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PROGRESS REPORT OF WORKING GROUP III
SPECIAL REPORT ON RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES
AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

(Submitted by the Co-Chairs of Working Group III)

PROGRESS REPORT

Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation

1. Background

At the 25th Session of the IPCC in Mauritius, 26 to 28 April 2006, it was decided to carry out a scoping meeting for a possible special report on the contribution of the use of renewable energy sources to the mitigation of climate change. The meeting was held from 21 to 25 January 2008 in Lübeck, Germany. This outline and a Scoping Paper suggesting a Special Report were presented at the 28th IPCC Plenary in Budapest, 9-10 April 2008.

At the 28th IPCC Plenary, the Scoping Paper for the Special Report was accepted with modifications and the Plenary approved the development of a Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation (SRREN) by Working Group III.

The goal of the Special Report is to assess existing literature on the future potential of renewable energy for the mitigation of climate change. The report will cover the six most important renewable energy technologies, as well as their integration into present and future energy systems, the environmental and social consequences associated with them, cost considerations, and strategies to overcome technical as well as non-technical obstacles to their application and diffusion.

2. Progress to Date

After the 28th IPCC Plenary, the IPCC Secretariat called on the government focal points to nominate authors and reviewers for the SRREN. Based on these nominations and in accordance with the IPCC Principles and Procedures, the Bureau of Working Group III selected Co-ordinating Lead Authors (CLAs) and Lead Authors (LAs) for the report.

The SRREN is being written by 123 LAs, working on 11 chapters. 47 of the authors come from countries with economies in transition and developing countries. For the full list of authors see <http://www.ipcc-wg3.de/authors>.

From 26 to 30 January 2009, the first SRREN Lead Author Meeting (LA1) took place in São José dos Campos, Brazil. The goal of the meeting, to initiate the process of writing the Special Report, was successfully accomplished.

During the first LA Meeting, several activities were carried out, including break-out groups for the 11 chapters of the Report, meetings of the Management Team (CLAs and WG III Co-Chairs), and meetings on cross-cutting issues. At the meeting, the authors got acquainted with each other, developed team spirit and agreed on a common approach. On the basis of the structure approved by the IPCC Plenary, work on the report began. The authors of the chapters discussed detailed outlines, agreed on key messages for each chapter and distributed research and writing tasks among the members of each chapter team. In the course of the meeting, the plenary identified cross-cutting themes for which ad-hoc working groups were set up. The following cross-cutting groups, with participants from all chapters concerned, were set up:

- Technology and Integration Group (co-ordination: Wolfram Krewitt)
- Common Metrics Group (co-ordination: William Moomaw)
- Mitigation Scenarios Group (co-ordination: Manfred Fischedick)

During the meeting, the last two groups were merged to form the Scenarios and Metrics Group. Further questions regarding e.g. overlaps among chapters were discussed in meetings of the Management Team. Within this scope, the participants also agreed on a time schedule for the SRREN, which was then adopted by the Co-Chairs of WG III (see point 3.). Overall, the first Lead Author Meeting proved to be a successful start of the SRREN process.

The idea to strengthen coherence between the different mitigation scenarios and the technology chapters obtained wide support. It was discussed, inter alia, how to improve the coherence of the Special Report. In order to achieve this, one or two additional meetings in the second half of 2009 that will comprise relevant CLAs, LAs and additional experts from the economic modelling community, will be held. The meetings will provide a comparison of different scenarios within the modelling community. Furthermore, supporting the exchange of insights between scenario developers and the latest knowledge on sustainable energy technologies is also considered necessary for strengthening the coherence of the whole report. That is, coherence shall be strengthened by improving the alignment between the assumptions of the models and the results of the respective technology chapters. It was also agreed that it would be desirable to assess scenarios exploring the effect of limited availability of different technologies on the cost and the portfolio of mitigation options.

A web-based workspace site has been set up to facilitate communication among the authors.

3. Future Work

With the end of the first LA Meeting, the productive period concerning the first draft (Zero-Order Draft) has started, continuing until 8 June 2009 and followed by the four-week period of internal review by the authors and selected experts. The collation and the first review of the comments by the TSU will follow. The next Lead Author Meeting (LA2) will take place in Norway from 31 August to 4 September 2009. Further key dates are: preparation of the First-Order Draft (FOD, 14 weeks until 14 December 2009), review of the FOD by Expert Reviewers (8 weeks until 8 February 2010), third LA Meeting (March 2010), preparation of the Second-Order Draft (SOD, 8 weeks until 3 May 2010), review of the SOD by experts and governments (8 weeks until 28 June 2010), fourth LA Meeting (July 2010), finalization of the report (8 weeks until 20 September 2010), final government distribution (8 weeks until 15 November 2010), CLA preparatory meeting (December 2010) and WG III Plenary for approval of the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) and of the full report (December 2010), after which the report will be ready for publication.