Remarks

by

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**International Renewable Energy Agency**

for the

**Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019**

at the

**8th IRENA Assembly**

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 13 January 2018

Madam President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to introduce the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019 contained in document A/8/L.4. This morning, we reflected on the profound shift in the global dynamics which will result in a very different world in the coming decades. The evolution of the existing energy architecture and its development into a low-carbon and economically vibrant system is a major plank of a global strategy to achieve sustainable development and meet the climate objectives.

With rapidly evolving technology, emerging business models and shifting regulatory landscapes, the deployment of renewables has a far-reaching impact. Its business case is strong and continuously improving, offering an economically attractive answer to energy security and climate concerns, and solutions for sustainable growth and employment. The deployment of renewables is also creating new opportunities to forge sustainable livelihoods, especially for hundreds of millions who lack energy access today.

IRENA has a major role to play in this context. Today, our Agency is an internationally-recognised player in the global energy landscape, synonymous with excellence in providing knowledge and advice, backed up with strong worldwide convening power and demonstrated impact on decision-making. The 2018-2019 programmatic cycle will further cement IRENA’s place as an effective international instrument in the global energy and institutional landscape.

There are some key prerequisites for securing IRENA’s continued success.

Relevance and usefulness are the key drivers of IRENA’s programmatic output. The Agency occupies a privileged space with its global access to the wealth of knowledge and information of all its Members. The Work Programme seeks to benefit from this major advantage, while keeping IRENA agile to adapt to the fast-changing environment.

Technical excellence is key to maintaining and increasing the Agency’s standing and credibility, and to ensure that IRENA provides timely, objective and policy-relevant advice to Members. To achieve this, programmatic activities have been streamlined to focus on the most relevant topics, particularly where IRENA has a clear comparative advantage or can build upon already established areas of excellence. Realising the energy transformation requires unprecedented effort and heightened levels of cooperation and investment by governments, traditional stakeholders or new actors. Inclusiveness and partnerships, therefore, remain the trademarks of IRENA’s work. Given limited resources and high demand, collaboration with other international and regional organisations will be optimised to avoid duplication of effort and benefit from respective competencies.

Consistent with the direction of the Medium-term Strategy for the upcoming five-year period, IRENA will lead the global renewable energy effort as a centre of excellence for energy transformation, an authoritative voice, and a catalyst for partnerships and concerted action. The proposed Work Programme and Budget is thus underpinned by three strategic priorities.

The first is the continued emphasis on the business case for renewable energy. More than in previous years, there is a broad consensus on the value of renewable energy and high commitment to innovation. But decision-making is increasingly nuanced and significant barriers to deployment still remain. IRENA will continue to support deployment at the speed and scale consistent with the global vision on sustainable development and climate change.

The second priority is to make maximum use of IRENA’s convening power, to encourage cross-pollination of knowledge and expertise by, and for the benefit of Members, and collaborate with stakeholders to remain on the cutting edge of energy transformation.

The third priority is to focus on further strengthening IRENA’s effectiveness and impact through strategic partnerships. The changing renewable energy landscape means that demand for IRENA’s services will be on the rise. Our long-term impact will depend on the ability to seek synergies and formulate strategic partnerships with Members, development partners and stakeholders in the energy sector.

In the past two programmatic cycles, IRENA has implemented its work through six thematic areas. While those thematic areas still carry great importance, the programmatic approach evolved to reflect the Agency’s redefined strategic direction. It also reflects Members’ request for greater alignment with the Medium-term Strategy for the upcoming five-year period.

