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Global Efficient Lighting Forum Convened to Address Accelerated Transition to Advanced Lighting Technologies

Switch to Efficient Lighting Worldwide Would Result in Savings of US\$120 Billion Annually

Beijing, China, 11 November 2014 – Governments, lighting experts and international donors meeting in Beijing this week have agreed to accelerate the phase-in of advanced lighting technologies to order to save energy, reduce CO₂ emissions, and improve the lives and livelihoods of millions of people who currently lack access to clean, reliable lighting.

The Global Efficient Lighting Forum, co-organized by the United Nations Environment Programme's en.lighten initiative and its collaborating centre in China, the Global Efficient Lighting Centre, brought together more than 200 participants from 60 countries, electrical utilities, leading lighting manufacturers, development banks, financial institutions and international agencies to reaffirm their commitment to mitigate climate change through the rapid global transition to energy-efficient lighting.

A worldwide shift to energy-efficient lighting in all sectors would lower electricity demand for lighting by more than 1,000 terawatt-hours and reduce CO₂ emissions by 530 million tonnes annually. The widespread use of commercially available efficient lamps and lighting devices would reduce electricity bills globally by US\$120 billion each year and avoid the construction of about 280 new coal-fired power plants, saving an additional US\$23 billion.

The Global Forum builds on the momentum of the Climate Summit held in New York in September that motivated governments to take action on a greater scale with regard to energy-efficient technologies. UNEP and its partners are committed to promoting the recommendations arising from the Global Forum into climate negotiations leading up to the COP21 in Paris.

The UNEP en.lighten initiative addresses the challenge of accelerating global market transformation to environmentally sustainable lighting technologies by providing technical support for the transition to energy-efficient lighting. To date, 66 developing and emerging countries have joined the en.lighten initiative and committed to establishing policies and standards to phase out inefficient incandescent lamps by the end of 2016.

Participants also recognized the urgency and importance of bringing modern lighting services to the 1.3 billion people around the world who lack access to the grid. If solar LED lanterns were used in place of kerosene and candles, the health and safety of billions of people would be improved, while displacing 90 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

"Replacing the world's 670 million kerosene lamps with cleaner, safer solar-powered lighting represents a major opportunity to deliver across multiple fronts, from cuts in global carbon emissions, health risks from indoor air pollution, support for green technologies and the generation of green jobs," said Achim Steiner, UN Under Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director.

At the Forum, a formal dinner was held to recognize countries, regional bodies and organizations that have made significant progress with efficient lighting and support global efforts to accelerate the transition. The recipients include the governments of Chile, the Kingdom of Jordan, Tunisia and Uruguay for their leadership in their transition to efficient lighting.

The ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREE) and the 15 member states, along with Proyecto Mesoamerica and its eight member states, were recognized for successfully developing regional frameworks for the shift to efficient lighting. The Department of Industry of Australia was lauded for being the first OECD country to effectively phase-out inefficient incandescent lamps in 2007. The rest of OECD countries followed suit after Australia's move.

Other recipients included IKEA for making the bold commitment to sell only LED lighting in all of its stores around the world by 2016. The Global Environment Facility was recognized for funding efficient lighting activities in more than 40 countries and regions worldwide.

"We are encouraged by the number of countries that have agreed to implement the policies, put in place financial vehicles and strengthen technical capacities to ensure a rapid transition to advanced lighting around the world," said Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility. "We are proud to be recognized as part of this strong movement toward energy efficiency around the world."

The expansion of the effort to transition to efficient lighting globally is the cornerstone of the Lighting Accelerator in the UN Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative Action Agenda. The recommendations and actions resulting from the Global Efficient Lighting Forum are a key contribution in achieving the SE4ALL efficiency goal.

KEY FACTS:

- The en.lighten initiative is a private sector partnership between UNEP, the Global Environment Facility, Philips, Osram, the Chinese National Lighting Test Centre and the Department of Industry, Australia
- If all light sources were switched to LED lamps, global electricity consumption for lighting would be reduced by more than 50 per cent, equivalent to the yearly CO2 emissions of Germany
- By 2030, the electricity used for lighting will increase by one-third, equivalent to the yearly consumption of France and Germany combined, if ambitious targets are not adopted
- The Nobel Prize for Physics 2014 was awarded to the inventors of blue LEDs which has triggered the commercial use of LED lighting as we know it today
- LED technology doubles in performance every two years. LED lamps are constantly decreasing in price, by approximately 20% every year.

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