

## PART III – CONCLUSION

Legislation on the commercial production and trade of bioenergy on international markets cannot be examined in isolation. Only through the identification and assessment of the many activities, institutions, policies and legislative provisions related directly or indirectly to bioenergy at the national level can governments identify strengths, weaknesses, overlaps and gaps. A firm legal basis is fundamental to properly regulate and support the development of bioenergy. Countries that have sound policies to promote the production and use of bioenergy will be at the forefront of realizing the economic and environmental benefits of this sector.

The relationships between bioenergy and sustainable development are complex, and depend on several factors, including the energy crop, method of cultivation, conversion technology and the conditions and alternatives in the specific country. The impacts of policy and legislation in related sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, environment and trade can have a profound effect on the development of effective bioenergy programmes.

To achieve an interdisciplinary approach to bioenergy, governments must promote institutional capacity building at the national level so as to ensure coordination among key stakeholders. Governments should encourage cooperation between ministries responsible for energy, agriculture, environment, industry and trade and the private sector. One way to do so is to establish national commissions or boards on bioenergy in which all concerned ministries and outside organizations, industry groups and NGOs are represented.

A better understanding of the linkages between different areas of law and a coherent approach to bioenergy would reduce legal uncertainties and encourage the optimal development of the sector. Coordination in this area may be intersectoral, intrasectoral or cross-sectoral, aligning international and national efforts. In any case, strong political will and commitment are required at all levels of government. In order to streamline bioenergy policies and laws, the underlying social, economic, cultural and political causes of non-compliance must be reviewed, as well as the impact of the energy policy and legal framework on the environment, rural development and the poor.

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In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the need for sound regulatory frameworks for bioenergy. Faced with high petroleum and natural gas prices, and increasingly aware of climate change and environmental concerns, many countries are implementing national policies and legislation to encourage bioenergy production and use. These developments stem from the desire to achieve energy security and self-sufficiency, the need to reduce reliance on foreign fossil fuel reserves and the hope of providing increased trade opportunities for some agricultural commodities. Land use, and the competing needs of energy and food security, are key issues in the bioenergy debate. International and national regulatory frameworks will have to establish clear guidelines for the sustainable development of the bioenergy industry. This paper aims to stimulate discussion on the elements of appropriate national legal frameworks for bioenergy, particularly in developing countries. It provides legislators and policy-makers with a tool to assist in identifying areas of law which may affect bioenergy regulation, and in designing key elements of national bioenergy laws.

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