

Checked Against Delivery

Welcoming Remarks

by

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at the

2nd IRENA Legislators Forum

At the

7th Assembly of IRENA

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Introductory remarks

Your Excellency Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi, President of the Federal National Council,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this second Legislators Forum, held before IRENA's 7th Assembly. I am particularly delighted to see that the familiar faces of those who attended last year's meeting have been joined by many new lawmakers this year's forum – I have in fact been told that the number of participants have doubled since last year. I believe that this is an important signal in terms of the direction of our engagement with legislators. It also attests to the importance of the issue, and how in different countries around the world, legislators are now seized with the issue of a sustainable development future, and how sustainable development engages with renewables to achieve such a positive outcome.

For us, this is a unique platform for informing the Agency's activities through your experience in formulating policies and developing energy legislation. I have often

also mentioned the importance of lawmakers for the creation of IRENA. Some of you will remember that it was the vision of the great German parliamentarian Hermann Scheer of the German Bundestag that really led the charge to establish an international renewable energy organisation, I am delighted to once again have the participation of his daughter Nina Scheer, who is also a member of the Bundestag.

As lawmakers, you are instrumental in formulating and approving the laws that govern the energy sector and overseeing their implementation, and you have a crucial role in gathering the necessary public support.

Through this Forum, IRENA is also seeking to support you in your various functions to allow you to better champion renewable energy in your national constituencies. We hope to further develop such a collaboration as we work towards a common goal: a world where everyone will have access to clean, sustainable and affordable energy.

This Legislators Forum is held the day before IRENA's seventh annual Assembly. During the coming two days, the Agency will be welcoming over 150 country delegations for a meeting with a range of important programmatic discussions on issues including renewable energy finance, innovation, and energy access. Holding both meetings in conjunction creates numerous opportunities for policy and decision makers to meet and I encourage you to seize this opportunity to strengthen dialogue

and collaboration, to take part in discussions on the latest renewable energy trends and developments amongst yourselves, but also with the delegations to the Assembly. We look forward to your guidance on how IRENA can support you in bringing about a sustainable energy future.

When we had our first Legislators Forum last year, there was a very optimistic discussion. This year, I think we can have one that is even more so.

2015 was another record-breaking year for renewables. A record 305 billion dollars were invested in renewables worldwide, and renewable energy capacity additions in the global power sector have overtaken those of any other source for about three years running. It has become the predominant choice for new investment in power generation around the world.

This has been driven both by technological innovation but also by the fact that we have developed a very compelling basis – renewables have now become a business that generates economic benefits such as employment, growth and reduced carbon emissions. So we have a very positive vision ahead of us.

This has been driven by cost declines. Solar PV costs in the last six years have fallen 80%, onshore wind by 40%. In country after country, renewables are becoming the cheapest option for power generation. That is dependent on policies, on legislation

reduced the cost of business. Recently, auctions in the UAE attained solar PV prices below 3 US cents per hour. This is because they created a framework for investment that reduces costs, and there are learning examples from around the world for all of us for how this can be done.

We have also heard from H.E. Dr Thani Al Zeyoudi, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, about the UAE's recently published Energy Plan which sets a remarkable target of 44% of energy production from renewables by 2050, and a cut in emissions by 70%. This plan is further testament to the UAE's determination as a leader in the energy transformation.

We also share employment issues, but the good thing is that the renewable energy sector has grown to account for more than 9.4 million jobs in 2015. This figure could grow to as much as 24 million by 2030, should deployment be substantially scaled up.

Internationally, we are benefiting from an unprecedented momentum. The milestone UN Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement send a strong political signal, and provide a framework to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy in national contexts. In the coming days, IRENA will release the third edition of *REthinking Energy*, which contains the most comprehensive analysis to date of

positive synergies between deploying renewable energy for SDG7 and a broad range of the other goals. As lawmakers, you have a unique insight into how the issues of sustainable development interact and affect your constituents, and you are therefore an essential asset in formulating national, holistic, integrated plans for implementing the goals. We encourage you to bring *REthinking Energy* to the attention of your colleagues in your national assemblies, as it addresses many of the issues that will be discussed here.

As countries act on their plans to transform the way they produce and consume energy, Parliaments will play a key role in translating their country's commitments into a set of concrete and actionable strategies within their respective national context. Parliamentarians will now have the responsibility of supporting renewable energy policies and frameworks that take into account the interdependencies of various sectors, and advocate to raise national ambitions. Parliamentarians also hold a unique position in society that allows them to show leadership in engaging relevant stakeholders from the private sector, civil society and academia.

The momentum is growing, but not yet sufficiently to create the sustainable energy future we need. The policy decisions that need to be made are complex and have wide-ranging and long-lasting consequences. Taking informed decisions is an

important responsibility and can be a challenge. IRENA, through its mandate, stands ready to support lawmakers in their important task by sharing and disseminating up-to-date information on renewable energy developments and offering a platform where best practice can be shared.

As we take the Legislators Forum forward, we hope to strengthen its role as a platform where members of parliament can discuss and exchange experiences, lessons learned, and new ideas in relation to renewable energy legislation. We have also acted to ensure that some of the recommendations from last year's Forum are reflected in today's agenda, by assigning particular importance to renewable energy policy instruments, access solutions, as well as tools and key legislative requirements for supporting the development of renewable energy legislation. We hope that within this agenda, your discussions with other members of parliament and with experts from IRENA and other organisations will assist you in championing renewable energy in your country.