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on climate change and sustainable development

AT THE THIRD SESSION OF THE IRENA ASSEMBLY: DAY 2

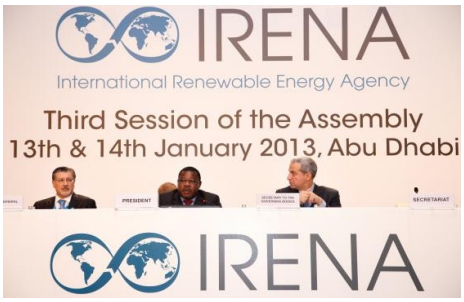
IRENA LAUNCHES ROADMAP TO DOUBLE RENEWABLE ENERGY BY 2030

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is leading a global initiative on Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) to mobilise action from all sectors of society in support of three interlinked objectives to be achieved by 2030:

1. Ensure universal access to modern energy services;

2. Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and

3. Double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix



The third session of the IRENA Assembly took place on 13th & 14th January 2013 in Abu Dhabi

Speaking on the final day of the third IRENA Assembly in Abu Dhabi, Dr. Robert F. Ichord, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Energy Resources, U.S. Department of State, described the momentum and support that has gathered for the initiative since its inception in September 2011.

As a result of this momentum, in September last year Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened a high-level meeting on SE4ALL in New York, and – together with Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank – expressed support for a new phase to implement the aspirational goals.

In this context, IRENA has launched REMAP 2030, a global roadmap to identify the policies and actions required to double the share of renewable energy (to 30%) by 2030. The launch, which took place yesterday at the third IRENA Assembly, marks the start of a process which will invite experts and policy makers from across the globe to assess the challenges and opportunities in meeting that goal, taking into account the interactions between renewable energy and the other two SE4ALL objectives. IRENA's initial analysis suggests that increasing the share of renewable energy to 30% is achievable.

Director-General of IRENA, Adnan Z. Amin

Speaking at a thematic presentation yesterday afternoon, IRENA's Director-General Adnan Z. Amin presented some of the preliminary findings of the REMAP 2030 project, which indicate that, if progress continues at the current pace, renewable energy will account for 21% of the global energy mix in 2030, leaving a gap of 9%. This presents a significant challenge that requires action at all levels and in different sectors, and Mr Amin invited governments to show their support by nominating national experts to take part.

Dr Ichord said that IRENA was well positioned as a renewables hub for multilateral action and cooperation and is already playing a key role in the implementation of SE4ALL through activities on policy and enabling environments, technology and knowledge development, financing and innovation models, and outreach and partnership.

In response to the presentations, India raised concerns about IRENA's involvement with the SE4ALL initiative, which was not agreed by consensus at Rio+20. In particular, the Indian delegation highlighted that Rio+20 had given clear primacy to access to energy and they therefore had issue with the focus on the goal to double the share of renewables in the global energy mix. To

close their statement India reiterated that agreements made at the Rio+20 Summit should not be renegotiated in other forums.

Seemingly pre-empting the comments from India – which had previously been raised in the morning's ministerial roundtables and at last year's high-level meeting on SE4ALL – in his presentation Mr Amin emphasised that IRENA's involvement was based on the distinction that the initiative provides a collaborative platform to facilitate cooperation between different constituencies, rather than giving directives or binding goals.

He continued to say that IRENA would still be conducting research into ways to increase the global share of renewables were SE4ALL not to exist, but that the initiative provides an organising framework for stakeholders that the Agency can utilise to advance their mission.

In contrast to India, Germany voiced their commitment to the goals of SE4ALL and said that IRENA's involvement was appropriate given their unique positioning and as SE4ALL was not a negotiated outcome of Rio+20 but a Secretary-General initiative. They stated their support of REMAP 2030 and their intention to contribute to the work with both data and experts.

IRENA'S GLOBAL RENEWABLE ENERGY ISLANDS NETWORK: A HELPING HAND FOR SIDS

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face a range of unique energy challenges. With virtually no conventional energy resources of their own and often being situated huge distances away from energy producing countries, most have remained dependent upon the expensive importing of fossil fuels across long distances. Renewable energy generation within these island territories would therefore seem to be both a practical and financially beneficial solution to this dilemma, although generating clean energy at the domestic level in SIDS is not without its own challenges. Not least of which are the costs of renewables projects, which can be especially high when considering that many options at the cheaper end of the scale, such as onshore wind, are simply not possible due to a lack of suitable land to house them upon.

