
ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY SOURCES OF ENERGY

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One of the components of today's world that distinguishes our life from the life our forefathers led is definitely the improvements that have been made in our way of life. These improvements have been made thanks to the use of energy which plays an essential role in the everyday life of citizens, heating their houses, and supplying power for most domestic services and appliances.

Energy is also an essential factor input to economic activity, such as in the fields of agriculture, services, industry and transport. Energy is a major raw material traded worldwide, playing an important economic and political role in the world context.

The location of these major energy resources, such as oil, gas, and coalfields, relative to the large consuming countries, gives rise to complex relationships between producers and consumers. The burning of these resources has negative repercussions on the environment, causing global warming and the greenhouse effect. This is the result of the depletion of the ozone layer. The solution to this problem is to have sustainable development.

What is sustainable development? In essence this means meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and meeting human needs implies recognizing each person's right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, including adequate access to energy supplies.

If we are to work towards having a sustainable future we must oblige all countries to accept to implement an energy strategy which does not jeopardize the development potential of developing countries. This could have various implications, such as the possibility that high-energy consuming countries might have to reduce their *per capita* consumption of energy, in particular fossil-fuel energy. The demand for energy is constantly on the increase and social and economic developments are expected to lead the demand for this energy to double every fifteen years. Over the next fifteen or twenty years the major factors involved will not be so much the actual availability of energy as the economic and political conditions under which it is obtained. The underlying problem regarding energy policy is to guarantee long-term security of supplies under satisfactory economic conditions. It is important, however, that

the aim of insuring adequate supplies of energy has to be reconciled with the demands of environmental protection. Both the emerging global ecological problems as well as the potential of non-renewable and renewable primary-energy sources must be taken into account when considering the overall issue of how to meet the future energy needs of a growing global population.

Besides a rational use of energy, enormous investment is necessary to find new sources of energy that will gradually replace fossil-fuel energy. The trends in energy requirement and consumption over these last twenty years may be attributed to three major factors: the price of energy and especially of oil; economic growth, including technical and structural changes in economies; as well as the energy policies pursued, in particular those aimed at energy conservation. The rate of growth of world energy demand together with the increase of global environmental concern has helped for the issue of energy to be considered in the long-term perspective. The question asked is to see how to protect the environment without giving up economic development, and this requires abundant and reasonably priced sources of energy. The future lies in finding new and renewable sources of energy, in finding ways of how to control and possibly reduce energy consumed, and, most of all, these energy sources must be environmentally friendly.