

**Forum:** Special Conference on Environmental Sustainability

**Issue:** Decreasing the consumption of non renewable energy resources in MEDC's

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## Introduction

Sufficient, reliable sources of energy are a necessity for industrialized nations. Energy is used for heating, cooking, transportation and manufacturing. Energy can be generally classified as non-renewable and renewable. Over 85% of the energy used in the world is from non-renewable supplies. Most developed nations are dependent on non-renewable energy sources such as fossil fuels (coal and oil) and nuclear power. The use of such non-renewable energy sources has led to negative effects, such as the increase of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, global warming, the pollution of water sources, etc.

## Definition of Key Terms

### MEDC

More economically developed countries e.g. Canada, U.S.A

### Consumption

The using up of a resource.

### Non Renewable Energy Resources

These are resources that cannot be produced, re-grown, regenerated, or reused on a scale which can sustain its consumption rate. Fossil fuel (such as coal, petroleum and natural gas) and nuclear power are examples.

### Renewable Resources

Resources that can be replenished at a rate equal to or greater than its rate of depletion; i.e., solar, wind, geothermal and biomass resources.

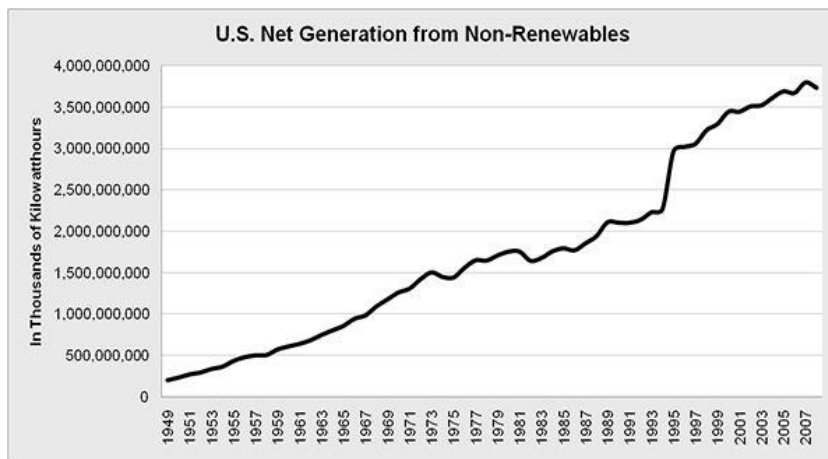
### Energy Sound Technology

Environmentally Sound Technologies (ESTs) are technologies that “protect the environment, are less polluting, use resources in a sustaining manner, recycle more of their wastes and products” Some ESTs can include renewable energy plants, hybrid motor vehicles, and the compact fluorescent light bulb.

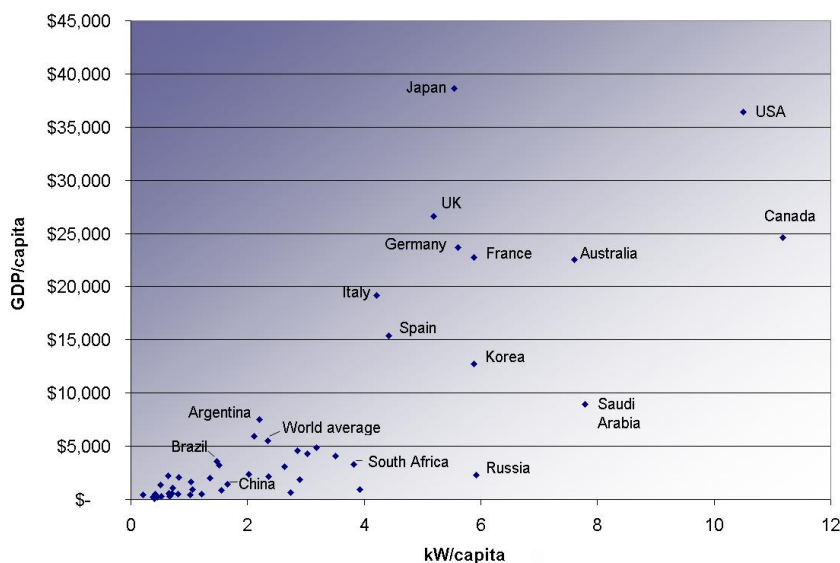
## General Overview

### Challenges to consider

One will find that non-renewable energy is used in various aspects of our lives, most importantly in home appliances and vehicular transportation. One of the biggest barriers in tackling this problem is the lack of accessibility to renewable energy sources, as well the cost and energy needed to replace the nonrenewable energy with renewable energy (Eg. In developing nations, sometimes there is no more space to put in windmills, etc).



**Caption #1: US Energy Generation from Non-Renewables from 1949-2007**



**Caption #2: Energy Consumption v. GDP**

## Possible Solutions

The biggest challenge MEDC's have today is not the lack of resources or technology to help them decrease the consumption of non renewable energy resources, but rather, the "implementation" of such measures. After all, technology can be developed, and plans can be written – but they have to be put into action.

### *Switching to renewable energy sources / more energy sound technology*

One way we can decrease our consumption of nonrenewable energy resources is to replace them with renewable ones. Renewable energy resources can include wind, hydroelectric, biomass and solar power. Governments can also promote energy sound technology through granting subsidies, so that the price of such EST's can remain at a competitive level.

### *Establishing relevant laws and plans*

These laws should include specific goals, dates, as well as incentives for the MEDC governments to agree to it. They also need to be feasible, and enforceable.

### *Education and public awareness campaigns*

If the public is more aware of the risks that non renewable energy resources pose to our environment, they will be more inclined to use and support a decrease in consumption and switch to other alternatives. Public awareness will help a nation move forward and gain support for any future plans.

### *Further research and development of EST's*

Another key solution to decreasing the consumption of non renewable energy resources is further research in the field of renewable resources and energy friendly technology. Scientists can collaborate on ways in developing more efficient and economic alternatives. They can also work on ways to economic incentives for companies who's interests might be in opposition to the decreased consumption of non renewable energy resources.

## Timeline of Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of event</b>
December 1992	General Assembly Resolution A/RES/47/191 calls for the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development
1973	UNESCO calls for the international solar energy congress entitled " <i>The Sun in the Service of Mankind</i> "

1984	International Conference on Environment and Economics (OECD) is held with the outcome that the environment and economics should aim for mutual reinforcement
1999	Dow Jones Sustainability Group Indexes is created, being the first global sustainability index tracking leading corporate sustainability practices worldwide.
2000	Meeting of the world's nations and leaders to discuss the state of the UN and world at the turn of the century. The Millennium Summit resulted in the creation of the eight Millennium Development Goal, of which Goal 4 is Protecting our Common Environment
2002	The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), is adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002

## UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The UN has done much to promote sustainable energy and discourage the use of non-renewable energy. However, these efforts have mostly been focused on the plight of developing nations, which lack the necessary resources needed to implement changes. Nevertheless, here are some documents that may be of interest to you:

- Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, 4 September 2002, **(A/CONF.199/20)**
- CSD Report on the Ninth session, 27 April 2007, **(E/CN.17/2001/19)**
- Overview of progress towards sustainable development: A review of the implementation of Plan Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg of Implementation - Report of the Secretary-General, 5, May 2005 **(E/CN.17/2008/2)**

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