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RUSSIA LOOKS TO DEEPEN ENERGY, HI-TECH COOPERATION WITHIN APEC

Excerpt from report by Russian news agency RIA Novosti

Moscow, 14 November: Energy security and cooperation in the innovative technologies sector are to be priority areas for Russia in international collaboration, including at the regional level.

"As for our future plans, an accent will be placed on areas that are a priority for Russia, including at the regional level, such as energy security and cooperation in the innovative technologies sector," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview to RIA news agency in the run-up to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum opening this week in the South Korean town of Pusan.

Lavrov said that energy security, for understandable reasons, was also the main priority for Russia's chairmanship of the G8 (from January 2006).

"We would like the number of APEC events held in Russia to increase. We are trying to draw our regions, particularly Siberia and the Far East, into this more widely," Lavrov explained.

He said that, in particular, discussions are taking place on holding a session of the APEC Energy Working Group in Russia in the second half of 2006 and a session of the Industrial Science and Technology Working Group in 2007.

Lavrov also expressed the hope that by 2007, when the working group session is held, the Centre for Scientific, Technical and Innovation Technology Cooperation between Russia and APEC, which has been set up in Vladivostok under the auspices of the Russian Ministry of Education and Science and Rosnauka [Federal Agency for Science], "can build up solid potential".

Lavrov said that the experience acquired - which is largely successful - shows that "this practice significantly expands opportunities for our cooperation with partners in the Asia-Pacific Region, increases Russia's standing in the forum, and helps to improve coordination of areas of regional cooperation that are important both for us and for APEC in general".

Lavrov said that 2005 had been very productive in this respect. He said that a special APEC seminar on issues concerning the energy efficiency of the economy had been held

in Moscow, along with a meeting of the APEC Energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation Expert Group. In Vladivostok a series of events was held on developing regional transport cooperation, including meetings of the APEC Transportation Working Group and special expert groups and committees.

"All these were praised by participants, both from the point of view of their organization and their content," Lavrov stressed.

[Passage omitted: details of APEC forum agenda]

Lavrov hopes that the meeting in Pusan will result in the outlining of "a kind of route for the further progress of APEC towards fulfilling its most important mission: the creation of a stable and safe environment for socio-economic development in the Asia-Pacific Region".

[Passage omitted: previously reported details]

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