

IRENA newsletter

Since our [Second Assembly in January](#), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has continued to grow rapidly in both its programming and organisational structure. Through this growth we have been able to shift our focus further from legal and institutional issues, and onto more substantive programme implementation and strategic direction. IRENA's development is coinciding with the growing demand for a global platform for renewable energy. This need is especially evident as 2012 marks the 20th anniversary of the original sustainable development conference, with the 20th anniversary conference taking place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June. It is due to this event, Rio+20, that 2012 is being seen as one of great importance for both the international agenda for sustainable development and renewable energy.

FOREWORD

The road to Rio has been a long one. Across the globe conferences have been held, publications have been written and delegations are planning, all in anticipation of contributing to Rio+20. IRENA has been actively involved in the process leading to Rio+20. I am a special advisor to the Secretary-General of Rio+20, Mr. Sha Zukang, and IRENA has participated in the Preparatory Committees and Informal Negotiations. We will be at the conference, and are planning two side events to showcase aspects of our work. A side event will be held on the Global Solar and Wind Atlas which will also involve a workshop to discuss recom-

mendations for and potential contributions to the future development of the Atlas. The second side event is themed "Renewing Africa's Energy Future" and will be co-hosted with Mozambique. This will be a chance for us to showcase our work in the African region, including scenarios and strategies, power sector prospects, and renewables readiness assessments. IRENA's voice will also be heard through the contributions of conferences we have participated at, such as the Bonn2011 Nexus Conference and the Mekong2Rio Conference in May.

IRENA is committed to being involved on the international stage, to further leverage our mandate and our responsibility to our Member states. To achieve our mandate, we must be involved in international processes like Rio+20 that can help focus international attention on renewable energy, but we also know that work on the ground creates pragmatic change. It is by working with relevant stakeholders, ensuring the availability of information, and providing policy and technological advice that the benefits of access to secure and sustainable energy will be realised. Therefore to further the discussions at Rio+20 we will be hosting a Summit for Island states in Malta in September. This will form a platform for Small Island Developing States to discuss the outcomes and implications of Rio+20, particularly in light of the High-level Conference held in Barbados prior to Rio+20.

Adnan Z. Amin
Director-General, IRENA

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IRENA Director-General Mr. Adnan Z. Amin shares a platform with UNEP Executive Director Mr. Achim Steiner at the Africa Rollout of SE4All.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S HIGH-LEVEL TALKS IN FRANCE AND KENYA

IRENA Director-General Mr. Adnan Z. Amin visited Paris, France on 13-14 February at the invitation of Ms. Kosciuszko-Morizet, then Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transportation and Housing. During the visit, Mr. Amin also met with officials from the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the French Development Agency (AFD), and the French Agency for Environment and Energy Management, to discuss French experiences and international cooperation in the field of renewable energy.

Mr. Amin also met with the Secretary-General of the International Organisation of La Francophonie, as well as the Renewable Energy Association, the National Confederation for French Employers, and the French National Business Association, where private sector representatives voiced strong interest in IRENA's activities. He also visited the Paris Tech laboratory in Palaiseau.

Later that month Mr. Amin flew to Nairobi, Kenya where he took part in the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (20-22 February). During his visit, the Director-General also co-chaired the Panel on the Africa Rollout of the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All, as well as a Ministerial Roundtable on the institutional framework for sustainable development. Mr. Amin also took part in a discussion on the Paris-Nairobi Climate Initiative co-organised by the governments of France and Kenya.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL VISITS JAPAN FOR FUKUSHIMA ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

The IRENA Director-General visited Tokyo to attend an international conference organised by the Japan Renewable Energy Foundation (JREF) on 9 March to mark the one-year anniversary of Japan's 2011 tsunami and the crisis at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

In a keynote speech to the two-day conference, organised under the theme "REvision 2012 - New Renewable Direction for Japan" Mr. Amin said that the Fukushima incident had transformed the public perception of energy systems and led governments to revisit their energy policies. "The initiatives to build a sustainable society through reconstruction have already seized the imagination of the global community and will set a positive example on what is possible for a clean energy future," he said.

