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**PREPARATION OF A CENTRAL ASIAN RENEWABLE ENERGY (CARE)
PROGRAMME AND ORGANIZATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL DONORS'
FORUM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE
ENERGY SOURCES IN THE REGION**

OUTLINE

Source: Item proposed by Kazakhstan.

Background: Pursuant to 171 EX/Decision 61, a UNESCO Regional Ministerial Conference on the Strategic role of renewable energies in sustainable development in Central Asia was held in Almaty from 17 to 19 May 2006.

Purpose: In Annex I Kazakhstan presents an explanatory note concerning this item.

Decision required: Annex II.

ANNEX I

EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. Pursuant to 171 EX/Decision 61, a UNESCO Regional Ministerial Conference on “The strategic role of renewable energies in sustainable development in Central Asia” was held in Almaty, from 17 to 19 May 2006. It was attended by representatives of the region’s countries (Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Uzbekistan), neighbouring States (Azerbaijan and Turkey), Japan and the Holy See. UNESCO was represented by the Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, Mr Walter Erdelen. Representatives of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and other regional and international organizations also took part. The Almaty Declaration (Appendix to Annex I) was adopted at the conclusion of the Conference.
2. All current research on sustainable development underscores the need to preserve natural energy resources. As energy is a driving force of development, it is of fundamental significance for economic progress and poverty eradication. Meanwhile, in the countries of Central Asia, for instance, despite substantial reserves of hydrocarbon resources, the medical, health, education and socio-economic situation continues to cause concern, given its magnitude and the sheer size of the rural areas where it is impossible to bring electricity, and where many communities have no access to energy.
3. A prime example is the Aral Sea region, recognized by the international community to be an ecological disaster area. The bed of the Aral Sea, laid bare as a result of drying up, has in part become a vast salt desert. Every year, the wind carries between 15 and 75 million tonnes of sand and dust for distances of up to 250 km. Over the last 15 years the number of people in the region suffering from chronic bronchitis, kidney and liver diseases and, in particular, cancer has grown several-fold. The region has one of the highest child mortality rates in the world. Economic crisis is aggravating this tragic ecological and health situation. Traditional occupations connected with the sea have disappeared. Owing to the absence of energy sources, sustainability has been lost and local communities have started to disintegrate.
4. At a time when efforts are being made to move towards renewable energy sources, growth in demand is nevertheless outstripping the introduction of capacities based on renewable energy. Regardless of forecasts of a doubling in global energy consumption by 2060, special efforts are required in order to ensure that the fruits of this increase may be used by the 2 billion people living at present for the most part in rural areas of developing countries who have no access to modern commercial energy services.
5. At the Almaty Regional Conference there were calls for regional cooperation to be developed on issues relating to renewable energy sources and for coordination of such activities by UNESCO. Note was also taken of the important role played by the Global Renewable Energy Education and Training Programme (GREET) and of the need to implement it more widely in Central Asia.
6. The Declaration adopted at the UNESCO Regional Ministerial Conference drew the attention of the international community to the problem of energy resources, which is particularly acute in rural areas of the countries of Central Asia, and paid particular attention to the Aral Sea region, and to ways of resolving its problems by means of renewable energy sources.
7. The Declaration called for the elaboration of a new “Central Asian renewable energy (CARE) programme”, which would include the main regional and national high-priority projects. It also pointed to the desirability of holding an international funding forum in Kazakhstan to identify potential donor institutions and sources, as well as funding mechanisms for the implementation of specific national and regional projects in the field of renewable energies in Central Asia.

8. In order to implement the results of the Almaty Conference, there is a need for continued support from UNESCO with regard to the decisions adopted. Accordingly, Kazakhstan proposes that UNESCO's Member States consider, at the 34th session of the UNESCO General Conference, the "Preparation of a Central Asian renewable energy (CARE) programme and organization of an international donors' forum for the development of renewable energy sources in the region", and submits a draft resolution thereon to the General Conference in Annex II.

