

**Introductory Remarks**

by

**Mr. Adnan Z. Amin**

**Director-General**

**International Renewable Energy Agency**

**Plenary Discussion:**

**Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2019**

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

**24 May 2017**

---

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to have this opportunity introduce the draft framework for the Medium-term Strategy 2018-2022 which is contained in document C/13/4. Yesterday, we had already touched upon the MTS as its development is inseparable from the development of our Work Programme for the next biennial cycle. Today we hope to build on this discussion and define a common vision for the next five years to guide our work and priorities just as the current MTS has successfully guided the development of our last three programmatic cycles and I am very pleased that we had the opportunity to have an intersessional process led by the US which has already begun to yield a number of insights into programming the perspectives of member states, and which has already informed aspects of the work programme and the MTS. We are very much

---

hoping that the discussion today will add to that and give us a clear framework for the time ahead.

The MTS framework has been a regular topic on the Council agenda since 2016. You will recall that the former leadership of the Council meetings have convened a series of sessions looking at a huge number of issues to do with the energy transition, as well as the financing of the Agency. The rapid changes in the energy sector as well as in the Agency over the last five years are quite dramatic. The Agency has grown from 68 Members in 2011 to 150 today with another 30 countries in the process of accession. This fundamental change requires us to pause and redefine the Agency's direction and focus in this very dynamic environment in which we find ourselves. We also need to look beyond the pure focus on the energy sector. Energy is so consequential for every sector of the economy that just looking in isolation at the energy sector and capacity additions for renewables is a very short-sighted way of achieving our mandate. Also, Major international agreements reached in 2015 – Agenda 2030 and the

---

Paris Agreement – have placed renewable energy at the centre of the global development and climate agendas. The world has a unique opportunity to consider the deployment of renewable energy as an avenue to meeting multiple development, social and climate objectives.

Building on the report on decarbonization that we prepared for the G20 at the invitation of the German presidency, later today we will discuss our new study on *Perspectives for energy transition*, which builds on our REmap and socio-economic work, to show how the world can meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Our findings show that transformation of the energy system is not a burden to us as an international community the world must shoulder, but an enabler of change that can provide a new economic, social and environmental frame of reference. This is a powerful message that offers a level of optimism and confidence that we need to accelerate the progress but it demands from all us also to rethink the way that we do business and the effectiveness of our activities.

It is fundamentally important that we get the next MTS framework right at this critical juncture. The Framework before you highlights a range of strategic issues that Members have identified and conveyed during the

---

previous meetings, as well as through feedback received from the Working Team led by the US. We have also received 17 written inputs from Members, many of which reinforce the previous conclusions, and emphasise some of the priorities for the Agency. We used IRENA's Coalition for Action to get an additional perspective on the direction of, and expectations of the private sector and civil society stakeholders and all of these contributions are posted on the Remember website.

Based on the Member feedback, the MTS Framework redefines IRENA's mission for the next five-year period, expanding from the initial focus of becoming an authoritative voice for renewable energy. In the coming period, IRENA - and this is the proposed mission statement - should play *a leading role in the on-going transformation of the global energy systems as a centre of excellence for knowledge and innovation, a source of advice for countries, a global voice for renewable energy, and a network hub to develop collaborative partnerships for all stakeholders.*

---

Through the development process of the MTS, Members highlighted a range of considerations meant to guide the elaboration of the MTS and the objectives that it should achieve. To ensure that the Agency remains consistent with its overarching mission and maintains a resilient, flexible, and fit for purpose structure, the MTS should:

- Clarify IRENA's comparative advantages and contributions to an accelerated achievement of internationally agreed-upon objectives;
  - Empower the Agency to take a holistic approach across sectors, economies and communities; Many of you spoke about this yesterday,
  - Strengthen IRENA's voice in shaping of, and contributing to, the global energy dialogue;
  - Identify key stakeholders and partnerships that will be necessary for the achievement of the Agency's objectives; and
  - Maintain clear focus on concrete outcomes and results.
-

The next MTS period requires a careful consideration of how IRENA's comparative advantages can be effectively prioritised and deployed to drive change at all levels. The renewable energy institutional landscape is rapidly growing, and we should define where we are best placed to lead and where we should be contributing to the work of others. We must remain focused on our core functions, concentrating on upstream policy-making related work that can affect change on the ground. In this context, we need to systematically review and evaluate our work to demonstrate impact, strengthening programme delivery and ensure that our priorities are right.

In our discussion on the Work Programme, we have already reflected on the difficult task of reconciling the demands on the Agency with the limited resources at our disposal. We need to make the best use of our comparative advantages to effectively prioritise and maximise impact.

---

This level of ambition must be accompanied with a strategy for effectively resourcing the Agency. We look forward to your continued feedback on how we can better align the MTS with a diversified resource base that would enable us to deliver on Members' expectations.

To facilitate this discussion and the preparation of an elaborated draft of the MTS 2018-2022, we offered a few questions for your consideration that will help with the next stage of development:

- Are the key strategic objectives for the MTS 2018-2022 aligned with your vision for the Agency? Are there any major elements missing, or are there any misplaced elements?
  - Given that IRENA's programmatic priorities will be determined on a biennial basis, do you think that the MTS framework can effectively guide the development of successive Work Programmes, and what conditions need to be in place for that?
-

- How can the MTS help to provide a longer-term outlook for the Agency's resourcing?

We look forward to your feedback on this subject because we really believe that the ownership of this process is central to the future success of the Agency. I want to underline that we are at a remarkable point. The Agency was founded at a time when a fundamental transition was starting to form. We have for the first time an ongoing energy transformation that promises to be so fundamental that it will redefine many of the processes, the industrial frameworks and business models that we see today across all sectors. It is happening today. This is a very special and very place to be for the organisation. You have seen all the work we have been putting forward. Today we will be launching our jobs report. Nearly 10 million people are worldwide working in renewable energy today – it was less than 2 million when we started. We are seeing an analysis of the projection for decarbonisation in the energy sector worldwide that seems to us to be the only feasible way that we can achieve decarbonisation that will take us to the objectives of the Paris Agreement and a safe world for

---

generations to come. We are seeing innovation processes that are driving change and cost reductions at a pace that we could never have anticipated. Solar PV is down by 90% in cost. I was in Beijing recently, and China is now investing in concentrated solar power (CSP). We see a potential for a similar cost reduction with this kind of investment in CSP that will drive it substantially below the prices that we have today, some of which are already competitive on the grid today. Our knowledge of how we integrate renewables and how systems evolve further strengthens this, and the baseload argument has begun to fall away as we understand the technologies, and policy and markets that we need to integrate high shares of renewables. This in our scenario that we prepared for the G20, and which we will discuss later today, gives us the potential for a transformation and stimulus of economic growth through investment in infrastructure and power generation that we previously did not consider possible.

So the opportunity is immense. We are the only international organisation with universal membership that is placed in this space can play a role in

---

driving the transformation, and this MTS will be our framework for how we do it. We want to benefit from your perspectives, your guidance and your ownership of this process to ensure that we have the framework that on the one hand meets the expectations of the membership, and on the other hand gives a clear, laser-like guidance to the Agency for this historic opportunity.

That's why this exercise is important. This is going to be a guidance framework for the next phase of the energy revolution that is taking place today, and that your international organisation is charged with stewardship in taking forward. That is why we are hoping that we will have very clear and very purposeful views from you as well in how we move forward in this – what is the focus, how can this be resourced, and do you expect the organisation to support this deeply ambitious agenda of seizing the opportunity we have before us.

Mr. Chairman, those are my remarks and I look forward to the discussion.

Thank you very much.

---

