

World Energy Supplies on an 'Unsustainable Path' says UNEP

Submitted by: EDW Technology

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In an attempt to refocus attention onto the world's dwindling supply of fossil fuels, the UN Environmental Program (UNEP) has published a dramatic fifth edition of its Global Environmental Outlook. The report says that the world is failing to make any significant progress towards its environmental objectives and is on an 'unsustainable path'.

The report was timed to come out just before the week's Rio+ 20 Summit. The summit is one of the largest environmental meetings in years, where more than 50,000 delegates from governments, companies and environmental organisations will try to agree on new goals on everything from water and food security to energy supplies. But according to the report the delegates will have a lot of work to do. UNEP calls for a greater focus on the policies that target the factors that drive environmental change, such as reliance on fossil fuels for energy production. They also say that there is a need for greater accountability in international agreements and that more reliable data is needed to ensure that policy makers can make better informed decisions.

Backing from the EU

UNEP's findings are backed up by an EU Commission publication, which suggests four main areas where immediate action is needed to ensure that renewable goals for 2020 are met. They believe that intensive action is needed on:

- Market reform to bring about a smoother integration of renewables
- Support schemes that encourage cost reduction and avoid over compensation
- An increased use of co-operation mechanisms that allow renewable energy to be traded between member states
- An integrated regional market in northwest Africa that would facilitate large-scale investments in the region, and allow EU states to import energy.

The communication also proposed setting clear objectives for 2030, including national targets, EU-wide targets and goals for greenhouse gas emissions rather than renewable energy.

Singing from the same songsheet

Industry experts in the wholesale energy supply markets agree with the findings of both reports. "It's good to see that everyone seems to be singing from the same song sheet at last, and the EU's points in particular are ones that we have been raising ourselves for some time now," comments EDW Service Delivery Director, Graham Paul. "But what we've got to see now are two key things – agreement and delivery. Everyone understands what needs to be done to ensure that energy supply in particular keeps pace with demand over the next 20 years, and that wherever possible that energy comes from renewable sources. But while rhetoric is a fine thing and grabs the headlines, it's the delivery

of those targets and how they're incorporated into the existing structure of the energy supply industry that will make all the difference to the bottom line numbers," he adds.

While lifestyle changes and encouraging consumers to change how they look at energy will be an important part of the process, Graham believes that these aren't the only things that have to be considered. "UNEP is right in that we are on an unsustainable path," he comments. "What we have to do now is create a new roadmap that is sustainable but that doesn't include knee-jerk reactive measures that could end up doing more harm than good. The Rio+ summit is probably one of the most important summits in years for the energy supply industry, and we have to make sure that our interests are represented and presented so that informed decisions can be made," he concludes.

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Notes for Editors:

About EDW:

EDW have a long history in developing, implementing and supporting best-of-breed software solutions for retail electricity quoting and customer management including their bespoke energy billing software (<http://www.edwt.org/products/energy-retail-suite-overview/billing>) for the industrial and commercial market sector.

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