The JREF conference attracted academics, researchers and policy makers from Japan and abroad. Several plenary sessions were held to discuss themes such as policy, market and future perspectives for renewable energy, market structure reform and grid expansion to create an Asia Super Grid.

"Renewable energy in Japan currently enjoys tremendous support from the general public. Transforming this enthusiasm into reality is a challenge but also a wonderful opportunity," Mr. Amin told the delegates, adding that IRENA was already taking part in a number of initiatives with the Japanese New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organisation (NEDO) including smart grids and the development of green cities.

IRENA's recent activities in Japan have also included a visit to Fukushima by Mr. Dolf Gielen, Director of the IITC in Bonn, who discussed proposals for developing eco-communities in the region through the deployment of renewable energy and the development of smart grids at a government-organised seminar entitled "Smart community proposals for reconstructing the disaster-affected areas". The outcome of the seminar will contribute to reconstruction planning for the affected area.

GLOBAL THOUGHT LEADERS JOIN FORCES AT BLOOMBERG NEW ENERGY SUMMIT

The IRENA Director-General joined more than 500 global decision-makers in New York to discuss future challenges facing the clean energy industry at the fifth Bloomberg New Energy Finance Summit.

The three-day meeting (19-21 March) was followed by a roundtable day, and convened under the theme “Innovate, Generate, Integrate” – the three crucial ingredients for the continued growth and success of the clean energy industry.

IRENA’s contribution to renewable energy was recognised by Mr. Amin’s inclusion on a list of 2012 Thought Leaders, published by Bloomberg New Energy Finance for the event.

Major topics discussed at the summit included the potential for dramatic improvements in technology, and where continued innovation could drive growth; the challenges and opportunities of a long-term clean energy market; and the integration of innovation and new power and fuel generation into existing networks and processes.

IRENA TAKES PART IN G20 ENERGY MEETING IN MEXICO CITY

IRENA participated in a two-day G20 Energy and Growth Working Group held in Mexico City, beginning on 29 February. The meeting’s theme was “Developing Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in the G20 Countries – The Interplay of Technological Innovation and Deployment Policies”. Participants discussed inputs into a forthcoming report on clean technologies, which will be presented to G20 Finance Ministers at their meeting in Los Cabos in June 2012.

Representatives from more than 20 countries, as well as the EU and various international organisations, attended the event. IRENA’s Director for Policy Advice and Capacity Building Mr. Hugo Lucas, represented the agency, and also held side meetings with Mexican officials including Dr. Jose Loyola Trujillo, Director-General for International Affairs, and Mr. Julio A. Valle Pereña, Director-General for Renewable Energy. Both of whom expressed their interest in contributing to the Global Atlas on Wind and Solar Energy, and possibly hosting an IRENA event later this year.

IRENA PARTICIPATES IN THE 6TH CHINA NEW ENERGY INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Director-General Mr. Adnan Z. Amin visited Beijing to deliver a keynote speech at the 6th China New Energy International Forum. The forum provided a platform for a range of stakeholders from both the public and private sector, including Ministers, leading manufacturers, and members of research institutions. Discussions were held over 13-14 March and they covered the strategically important trends and issues emerging from the rapidly changing global environment for renewable energy. These discussions were focused particu-

larly on the solar industry, although other sources of renewable energy were also discussed.

The overarching theme for this year’s forum was “New Energy - Sharing Opportunities in China.” During his keynote speech, Mr. Amin spoke about the vast global potential for renewable energy, and its ability to enable sustainable development. He then addressed the current status and trends of the global renewables market, including the trend of demand and investment moving to emerging markets and developing countries. There are many implications of this for the industry, in particular the need to tailor technologies and techniques to ensure their effectiveness in these new markets. Mr. Amin also spoke of the challenges that China and the world are facing, as well as the opportunities that are emerging and what IRENA can, and will, contribute. Mr. Amin finished by stressing the importance of innovative partnerships, governmental commitment, and the support and participation of industry to moving the world onto a more secure, reliable and sustainable energy path.

