

Chair's Conclusions: Preparatory Conference for the Foundation of IRENA

Berlin, 11th April 2008

At the invitation of the German Federal Government representatives of 60 countries met on 10th and 11th April 2008 in Berlin at the Preparatory Conference for the Foundation of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

The meeting took place at a critical juncture – as the world is facing both a growing energy demand and the necessity to limit global warming. We shared a sense of urgency to switch to a more secure, low-carbon energy system without undermining economic and social development. We agreed that renewable energy has to play an important role in this energy revolution.

In our meeting, we discussed possible objectives, activities, organisation and finance of an IRENA.

From our most constructive discussions of this preparatory meeting I conclude the following:

Time for action – An intergovernmental agency for renewable energy

We saw general support to work towards the foundation of IRENA, stressing the importance of good coordination with other international institutions and networks. IRENA should constitute an independent driving force behind renewable energy and help to create a level playing field for developing renewable energy. Participants emphasised that, without an organisation such as IRENA, the world will remain unable to realise the benefits of renewable energy in full.

Objectives and activities of IRENA

The main objective of IRENA should be to foster and promote the adoption of renewable energy worldwide. This overall objective needs to be broken down into a number of concrete activities, including: enhanced and informed policy advice leading i.a. to improved regulatory frameworks for renewable energy; effective transfer of technology and know-how; sustained skill and capacity building for renewable energy; provision of scientifically sound information ensured by applied policy research, both technical and socio-economic; facilitation of financing of renewable energy; and better provision of information for the public.

IRENA should focus on all forms of renewable energy, taking into account sustainability criteria. It should also deal with the links between renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Organisation and financing of IRENA

IRENA should be an intergovernmental organisation with a highly efficient, lean structure staffed by leading renewable energy experts from different geographical regions. Its governance structure should include a General Conference, a Board of Governors and a Director General which should be supported by ad hoc task forces. This structure will ensure that IRENA's vision and policies are realised in an efficient and transparent manner. IRENA's core budget will be covered by assessed contributions based on the principle of equity.

Next steps

The German Government is encouraged by the support expressed at the conference. We will take the initiative to further consult the governments of all the participants assembled here and other countries who might want to join us. We would like to encourage our partners to provide proposals for the establishment of IRENA. We will circulate a roadmap proposing the next steps. We gladly took notice of the different offers to support this process.

The success of the conference has given us great confidence. The German Government aims to invite all interested countries to the Founding Conference in autumn 2008.