

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE ON ENERGY, BUILDINGS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, HELD IN ST. PETERSBURG 15 APRIL 2009

A group of Russian and foreign experts (64) met at the premises of the Consulate of Finland in St. Petersburg and discussed issues of energy efficiency and sustainable development in the built environment. The participants represented different areas of expertise from public and private sectors: construction, real estate development, architecture, engineering, professional education, policy development, energy production and distribution, and information dissemination (media). The meeting was organized within the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's Working Group on Environment and supported by the government of Sweden and by the Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Buildings and Construction¹ (SBC), led by the Ministry of the Environment of Finland. Russian Cleaner Production and Sustainable Development Centre was responsible for the practical arrangements of the Conference.

The Marrakech Process on Sustainable Consumption and Production² (SCP) and its seven Task Forces are part of the follow-up of the United Nations (UN) Conference on Environment and Development³ in Rio (1992), and the UN Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg⁴ (2002). The goal of the process is to outline a 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on SCP, which will be discussed in the sessions of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in 2010 and 2011.

The strategic framework for the discussions was set by the Decree⁵ given 4 June 2008 by the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Dmitry Medvedev. The Decree set a target to increase the energy efficiency of the Russian economy by at least 40 % from the level in 2007 by 2020. The Decree also highlighted the need to implement urgent measures for improving energy efficiency in construction and municipal sectors. In his opening remarks, the Deputy Plenipotentiary of the President of Russian Federation in the North-West Federal District, Mr. E. Lukianov noted that the economic crisis calls for integration of energy efficiency and environmental targets into policy development at different levels and increasing energy efficiency is also a tool to overcome the crisis.

The purpose of the conference was to report about the Marrakech Process, to look for tools to promote SCP, SBC in particular, and to discuss the practical implementation of energy efficiency measures in Russia. Conclusions from the discussions include the following:

1. The participants acknowledged the fact that worldwide approximately 40% of all energy is consumed in buildings, both in the construction of new buildings and in particular in the use, operation and maintenance of existing ones. Hence, there was full agreement on the urgent need to introduce energy saving measures, increase energy efficiency, and enlarge the share of renewable energy resources used in the built environment.

¹ <http://www.environment.fi/sbc>

² <http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/>

³ <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/index.htm>

⁴ <http://www.un.org/events/wssd/>

⁵ <http://www.reeep.org/index.php?id=440&special=showHotTopic&iHotId=778&sQuiteName=news&iQuitId=216>

and other similar pages on the website of REEEP

2. Necessity to review present legislation and prepare basic regulation for energy efficiency in new buildings (new norms and standards that promote the introduction and implementation of energy efficiency measures) both at national, regional (oblast) and local levels. Comparison and harmonization with norms introduced in the European Union could benefit this process.
3. In order to be efficient, new policies will have to include a variety of tools, including innovative incentive mechanisms, evaluation and reporting systems, energy classifications and auditing services, research projects and awareness-raising campaigns.
4. Particular concern on the need to develop strategies and mechanisms for the energy-related refurbishment of existing buildings.
5. Increased attention to the planning and design of residential areas and neighborhoods in order to promote the introduction of energy saving measures and renewable energy sources as well as environmental, economical, social and cultural aspects of sustainability.
6. Need to demonstrate sustainable alternatives with pilot projects, which would utilize the advantages of a multi-stakeholder process involving different levels of government and the input of various different experts, as well as local NGOs and citizen.
7. To speed up an increased application of renewable energy resources, combined heat and power, new concepts for smart grids⁶, technological, regulatory and fiscal innovations should be developed.
8. More emphasis on education, there is an urgent need to increase the knowledge and number of experts on these issues.
9. More concrete cooperation projects were proposed to exchange best practices and best policy practices (in different administration levels), test policy review tools (such as the one developed by UNEP SBCEI), energy efficiency issues in urban planning, and awareness raising campaigns). Measures to increase motivation to act need to be developed.
10. Finally, it was agreed that not one single sector or group of experts can formulate and implement energy efficiency and sustainability targets alone. All stakeholders, both in the public and the private sectors, as well as both expert and citizens' knowledge are needed.

The Co-Chairs' summary will be distributed to all participants, who are encouraged to share it with their colleagues.

With this brief summary the Co-Chairs would like to express their gratitude to the organizers of the conference while stressing the urgency to continue multi-level cooperation on issues mentioned above.

Irina Osokina, Professor
Academician, Russian Academy of Natural Sciences

Kaarin Taipale, Ph.D., Chair, Marrakech Task
Force on Sustainable Buildings and Construction

⁶ A **smart grid** delivers electricity from suppliers to consumers using digital technology to save energy, reduce cost and increase reliability. (Wikipedia)