

## **IRENA takes off**

*500 delegates from 120 Member States attended IRENA's third session of the Preparatory Commission in Abu Dhabi*

**Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 17 January 2010** – Member States of IRENA met today in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, to decide on the Agency's Work Programme and Budget for 2010. Five hundred delegates from 120 Member States discussed the different tasks and projects the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) will tackle this year.

In 2010, IRENA will set out to establish itself as the global base for renewable energy knowledge. Collecting, generating and sharing knowledge about renewable energy will be a central activity of the Agency. IRENA will act as a clearing house, informing about existing renewable energy technologies that have worked well in the past and could be deployed globally, as well as about promising innovative technologies. IRENA will, in 2010, start advising its Members regarding successful policies and financial schemes to promote renewables, as well as related capacity building and training programmes.

With an adopted budget of US \$13,7 million for 2010, IRENA will focus on building a network of international renewable energy experts, starting to map the global potential of renewables and build up a comprehensive database of policies to promote renewable energy. H el ene Pelosse, Interim Director-General of IRENA stated: "IRENA will become a one-stop-shop for up-to-date and relevant information on renewable energy. With this knowledge, IRENA will assist its members in advancing renewables in their own national policies and programmes."

Kyrgyzstan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and South Africa signed IRENA's Statute during the conference. During his speech, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, also announced that Saudi Arabia is planning to become a Member of IRENA. The Agency's membership almost doubled since 75 countries founded IRENA in January last year. With 142 Signatories to date, almost three quarters of the UN membership have signed IRENA's Statute. This broad acceptance reflects the importance given by states worldwide to the production and use of renewable energy. Pelosse underlines: "The creation of IRENA is just one example of a new spirit of global cooperation."

After Member States took decisions on IRENA's staff rules, all is set for recruitment. Hélène Pelosse wants to "bring the most talented renewable energy experts on board. Without even advertising for vacant positions, IRENA has received more than 500 applications – 41% of them from women. "At her nomination as Interim Director-General of IRENA, Pelosse had announced her commitment to hire 50% women. IRENA will become the first international organisation to reach gender parity. Pelosse states: "Following the example of Her Highness Sheikha Fatma, the wife of his late Highness Sheikh Zayed, I want to empower women."