



Green growth and energy

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“Global Changes, Green Growth and Energy Utilization”

In the field of development paradigms, it has been clear for long time that there are gaps between their current understanding and the one that is necessary to address evolving economic, social and environmental planning and management issues, as well as their policy, institutional, legal, and technological considerations.

In addition, there are global changes which are affecting, and will continue to affect, green growth and energy use in many different ways. Some of them are population, urbanization, industrialization and, of course, economic growth.

In terms of population structure and distribution, the important underlying trends to consider are:

- An increasing global population, at least to 2050, mostly in urban areas of the developing world, which means potential for urbanization and increasing use of resources.
- Half of the world population growth may occur in only six countries: India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Indonesia. Except for China, and India to some extent, the rest of the countries are well behind development of policies for production of cleaner energy, not to mention development of targeted instruments and technology.

Regarding economic growth, this is one of the most important drivers of resources demand, including energy sources. In the case of the rapidly emerging economies (BRIC countries), they have become major economic and trade partners and competitors, but also resource users and polluters on a scale that is comparable to some of the largest developed countries.

Globally, the pace of economic growth is expected to slow over the next couple of years. In China, its growth has eased slightly, to 10%, and to 8% in India. However, even these “slower” growth rates will have major energy-related implications since they will pose pressure on resource utilization of these two countries, but also in many others in an increasingly globalized world.

In the case of Asia, only between 1985 and 2004, commercial energy consumption increased by 63%, resulting from rapid growth in economies of the countries, and on their population, urbanization and industrialization. If we think on South Asia, per capita energy consumption is below world average, which means that there is a great potential towards increased per capita energy demand in the near future.

At the end, it will be domestic policy decisions and targeted-policy instruments what will promote investments and will help to build the infrastructure required for a greener economy, always looking towards a sustainable growth. Technologies will not solve our problems by themselves, but they can buy time to put policies in place until we improve the management of our resources. In the long-term, the benefits are likely to outweigh the costs.