

Connie Hedegaards tale ved konference for IRENA

26-01-2009

Ministertale til stiftende konference for IRENA Bonn den 26. januar 2009

[fem minutter]

Distinguished delegates and colleagues. Dear friends.

Today, we celebrate the creation of a catalyst for change.

Today, we reaffirm our commitment to global energy security and united action to mitigate climate change.

Today, we light a beacon that will guide us on our way to a low-carbon future.

Denmark has long been an advocate for renewable energy and energy efficiency. For many years we have held that this vital agenda was homeless in the international family. That is why we introduced the idea of an international institution for renewable energy at the Johannesburg Summit back in 2002. And that is why I am so very pleased to stand here today.

Seven years after Joburg, WE are now establishing that home. TOGETHER, we will create a much needed platform for sharing of best practices and sustain momentum around one of the most crucial agendas of our time.

I commend you for your leadership and for your commitment to the International Renewable Energy Agency.

In the years to come this institution will be a lighthouse for all of us – developing as well as developed countries.

It will guide us as we go on to investment in renewable energy and energy efficient solutions.

It will provide ideas and solutions as we move from the era of climate talks to an era of climate action.

And it will bring clarity as we realise that the challenges of the 21st century are inherently interlinked.

Amid the current global financial crisis, true international leaders have reaffirmed their commitment to renewable energy. They understand that sustained economic growth goes hand in hand with energy, water and food security.

They realise that only by addressing the climate challenge can we afford growth and through that increase our global security and wealth.

And true international leader know that investing in research and development of new renewable energy technologies will help us through the financial crisis.

Just last week I visited Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – taking part in the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi. Both countries as we all know are rich in oil and natural gas – BUT ALSO committed to a low-carbon future. Abu Dhabi last Monday announced a goal of 7 percent renewable energy in 2020, whereas Saudi Arabia this fall will open a new 100 percent solar driven university.

As Bob Dylan sang, the times they are a changing. Why? Because still more people understand that renewable energy is good business, its new jobs, and its a growth opportunity.

I say this with confidence. Denmark has proved it to be true. Since 1980 our economy has grown by 78 percent. Our economy is one of the strongest in Europe. Our unemployment rate one of the lowest - below 2 percent.

Meanwhile, our intake of renewable energy has grown from almost nothing in 1980 to now 17 percent of total energy consumption – based on wind and biomass. In 2011 it will be 20 percent. In 2020 it will be 30 percent. Renewable energy technology is one of our fastest growing export areas. And the renewable industry has created thousands and thousands of jobs – by the way primarily in rural areas of the country – areas that earlier on were hard hit by outsourcing.

Denmark's track record shows very clearly that it pays off to invest in renewable energy. And our long term vision is to become completely independent of fossil fuels – replacing it with renewable energy.

As we progress towards this goal we will need to tap into the knowledge base of others. IRENA makes this much easier. We look forward to sharing our experiences with you along the way.

TOGETHER, we know the challenges. And jointly we hold most of the answers to creating the low-carbon economies of the future. IRENA will help us share, implement, progress and reap the benefits of renewable energy.

Today, we have seized a great opportunity for change – for the benefit of all of us – and generations to come. We should congratulate the world with the establishment of this new home for one the most important energy sources of the future: Renewable energy.

Thank you.