Appendix

ALMATY DECLARATION

We, Ministers and Ministers' representatives, have gathered on the occasion of the Regional Conference on "The Strategic Role of Renewable Energies in the Sustainable Development of Central Asia", held from 17 to 19 May 2006 in Almaty, Kazakhstan,

Recalling the resolutions of the United Nations on the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy,

Recalling the recommendations and conclusions contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation") concerning energy for sustainable development,

Recalling also that during its second cycle, in 2006-2007, the Commission on Sustainable Development considered as a high priority the thematic cluster that includes "Energy for sustainable development, Air pollution/Atmosphere, Industrial development and Climate change",

Noting that initiatives and programmes launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization have made a significant contribution towards raising awareness of the increased role of renewable energy sources in the global energy supply,

Commending the initiatives that aim to improve access to reliable, affordable, economically viable and environmentally sound energy services in order to contribute to the attainment of the development goals, including those set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,

Welcoming the efforts made by governments and institutions in Central Asia that have initiated policies and programmes seeking to expand the use of renewable energy for sustainable development; and *recognizing* the contributions of regional initiatives supporting the countries' efforts in this respect,

Recognizing the great potential of renewable energy in Central Asia,

1. *Emphasize* the need to intensify research and development in support of energy for sustainable development, which will require increased commitment on the part of all stakeholders, including governments and the private sector, and to deploy financial and human resources for accelerating research efforts;
2. *Recommend highly* to the countries in the region to take concrete national action, including legislative measures, for wider use of renewable sources of energy;
3. *Call upon* governments in Central Asia, to define a "Central Asian Renewable Energy (CARE) Programme" which will include High National Priority Projects as well as regional-related priorities;
4. *Invite* governments in Central Asia to support, as appropriate, the efforts to be made for the wider development of the renewable energy sector, the saving of energy and its efficient use in order to contribute to meeting the growing energy needs as well as to achieve sustainable development targets;
5. *Call upon* governments in Central Asia to take further action for the provision of financial resources, technology transfer, capacity-building and the dissemination of environmentally sound technologies on a global scale, including through regional cooperation;

6. *Invite* donor countries, international and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and funding sources to provide financial support for the implementation of pilot projects, and to facilitate long-term cooperation in the renewable energy sector in Central Asia;
7. *Invite further* the Government of Kazakhstan to host an International Funding Forum in 2007 in order to identify potential funding institutions and sources as well as the funding mechanisms to implement specific national and regional renewable energy projects;
8. *Request* the Chairman of the Conference, in consultation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and in cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat and other relevant organizations, to report to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its 15th session on the outcome of the Conference and on action being taken for the effective implementation of its recommendations;
9. *Recommend* the launching of a Forum at political and technical level to follow and supervise the implementation of the Conference recommendations and action plan;
10. *Decide* to recommend to the relevant authorities in the respective countries the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the 34th session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2007 of a draft resolution on “Enhancing international cooperation and development of renewable energy in Central Asia”.

ANNEX II

The General Conference,

Bearing in mind resolution 54/215 of the General Assembly of the United Nations of 22 December 1999, and other decisions of the international community confirming the close link between renewable energy sources on the one hand and sustainable development, poverty eradication and support for the ecological equilibrium of the planet on the other,

Taking into account the conclusions of the 14th and 15th sessions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development on the contribution of renewable energy sources to sustainable development, and the report "Delivering as One" of the United Nations High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence in the part concerning the provision of energy,

Recalling paragraph 45 of 155 EX/Decision 4.1 of the Executive Board, which stipulated that UNESCO should continue its action concerning the Aral Sea basin,

Considering the particular importance of the use of renewable energy sources for remote and rural areas in arid and semi-arid zones, particularly in Central Asia,

Taking into consideration 171 EX/Decision 61 of the Executive Board on the organization of a UNESCO regional ministerial conference on the strategic role of renewable energies in sustainable development in Central Asia in Almaty (Kazakhstan), which was held from 17 to 19 May 2006 (hereinafter referred to as the Almaty Conference),

Referring to the conclusions of the Almaty Conference and, in particular, the Declaration adopted in which UNESCO's important mission regarding the development of renewable energy sources was once again underlined,

Welcoming the efforts to formulate national and regional renewable energy policies made by the countries that took part in the Almaty Conference,

Further referring to 176 EX/Decision 24, adopted by the Executive Board at its 176th session, on the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 in the part concerning the provision of assistance to Member States to formulate national policies on renewable energies,

1. *Welcomes* the decisions of the Almaty Conference aimed at developing and implementing a Central Asian renewable energy (CARE) programme, and at convening an international donors' forum in Kazakhstan to identify potential funding sources and mechanisms for the implementation of specific national and regional projects in the field of renewable energies in Central Asia;
2. *Requests* the Director-General to determine the conditions and forms of UNESCO's technical and financial assistance in order to:
 - (a) develop and implement a Central Asian renewable energy (CARE) programme, and enhance the capacities of government officials and experts from the countries of Central Asia in the field of renewable energy sources project management;
 - (b) convene an international donors' forum on renewable energy sources in Central Asia, to be held in Kazakhstan in 2008 or 2009.