



Rat für  
NACHHALTIGE  
Entwicklung

## Press Release

### **Farmed fuel is an exemplar of unsustainability**

#### **“Conserving biodiversity now means: Making biomass production sustainable” – German Council for Sustainable Development presents policy recommendations**

**Berlin, 6 March 2008** – In the run-up to the world summit on biological diversity, the German Council for Sustainable Development RNE urges the German federal government to take action to counter the adverse effects of bioenergy production. “Excessive biofuel production is a prime example of how to lock into an unsustainable development path” says Hubert Weinzierl, President of the German League for Nature and Environment DNR and responsible at the Council for drafting the recommendations.

“In all three dimensions – social, ecological and economic – we see unsustainable developments” notes Mr Weinzierl, stressing that there will be social disruption on a global scale if our worldwide relations come to be dominated by an interest in automotive fuels. Moreover, given that requirements would far outstrip any natural cultivation potential, biofuel production does not make economic sense. Therefore, says Mr Weinzierl, the Council confirms the critical assessments produced by scientists who are warning of the adverse effects that excessive expansion of the biomass economy would have for worldwide species diversity and the global climate and environment, and for the social situation of rural populations in developing countries.

In view of the global intensification of the biomass economy, the Council recommends that the German federal government, as host of the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, launches a major initiative to adopt an international protocol on bioenergy modelled on the Biosafety Protocol. The path towards sustainable bioenergy production ultimately needs to be found at global

level, stresses Mr Weinzierl. This also presents a need, however, to take action at national level.

The Council urges national policymakers to substantially reduce the legally-binding quota for the admixture of bioenergy to automotive fuels, and to set strict criteria for assessing the sustainability of the cultivation and processing of biomass products. Hubert Weinzierl goes on: “We warn against an imbalanced development of biomass production solely in favour of farmed fuels”. He notes that food supply should take priority. Biomass cultivation should not lead to a situation in which there is competition between the “pump” and the “plate”. Be this as it may, there is a need to produce and use biomass. The way this is done must be aligned internationally because burning the last fossil fuels is reckless and ethically irresponsible. “We need a fundamental transformation of the way energy is used for mobility. Biofuels are only a small part of the solution. Consumption levels must be reduced, other types of mobility pursued and completely new technologies developed.”

The Council for Sustainable Development argues for intensified research on new ways to cultivate and use bioenergy. It urges a comprehensive assessment against sustainability criteria of all energy sources.

The recommendations on biodiversity produced by the German Council for Sustainable Development RNE are available for download from its website:

[http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/uploads/media/RNE\\_Stellungnahme\\_Biodiversitaet\\_und\\_Biomasse\\_20-02-2008.pdf](http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/uploads/media/RNE_Stellungnahme_Biodiversitaet_und_Biomasse_20-02-2008.pdf).

---

Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel hat den Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung im Mai 2007 neu berufen. Die Mitglieder des Rates entwickeln Beiträge für die Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie und –politik der Bundesregierung, benennen konkrete Handlungsfelder und Projekte und setzen sich dafür ein, dass Nachhaltigkeit zu einem wichtigen öffentlichen Anliegen wird. Informationen zum Rat und seinen Mitgliedern finden Sie auf [www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de](http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de).

Was ist Nachhaltigkeit? Nachhaltige Entwicklung heißt, Umweltgesichtspunkte gleichberechtigt mit sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Gesichtspunkten zu berücksichtigen. Zukunftsfähig wirtschaften bedeutet also: Wir müssen unseren Kindern ein intaktes ökologisches, soziales und ökonomisches Umfeld hinterlassen. Das eine ist ohne das andere nicht zu haben.

**Kontakt:**

Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung, Geschäftsstelle  
Dr. Günther Bachmann  
Potsdamer Platz 10, D-10785 Berlin  
[T] +49(0)30 408190122  
[F] +49(0)30 408190125  
[E] [guenther.bachmann@nachhaltigkeitsrat.de](mailto:guenther.bachmann@nachhaltigkeitsrat.de)  
[W] [www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de](http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de)

**Presseanfragen:**

g+h communication  
Rhan Gunderlach / Annette Hornung-Pickert  
Leibnizstraße 28, D-10 625 Berlin,  
[T] +49(0)30 23 62 46 - 03  
[F] +49(0)30 23 62 46 - 04  
[E] [info@gundh.com](mailto:info@gundh.com)  
[W] [www.gundh.com](http://www.gundh.com)