

PRESS RELEASE IEF REPORT “BIOFUELS: POTENTIAL AND LIMITATIONS”

The International Energy Forum has just released a report by Claude Mandil, former Executive Director of the IEA, and Adnan Shihab-Eldin, former Acting Secretary General of OPEC, on the potential and limitations of biofuels. The impetus for the report's preparation was a call from energy ministers at the 11th IEF Ministerial in Rome to explore the prospective impact of biofuels on the global energy mix. The report, “Biofuels: Potential and Limitations” has been produced for Energy Ministers gathering at the 12th IEF Ministerial in Cancun on 29-31 March 2010.

The report commissioned by the IEF examines the current state of biofuel production and offers recommendations to policymakers on the best way to move forward with biofuel production and distribution. The authors, Claude Mandil and Adnan Shihab-Eldin, acknowledge the potential role of biofuel to contribute usefully to energy security and climate protection but are critical of most first generation biofuels, outside of ethanol produced from sugarcane in Brazil. *“Within the first generation of biofuels, there is a clear consensus that only one is acceptable...this is ethanol produced from sugarcane in Brazil.”*

Their assessment acknowledges the political role that biofuel policies play in many countries, but finds that first generation biofuels (most seriously, those that use corn as feedstock) offer only marginal benefits to energy security and GHG mitigation. The authors argue *“there is an urgent need to review existing biofuels policies...to protect the poor and safeguard against food insecurity”*.

Mandil and Shihab-Eldin see potential in second generation technologies but caution that the commercial realization of these methods may be decades away. The authors find that ambitious biofuel targets have been implemented in many countries without a comprehensive analysis of each feedstock's sustainability and tertiary effect on issues like food prices and land use change. *“...most of the initially established biofuel production targets, which remain generally applicable, are either too ambitious or unsustainable over the long term.”*

They urge policymakers to consider every component and effect—domestic and international—of biofuel production and consumption when forming these targets. The report also calls for a standardization of life cycle assessments to aid in the analysis of biofuel development globally.

The full Report is available for download at www.ief.org

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International Energy Forum (IEF)

The IEF is the world's largest gathering of Energy Ministers. Unique in that participants include not only IEA and OPEC countries, but also key players like Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Russia and South Africa. The IEF countries account for more than 90% of global oil and gas supply and demand. Through the Forum and its associated events, Ministers and Energy Industry Executives participate in a dialogue which is of increasing importance to global energy security. The IEF and the global energy dialogue are promoted by a permanent Secretariat based in the Diplomatic Quarter of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The next IEF Ministerial will be hosted by **Mexico in Cancun 29-31 March 2010**, co-hosted by Germany and Kuwait.

The IEF also co-ordinates the Joint Oil Data Initiative (JODI) in co-operation with APEC, Eurostat, IEA, OLADE, OPEC and the UNSD. For more information visit the JODI web site www.jodidata.org

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