To empower effective policy and decision-making, IRENA will serve as a **Centre for excellence for energy transformation**. This transformation is a multifaceted and far-reaching process. Understanding the role of renewable energy can play is of utmost importance, particularly as multiple stakeholders navigate the shift from a centralised system to one that is much more interactive, decentralised and distributed. We will continue to provide critical analysis and advice on the pathways to create a renewables-based global energy system. As requested by many of you, we will expand the innovation work, both to strengthen analytical studies on technologies and markets, policy and finance, as well as to provide a collaborative platform for stakeholders. And special attention will be paid to capturing knowledge, lessons and best practices to help accelerate the common learning curve. We have seen that capturing many of these best practices is one of the most effective stimulus for catalysed action in different settings. To shape the global discourse on energy transformation, IRENA will continue to be a strong **global voice of renewables.** The foundation of this role will be sound empirical evidence and rigorous analyses on topical issues, communicated in an accessible and timely manner and widely distributed. Decreasing costs and recognition of the benefits offered by renewable energy are the key drivers of the ongoing transformation, and we will continue to demonstrate the business rationale and the macro-economic benefits renewable energy brings.

Devising the energy system of the future requires new mindsets and new forms of collaboration to address the challenges ahead. As a **network hub**, IRENA is well-established and an inclusive platform for all stakeholders to foster action, facilitate the convergence of efforts, and enable knowledge sharing for impact on the ground. We will continue to do so in all regions, and through targeted initiatives and collaborative platforms.

Through direct engagement with Members, IRENA has made its knowledge products policy-relevant and accessible. One key lesson has been that translating knowledge into on-the-ground change requires local solutions and tailored advice. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. These solutions are frequently replicable, and Members have often stressed that IRENA is optimally placed to consolidate and disseminate successful approaches. Building on IRENA’s country work over the years, and bolstered by a sound knowledge base, we will continue to be a **source of advice and support** to Members. This will include an added emphasis on project support and facilitation, and a more refined country-level assistance. We will have a special emphasis on bringing together all of our capabilities on project facilitation because we believe this is the point where the rationality of the decisions on renewable energy has to come together with a much more effective project development process.

The rapidly changing environment in which the Agency operates requires careful prioritisation of programmatic activities, focusing on areas where IRENA’s contribution can make the most impact. Developing the Work Programme through the prism of MTS – the Medium-Term Strategy – pillars greatly assisted in addressing the priorities identified through the consultative process with Members, building on the experience gained since 2011.

Members emphasised that their ambition for the Agency cannot be met through core resources alone, and that future growth will have to come from a diversified resource base. The Work Programme therefore includes both the core resource requirements as well as an indication of additional needs to orientate future contributions and retain the overall coherence of the Work Programme.

The core budget, amounting to USD 43.1 million for the biennium, takes into account assessed contributions from new Members who joined since the adoption of the Work Programme and Budget 2016-2017 on 17 January 2016. Core non-assessed contributions comprise USD 10.2 million from Germany for the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre and USD 9.12 million from the United Arab Emirates, comprising USD 5 million for IRENA’s operations, USD 0.92 for information technology infrastructure and USD 3.2 million for governing body meetings. I would also like to mention that the UAE continues to provide housing allowance averaging USD 2.2 million biennially.

The proposed Work Programme also outlines additional core non-assessed and other resources required to implement the programmatic activities and advance the objectives of the MTS. In this context, I would like to express our gratitude for contributions and pledges already received from Norway for NOK 39 million as core support for the implementation of the WP and MTS for which we are very grateful, and EUR 1 million from the Walloon region of Belgium for the work on decentralised solutions and NDCs. In discussions on resource diversification, Members also supported the introduction of a “Renewables Acceleration Fund” for additional contributions toward the implementation of the MTS. We will elaborate the features of such a Fund and continue to discuss with interested Members how this might be brought into operation.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The energy transformation is charting a path for the economy of the future, underpinned by a new, sustainable energy system. International cooperation is playing a vital role in this transformation, and Members have sent a clear message on their vision for IRENA to play a central role in making the next step-change in transforming the energy systems around the world. Moving forward, an effective, focused and results-oriented Agency that has the trust of its Members is crucial to attain the long-term objective of accelerating the deployment of renewables and support Members in transforming their energy systems. The proposed Work Programme sets out the agenda that will enable IRENA to make a significant and sustained impact and, drawing on its strengths, demonstrate the unique value of its mission.

I thank you, Madam President.