



GSI Global
Subsidies
Initiative

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The Global Subsidies Initiative (GSI)

Phasing out Fossil Fuel Subsidies: Moving from Rhetoric to Reform

Time: 15:00-17:00, 14 December 2009

Address: Mount Everest 3 Room, Crowne Plaza Copenhagen Towers Hotel, Orestads Blvd 114-118 - Copenhagen

Though long overdue, this potentially transformative issue suddenly reached international consensus since the announcement by G-20 leaders, meeting in Pittsburgh on 24-25 September 2009 that they had agreed to phase out subsidies to fossil fuels over the medium term. Governments recognize that reducing support to fossil fuels will not only save them billions of dollars, but that it can also make a significant contribution to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, leveling the playing field for investments in alternative energy, and encouraging the shift to cleaner and more efficient modes of production and consumption.

While the underlying rationale is tremendously compelling and the goal patently clear, the challenge now lies in implementation: collecting the data, countering political reticence and resistance from entrenched interests, and softening the impact of higher energy prices on the poor. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) invites speakers and observers from a range of G-20 governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as the private sector to focus on how the political commitment to phase out fossil-fuel subsidies can be translated into effective reform.

Agenda:

- 3.00 pm Opening remarks by Mark Halle (moderator), Executive Director, IISD-Europe: The building blocks of fossil-fuel subsidies reform.
- 3.20 pm The perspective of Finance Ministries in fossil-fuel subsidies reform, Per Callesen Deputy Permanent Secretary, Danish Ministry of Finance.
- 3.30 pm National approaches to developing and implementing strategies for reforming fossil fuel subsidies, William A. Pizer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment and Energy, U.S. Department of the Treasury.
- 3.40 pm National approaches to developing and implementing strategies for reforming fossil fuel subsidies, Andrew Dobbie, Department of Energy and Climate Change, United Kingdom
- 3.50 pm Overcoming challenges: the politics of reform and protecting the poor, Representative from a G-20 developing country [to be confirmed]
- 4.00 pm The role of international organizations in supporting reform efforts, Helen Mountford, Acting Deputy Director, Environment Directorate, OECD
- 4.10 pm The role of international organizations in supporting reform efforts, Fatih Birol, Chief Economist, International Energy Agency
- 4.20 pm Questions and discussion
- 5.00 pm End of session