During his time in Beijing Mr. Amin hosted a press conference which was attended by five key members of the Chinese media, including Xinhua News Agency, China Daily, China Energy News, China Energy Net (China5e.com), and China Electric Power Media.

ROADMAP FOR RENEWABLES DISCUSSED AT BRUSSELS WORKSHOP

On 19 April 2012, IRENA held the first of a series of workshops on the Technology Roadmap on Renewables in Manufacturing. Invited participants included a very dedicated group of experts representing industry, industry associations, and



Participants and IRENA staff at the Brussels Workshop.



The room during the Renewables Readiness Assessment Methodology Workshop in Abu Dhabi.

academia. The objective of producing this roadmap is to identify opportunities for, and barriers to, accelerating the deployment of renewables in the manufacturing industry. To date the manufacturing industry consumes about one third of global energy use, but less than 9% of this is supplied by renewable energy resources.

The specific topic of the first workshop was the use of renewable resources as a replacement for fossil-based feedstocks in new manufacturing products. Carbon currently comprises 75% of the total feedstock in the chemical industry, and the majority of this carbon is supplied by oil and other fossil fuels. Technically biomass resources could be used to produce 90% of plastics, although so far the use of biomass as a feedstock has been limited.

The objective of the workshop discussion was to establish a list of action items to increase the share of renewables as a feedstock. The first segment of the workshop involved a discussion between participants about the different feedstocks and the most important conversion technologies, product applications, and end-of-life options for renewables. The discussion then moved on to the global, sectoral, organisational, and technological trends that could create opportunities and barriers for the technology options, now and in the future. In the final segment, the participants created their own roadmap outlining when and where these opportunities would arise, and the role of industry, governments, and civil society to promote them.

One of the major issues that arose during the workshop was the necessity of creating stable and reliable supplies of biomass, due to the competition for it within the manufacturing

industry. Biomass is used in many sectors, and even though its use as a feedstock can add value, chemical industries will have to compete with other sectors to acquire it.

As an outcome from this workshop a list of 13 action items was produced. The findings and results from the workshop will be used to further develop the Technology Roadmap on Renewables in Manufacturing.

WORKSHOP REFINES THE RENEWABLES READINESS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A Renewables Readiness Assessment (RRA) is a holistic assessment of conditions for renewable energy deployment in a country, and identifies the actions necessary to further improve these conditions. On the 22 April IRENA hosted a workshop on the RRA methodology at its headquarters in Abu Dhabi. The perspectives of stakeholders were included through the representation of entities such as development banks, national governments, intergovernmental organisations, research institutes, development organisations, and civil society.

The workshop introduced the participants to the current methodology, and the background to its development. Representatives from Mozambique and Senegal then presented, and were questioned on, their experiences of implementing pilot studies of the RRA. Representatives from Peru spoke of how the RRA methodology could be adjusted to a middle income country such as Peru. The workshop then heard presentations by GIZ and the International Energy Agency focusing on their approaches to, and experience in, assessing the renewable energy sector.



Ministers and IRENA Director-General Mr. Amin after the Global Solar and Wind Atlas signing ceremony.

During the afternoon session the participants broke into working groups to further discuss the methodology, and several identified issues. These issues covered information gathering and relevance, the ability of outcomes to identify clear paths of action, and be structured to inform investment decisions.

Mr. Amin in summarising the workshop reiterated the importance of carrying out assessments to identify barriers, the necessity of cooperating to guard against needless duplication, all while understanding the broader developmental context of a country. The workshop benefited from the variety of experiences and knowledge around the table, and the generosity with which it was shared. The outcomes from this workshop will help shape the future development and implementation of the RRA methodology. This process will also benefit from further RRA pilot studies in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Asia-Pacific, leading to a finalised methodology by the end of the year.

IRENA AT THE LONDON CEM

The Director-General travelled to London in April to participate in a Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) Principals meeting, the Clean Energy Ministerial, and the launch of several IRENA initiatives. The SE4All Principals Meeting was held on 24 April to discuss and finalise the Global Action Agenda for SE4All – Pathways for concerted action towards SE4All.