Jackson Ngiraingas, Minister for Public Infrastructure, Industries and Commerce, Palau

Nevertheless, most SIDS have now set ambitious renewables targets and are exploring innovative solutions to increase the scale and efficiency of clean energy generation programmes. For example, Grenada's 'Greenada Vision' aims at 100% renewable energy for electricity generation and transport by 2030, and the Maldives has pledged to become carbon neutral by 2020 and – like many other SIDS – is taking major steps to reach this target. These steps include projects such as the development of mini-grids for renewable energy at the community level, something which the tiny Pacific state of Palau is currently attempting to construct. Palau is also looking to replicate an example of best practice from the Seychelles, in which individual households are able to sell back surplus renewable energy they produce from small scale solar and biogas facilities, providing an additional source of income which can potentially facilitate further micro-economic development. Yet while successful examples of renewable energy deployment in SIDS do exist, barriers associated with underpinning regulatory, financial, technical, institutional and market conditions required to support the sector continue to limit progress.

It is because of these very specific challenges – along with clear opportunities for transferable solutions – that a number of Pacific island states have called upon IRENA develop a renewable energy network specifically for islands. In response, with the financial support from Germany and the United Arab Emirates, IRENA has created the Global Renewable Energy Islands Network (GREIN), to facilitate continual dialogue between Pacific SIDS and take a demand driven-approach to tackling the specific barriers these countries face in their transitions to renewable energy. GREIN has two main objectives: build the capacity of participating islands' policy makers, utilities, regulators and financial institutions; and linking renewable energy skills required by the market to higher education programmes.

Despite only being in its infancy, it would seem that it will not be long before GREIN is expanded to engage SIDS from other regions, with a representative of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) present at the IRENA Assembly stating the group's support for the initiative and its intention to work with IRENA to discuss how it can become involved. Strong political will within SIDS for the implementation of country-wide renewable energy projects, in combination with the creation of essential support mechanisms such as GREIN to guide transitions to clean energy, could potentially see small islands achieve lasting energy security much sooner than most other countries currently struggling to leave behind conventional energy infrastructures.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

Furthermore, as Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme stated whilst chairing a Ministerial Roundtable at the IRENA Assembly, conventional large centralised projects will not be able to solve the energy dilemma. It is instead new thinking and context-specific policy initiatives that directly engage local communities – such as those being developed within SIDS – which will ultimately deliver sustainable energy for all.

WELL-CHOSEN TARIFF SCHEMES CAN BOOST RENEWABLE ENERGY SCALE-UP

Effective policies, selected and adapted to suit local conditions, are essential to increase the share of renewable energy in countries at every stage of economic development. Renewable energy deployment is increasingly cost competitive and is at the centre of global efforts to reduce CO2 emissions and extend sustainable energy to everyone on the planet**.**

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) organised an all-day "Workshop on Renewable Energy Policies" on 12 January in collaboration with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The discussion took place ahead of the third Assembly of IRENA in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, a global gathering for policy discussions about how to double the share of renewables in the global energy mix by 2030.

Anywhere in the world, investment in renewable power generation depends on stable regulatory frameworks, transparent planning processes and clear procedures for connection to the grid, workshop participants agreed.

However, there are no "one size fits all" support schemes. Policies – including feed-in tariffs (FITs), auctions, and feed-in premiums (FIPs) – need to be adapted to local conditions and varying degrees of market maturity. Hybrid approaches are becoming more common, particularly in developing countries, and local communities must be consulted and included to maximise employment opportunities and local added value, which builds confidence in renewables as the basis for a better future.

Investors, too, need to have confidence in the market, and the creation of stable long-term policies is essential to the successful deployment of renewable energy in every market. Feed-in tariffs are the most widely used scheme and carry the lowest risk. Auctions – although often seen as unsuccessful in the previous decade – are increasingly common for wind and other large-scale renewable energy projects.

Even as governments slash green subsidies, renewable forms of energy are rapidly becoming cheaper than oil and gas in many markets.

"Today, renewable energy is more cost-competitive than fossil-based energy if you have the right policy framework," said Yannick Glemarec, Director of Environmental Finance at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). "Renewables are the best way for oil-importing countries to save money."

In much of Europe, support schemes for renewables are subject to uncertainty because of public deficits, with Spain, Portugal, Latvia, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic all putting commitments to renewable energy on hold. Even in difficult economic times,

however, governments can "invest scarce public funds… to create the enabling environment to mobilise private finance" for renewable energy deployment, Glemarec said.

