployment, particularly in developing countries where biomass use is prevalent." It was invited by the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, in June 2007 to "continue its work on biofuel best practices and take forward the successful and sustainable development of bioenergy".*

*The partnership is chaired by Corrado Clini, Director General of the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea. FAO hosts the GBEP Secretariat at its Rome headquarters, with the support of Italy.*

The GBEP report is available in full at the Internet address: [www.globalbioenergy.org](http://www.globalbioenergy.org)

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