

IRENA-Africa High-Level Consultations on Partnership on Accelerating Renewable Energy Uptake for Africa's Sustainable Development, 08-09 July 2011

## ABU DHABI COMMUNIQUÉ ON RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR ACCELERATING AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

We, Ministers of Energy and heads of delegations of African countries and the African Union Commission and the Conference of Energy Ministers of Africa (CEMA), met at the invitation of IRENA in Abu Dhabi, UAE, 08-09 July 2011, hosted by the UAE Government. Participants included regional economic communities, national bodies, international partners, UN-Economic Commission for Africa, EU-Africa Energy partnership, World Bank, UNIDO, UNEP, UN-Habitat, Global Environment Facility, Paris-Nairobi Climate Initiative, key energy companies, NGOs research agencies and others.

Our discussions were guided by the February 2009 African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government decision to: "develop renewable energy resources in order to provide clean, reliable, affordable and environmentally friendly energy," (Assembly/AU/Decl. 9-XII) and the November 2010 Maputo Declaration of the Conference of Energy Ministers of Africa to "promote renewable energy in a joint effort with others to ... address all issues relating to climate change..."

We were also informed by the Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as well as IRENA's report, Scenarios and Strategies for Africa, which provide compelling evidence of the serious energy challenges faced by the region.

At a time of economic growth and opportunity in Africa, meeting energy needs and addressing the challenge of energy access and energy security is an issue of primary significance for Africa, in order to mitigate the negative effects of price volatility, supply insecurity and environmental degradation.

We also recognize the significant potential of renewable energy to accelerate African low carbon development and address climate change mitigation and adaptation. Achieving these outcomes will require:

- Assessment of existing conditions and needs and building regional cooperation in order to address those needs and opportunities
- O Strengthening national, regional and continental policy frameworks to stimulate investment in and ensure sustainable deployment of renewable energy
- O Supporting research and development on RE technology and innovation within the continent and through South-South cooperation.



The African continent sees great promise in working with IRENA, whose Assembly has given it a strong mandate regionally and globally to support member states in accelerating the adoption of renewable energy.

## CONSIDERING THE ABOVE, WE HAVE AGREED THE FOLLOWING:

- i. We are launching a concerted effort among all participating governments, agencies, non-governmental bodies and the private sector to promote intensified utilization of Africa's vast renewable energy resources for accelerating Africa's development, considering the need to:
  - a. ensure that IRENA's policy for Africa responds to the priority concerns of the continent.
  - b. ensure a well-integrated IRENA programme for Africa, which will cooperate closely with the AUC, CEMA, RECs, national governments and all other partners,
  - c. develop a concrete and practical approach to supporting the knowledge, technology, capacity and policy needs of African countries.
- ii. A crucial first step will be to better understand the opportunities and constraints in our countries and regions by mapping "Renewable Energy Readiness", a collaborative process that will provide a rapid, objective assessment of the status of renewable energy opportunities, and identify pathways to address gaps. We urge governments and other stakeholders to participate in design and implementation of this initiative.
- iii. We will further engage with IRENA, as the key inter-governmental forum on renewable energy, in providing a platform for charting collaborative action strategies for accelerating implementation of African policies, and initiatives on renewable energy, focusing in particular on:
  - a. Improving policy frameworks to ensure investment grade public/private financing, while taking into account special measures needed to ensure social inclusion
  - b. Brokering services in capacity building including for entrepreneurs in renewable energy
  - c. Cooperation on technology and innovation to enhance endogenous human and physical capacity to accommodate expanded renewables deployment
  - d. Fostering regional and local level renewable energy technology production and service industries
  - e. Supporting communication campaigns to promote uptake of renewable energy.
- iv. Participants urged IRENA, in its messages to the international community at CoP-17, Rio+20 and other major events, to build on this communiqué and emphasize the following:



- a. Providing strategic support for renewable energy in the context of the Green Economy, including assessment of the impact of market distorting subsidies that inhibit the deployment of renewable energy; targeted studies on employment implications of expanded renewables deployment, policies for employment creation through renewable energy and related themes,
- advocating increased international support to Africa on technical capacity building, policy advisory services, investment financing tools and industrial strategies for accelerating renewable energy up-take, while ensuring adequate provision of domestic resources
- c. Using the 2012 International Year of Sustainable Energy for All to carry forward Africa's renewable energy strategies.
- v. We agree to work towards formalizing IRENA's strategic presence in Africa and concretizing institutional arrangements for cooperation with African regional bodies and strategic partners in the sector; furthermore, we urge all African states who have not done so to become full members of IRENA.
- vi. We shall extend full cooperation and support to IRENA to ensure it fulfils its critical mandate to accelerate the adoption of renewable energy globally, and to work together to make Africa a lead region in the transition to renewable energy.

Abu Dhabi, UAE, 09 July 2011