"For me, one of the most pleasantly surprising things about this workshop was the convergence of views of all the participants, from different institutions, on what it will take to upscale renewable energy," he added. "And it isn't subsidies. It's to establish an enabling policy environment to reduce investment risk."

Presenters from Germany, Cyprus, Malaysia and South Africa shared the experiences of their countries with various feed-in systems. Participants also discussed ways IRENA could assist its 160 participating countries through its Renewable Energy Policy Advisory Network (REPAN). IRENA, established in 2011, has become the policy hub for efforts to double the share of renewables in the global energy mix by 2030 and provide sustainable energy for all.

Renewable energy deployment has often been hindered by unclear policy frameworks, which have in turn made project financing difficult. Frequent, unpredictable changes reduce investment certainty, whereas transparent schedules and adjustment methodologies increase predictability. Retro-active changes in policy, in particular, undermine investor confidence. Tariff levels should not be influenced by lobby groups but defined by panels of experts or in a competitive process, workshop participants said.

An IRENA policy expert, Dr Rabia Ferroukhi, introduced and compared FITs, FIPs, and auctions – how they work, their benefits and drawbacks. By early 2012, more than 60 countries were using FITs or FIPs, compared to only 30 countries in 2005, she noted. These schemes have become increasingly popular, especially in developing countries. One of IRENA's forthcoming reports, entitled, 'Assessment of Renewable Energy Tariff-Based Support Mechanisms', focuses on auctions schemes, presenting case studies from Brazil, China, France, Morocco, Peru and South Africa.

Although FITs and FIPs are still the most popular mechanisms, the use of auctions is increasing worldwide, Dr Ferroukhi said. Over time, FITs, FIPs and auctions have undergone significant changes in the way they are designed, making all three systems more effective and efficient, she added. "Each country has its unique policy goals and capabilities."

FITs have the drawback of being discontinuous, with stop and go cycles. Fixed FITs require low capital cost, create high technology diversity, involve a broad spectrum of investors, and are suitable for immature markets.

Another session of the workshop highlighted support policies for wind energy based on research by IRENA, the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) and UNDP, while a third session focused on adapting renewable energy tariffs to immature energy markets in developing countries.

ABOUT

Outreach is the longest continually produced stakeholder magazine in the sustainable development arena. Published as a daily edition, Outreach provides a vehicle for critical analysis on key thematic topics in the sustainability and climate change arenas, giving a voice to individuals and organisations from all stakeholder groups. www.stakeholderforum.org/sf/outreach/

Outreach is published by Stakeholder Forum, an international organisation working to advance sustainable development and promote democracy at a global level. www.stakeholderforum.org

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Outreach is made possible by the generous support of:

IRENA
International Renewable Energy Agency

IRENA EVENTS AT THE WORLD FUTURE ENERGY SUMMIT – Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) Abu Dhabi, 15-17 January

Date	Type of Event/Venue	Time	Title
15th January	Side event	3:30-5.30pm	Renewables Readiness Assessment (RRA)
	Presentations at IRENA booth	12pm	Global Renewable Energy Island Network
		1pm	REMAP 2030
		1:30pm	Technology briefs
		2pm	Global Atlas
		2:45pm	Project Navigator
		3:30pm	Standards
		4pm	Costing Reports
		5pm	African power sector modelling
16th January	Side event	3:00pm	Renewable Energy Policy for the 21st Century (IRENA / REN21)
	Presentations at IRENA booth	10:45	IRENA Renewable Energy Learning Partnership
		11:30	REMAP 2030
		12pm	Technology briefs
		12.30pm	Global Renewable Energy Islands Network (GREIN)
		1pm	African power sector modelling
		1.30pm	Standards
		2.45pm	Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD)
		3.45pm	Kiribati Renewables Readiness Assessment
		4.45pm	Costing
		5.45pm	Global Renewable Energy Atlas
17th January	Side event	12.30pm	Renewable Energy in the Gulf (IRENA / EWS / WWF)
	Side event	1pm	Innovation for Accelerating the Deployment of Renewable Energy
	Presentations at IRENA booth	10:45	Project Navigator
		11:45	Global Renewable Energy Islands Network (GREIN)
		12:30	Costing
		1.45pm	Renewables Readiness Assessments (RRAs) in Africa
		2.30pm	REMAP 2030
		3:00pm	Technology briefs
		3:45pm	Global Renewable Energy Atlas
		3:45Pm	Kiribati Renewables Readiness Assessment
		4:45pm	IRENA Renewable Energy Learning Partnership