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Green Markets: Investments in sustainable economic development

International UBA Conference provides guidance on sustainable models of prosperity

New ideas for green markets of the future and a “green economy” will be the focus of the agenda at the international conference Green Markets – World of Sustainable Products sponsored by UBA on 29-30 September 2011 in the Urania in Berlin. “Green Economy” stands for resource and energy-efficient economic activity, which is geared towards triggering sustainable development worldwide, at continuing the fight against poverty, and complying with ecological limits. A first step in that direction is investment in green markets of the future. The conference takes place in advance of the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012, where the international community will gather to discuss how to modernise, in ecological terms, both the economy and society. “Green economy is a key strategy to successfully combat hunger and poverty in the world and to contain global economic development within the limits of our planet’s ecological capacity,” said UBA President Jochen Flasbarth.

The pathway to a green economy provides industrial and developing countries with the prospect of ensuring prosperity without encroaching on the limits of the environment. In June 2012 – 20 years after the 1992 Rio Conference – the international community will gather at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). At this so-called ‘Rio +20’ Conference the parties to the conference will discuss how the global community can move towards becoming an environmentally friendly, resource-saving and energy-efficient ‘green economy.’ Flasbarth comments, “Environmental protection may not be regarded as a niche policy. Development towards a green economy not only affects green sectors, but the very core of the economy”.

Investment in green future markets lays the groundwork for a green economy. The Federal Ministry of Environment and the Federal Environment Agency have identified six green lead markets for Germany: environmentally friendly energy production, energy efficiency, material and resource efficiency, sustainable mobility, sustainable water management, and waste and

recycling management. On a global scale these markets alone hold enormous potential valued at up to 3.1 trillion euros by 2020.

The Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe, published on 20 September 2011, details the key components for a transition to an energy and resource-efficient economy in Europe. European Commissioner for Environment Janez Potočnik comments, "In a cooperative effort of Member States and interest groups in industry and civil society, we must create the conditions in which our economy can undergo fundamental changes in the coming years. We must send the right market signals, abolish subsidies harmful to the environment, and promote sustainable production and consumption." Resource efficiency must be borne in mind in all policy-making areas- from waste management, research and innovation, to energy and transport. If nothing else, a true green economy will help to reduce absolute poverty in developing countries. The UN Environment Programme-led Green Economy Initiative of 2008 launched has made several proposals to this end. UNECE General Secretary Ján Kubiš comments, "Investment in natural capital-water, soil, ecosystems- not only makes an important contribution to global climate protection and the preservation of biodiversity, it also represents an investment in the economic viability of billions of people".

More information on the international conference Green Markets - World of Sustainable Products is available at: www.greenmarkets2011.org

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