

**Introductory Remarks**

by

**Mr. Adnan Z. Amin**

**Director-General**

**International Renewable Energy Agency**

**Plenary Discussion:**

**Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2017**

**13<sup>th</sup> IRENA Council**

**24 May 2017**

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Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now time to present the 2017 edition of our annual review of renewable energy employment, which has become a big part in terms of what has been happening in employment in this sector because it has become so consequential in the discussions on energy and decarbonisation. I am pleased to introduce our discussion on renewable energy and jobs, which showcases the fourth edition of our annual review of renewable energy employment.

This topic is well-suited to follow our plenary session on the decarbonisation of the energy sector, given that employment is a both a critical driver and a central component of the energy transition. I have seen first-hand the growing recognition in my discussions with leaders of our Agency's Members during recent visits to countries such as Egypt,

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Germany, Russia and Saudi Arabia the importance of this issue. In Saudi Arabia, the creation of new jobs is at the very heart of the new USD \$50 billion Renewable Energy Program which was recently launched and which I had the privilege to participate in.

In this context, the Agency's efforts to chart the relationship between renewables and employment have become even more relevant and timely and the interest in our Annual Reviews of Renewable Energy and Jobs has grown stronger each year attracting extensive media coverage. In fact, I just had 3 media interview a bit earlier on this.

I am particular pleased to highlight some of the key findings of the 2017 Annual Review. The Review shows that renewable energy employment has grown to 9.8 million people worldwide in 2016. While growth slowed down compared to previous years, jobs still increased by 1.1% per cent over 2015, thus bringing the promise of prosperity to more and more people. Jobs in renewables, excluding large hydropower, increased by 2.8% to reach 8.3 million in 2016.

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We believe this growth in renewable energy jobs is especially significant because it stands in stark contrast with conventional energy industries, which have been facing employment cuts in several markets. We know that this is very much part of the political discourse around the world.

Globally, the solar PV industry is the largest renewable energy employer with 3.1 million jobs, followed by liquid biofuels with 1.7 million jobs, and wind power with 1.2 million jobs last year. As in previous years, the leading renewable energy job markets are in China, Brazil, the United States, India, Germany and Japan.

Favourable policy frameworks remained a key factor for job creation as with many other parts of the renewable energy equation. Declining costs and supportive policy frameworks resulted in record levels of solar PV installation, with Chinese solar PV jobs increasing by around 20 per cent.

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India is also experiencing a growth in employment in its solar PV and wind sectors, supported by national and state-level policy mechanisms that aim to reach 100 gigawatts of solar and 60 gigawatts of wind by 2022. If achieved, these pledges can result in more than 1 million jobs by 2022 in India alone.

Looking forward, IRENA estimates that an accelerated scale-up of renewables in line with global climate imperatives could raise jobs from just 9.8 million in 2016 to more than 24 million in 2030 and 26 million in 2050 – in line with the decarbonisation scenario we just presented – all while achieving net positive GDP impacts. This can be done with technologies that are available and affordable today, and this is something we need to stress constantly, and it requires strong political will and enabling environments for investment in every market.

Harnessing these enormous socio-economic opportunities in the renewable energy sector will require a diverse workforce with varying talents and capabilities. Significant efforts in training and education will

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be needed to provide the labour market with sufficient skillsets. In this context, IRENA's upcoming reports on *Leveraging Local Industries* analyse the skills requirements along the solar PV and wind value chains to help decision makers design policies that maximise the potential for job creation.

We will continue expanding our work on skills and training given the increasing importance our Members are placing on this issue. But also from our own understanding of the way the industry is evolving.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Renewable energy employment has become a pillar IRENA's knowledge framework. Our studies on jobs continue to inform the Agency's broader work, and have become a key element in many of our publications, including the recent decarbonisation report that was presented.

I am confident that the findings in our 2017 Annual Jobs Review will help strengthen the role of renewable energy in achieving our

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broader socio-economic objectives, and ultimately support our transition to a sustainable energy future.

And I would like to take this opportunity to particularly thank Ms. Rabia Ferroukhi for the extraordinary job she has done in pioneering this study and for her leadership to develop this part of our programme which has become an iconic body of work.

Thank you very much.

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