The third Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM3) on 25-26 April was hosted in London and attended by representatives from 23 different countries, and observers from select organisations. IRENA was awarded observer status and invited to attend. Other observers included the International Energy Agency and the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation. The Director-General and IRENA representatives also attended the Minister's Closed-door discussions, and participated in roundtable discussions on renewable energy finance and solar photovoltaic.

DIARY DATES

- 4 June, Abu Dhabi, UAE: IRENA Committee meetings
- 5-6 June, Abu Dhabi, UAE: Third Meeting of the IRENA Council
- 13-15 June, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Rio+20 3rd Preparatory Committee Meeting
- 19 June, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Global Atlas side event at Rio+20
- 20 June, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Africa side event at Rio+20
- 20-22 June, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Rio+20 Conference
- 6 August, London, United Kingdom: Global Business Summit on Energy
- 6-8 September, Malta: Islands Renewable Energy Solutions Conference

On the first day of CEM3 the international partnership for the Global Solar and Wind Atlas initiative was launched. The aim of the Global Atlas is to combine, and expand, existing databases for wind and solar potential from around the world, into one open web-portal providing relevant information for decision making, including policy and investment. At the launch countries including Denmark, France, Spain, Germany, India, Korea, Mexico, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, and the United Kingdom, stated their commitment to collaborate on the Global Atlas. The collaboration will involve resource contributions such as satellite maps, validated data sets of national atlases, and the sharing of expertise from national research facilities. "Assessing renewable energy resources is the first step to creating an enabling market environment," explained Mr. Amin. "This requires large capital investments in measurement campaigns, as well as a high level of technical knowledge. The platform and partnership created by the Atlas will provide invaluable information and services to support the goal of universal access to sustainable energy."



Also launched at CEM3 was an online renewable energy education and training initiative, the IRENA Renewable Energy Learning Partnership (IRELP). IRELP has been designed to fulfil an identified need for renewable energy training. To achieve this it provides technical training, as well as instruction on cross-cutting issues including policy, finance and access to energy. IRELP is a global platform for those looking to expand and update their renewable energy knowledge. Potential users could include students, vocational trainees, education and training providers, governmental entities and decision makers. "Inadequate availability and access to renewable energy training has exacerbated shortages of skilled workers," said Mr. Amin. "Higher education is needed for research and innovation, and vocational training is essential for technical services such as installation, operation and maintenance. IRELP has been designed to address these barriers." Currently IRELP offers users access to a library of training materials, a webinar database, an e-learning platform, and a forum for on-line discussion. To view the website please visit www.irelp.org.

EXPERTS IN ENERGY VISIT MASDAR TO ADDRESS IRENA SCHOLARS

Three important lectures have been delivered so far this year as part of the IRENA Scholarship Programme. In January Ms. Christine Eibs Singer, former CEO of E+Co, delivered a lecture entitled "the Role of Entrepreneurs in the Access to Energy", and in February Dr. Soren Krohn Hansen, former Vice-President of the European Wind Energy Association, gave a talk discussing renewable energy potentials and mapping. These were followed by a lecture from Mr. Carlos Gascó Travesedo of the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism in April entitled, "Renewables policy, regulation and planning."

The IRENA Scholarship Programme, which is supported by the Government of the United Arab Emirates, offers 20 scholarships annually at the Abu Dhabi-based Masdar Institute of Science and Technology. The programme exists to promote talented academics, and students from developing countries are particularly encouraged to apply. Candidates are reminded that the application process for IRENA Scholarships for the academic year 2012-2013 closes on 31 May 2012. Full details can be found on the IRENA website.

NEW SIGNATORIES RATIFY IRENA STATUTE

Nine Signatories (Greece, Ethiopia, Yemen, Turkey, Mauritania, the United Kingdom, Uganda, Algeria, and Bahrain) have deposited their instrument of ratification since the Second Assembly of IRENA in January. Cuba has deposited its instrument of accession, while Singapore and Tuvalu have applied for membership. The procedures to become an IRENA Member are available on the IRENA website, www.irena.org.

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