Welcoming Remarks

by

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**International Renewable Energy Agency**

for the

**Opening**

of the

**8th IRENA Assembly**

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Madam President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the great honour to welcome you all to this 8th session of the Assembly of IRENA in our headquarters city of Abu Dhabi. At the outset, allow me to congratulate the President of the 8th session of the Assembly, H.E. Mrs Carolina Cosse, Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining of Uruguay. We had good discussions about our shared hopes for this session and the year ahead, and I look forward to working together for progress in all our areas of work. I would also like to thank the outgoing presidency Italy for their leadership of the 7th session of the Assembly and active support of the Agency in 2017. We collaborated closely throughout the year, including during Italy’s presidency of the G7, and in partnering on issues of common interest, such as co-hosting the high-level geothermal conference in Florence.

I am delighted to note that we have 153 countries and the European Union participating, including 78 represented at ministerial level and, together with observers and the private sector, close to 1,200 participants.

The mandate entrusted to our Agency to support countries in the transition to a sustainable energy future has never been more important and relevant. Over the last years, we have worked together to better understand the great opportunities that the rapid development of renewable energy presents, and to provide the basis for effective action and international cooperation to accelerate the energy transition we have been witnessing. Today, this energy transition has become a transformation. A transformation not only of our energy systems, but a transformation of economies and societies with far reaching implications for all of us. We are seeing signs of change all around us, bringing with it challenges and opportunities, disruption and growth.

This requires that the Agency as a framework for international cooperation remains relevant and focused, and provides critical knowledge and advice in decision-making and policy formulation. In this context, this session of our Assembly is of special significance as we consider our new biennial Work Programme and the Medium-term Strategy that must position the Agency to play this role. We will also have focused discussions in our ministerial and plenary sessions on highly topical issues such as renewable energy investment, innovation, policies and markets, in a number of areas including strategic discussion on NDCs.

We have an ambitious and interesting agenda for the coming two days and we look forward to insightful and productive discussions with all of you in the capable hands of the new president.

I thank you, Madam President.