



IRENA prepares for important milestones

The Inaugural Assembly of IRENA in April 2011 will be the most important event in the Agency's short and eventful history since its founding conference in 2009. Interest in and political commitment to IRENA among Member States remains high, and ambitious aspirations for its future among all stakeholders ensure that there will be an unprecedented level of engagement and participation. IRENA now has 149 signatories, of which 50 have ratified the statute to date. These are remarkable statistics for a new international organisation, which attest to the timeliness and importance of developing strong institutional arrangements for the promotion of renewable energy.

By establishing IRENA, governments have given a clear signal of their commitment to an alternative, sustainable future. But they cannot do it alone: private sector and non-governmental organisations have a critical role, as partners and advocates, in realising the opportunities that the science and technology at our disposal already offer and in their further development.



Adnan Z. Amin
Interim Director - General of IRENA

The convergence of mounting concern over carbon emissions and climate change and the need to promote energy access for development to improve the lives and productivity of citizens in developing countries provides the backdrop for important decisions to be taken at the Assembly.

In order to meet the expectations of the international community, the IRENA Secretariat is working hard to ensure that the preparations underway are designed to facilitate high-level deliberations focused on policy and substantive matters. The Assembly will set a compelling strategic vision and direction for IRENA and adopt a work programme that will lay the foundations for a successful future.

Over the last few months, we have worked hard to strengthen the management functions at IRENA to bring them into compliance with government decisions and ensure full transparency in our operations in order to reassure donor governments that taxpayers' resources are utilised in the most effective and efficient way. We have undertaken a large number of informal consultations with Member States and other stakeholders to develop our strategic vision and work programme proposals in response to real needs and opportunities in the field of renewable energy. We are confident that we will meet the high expectations that the international community has for IRENA. In this regard, we will make full use of the immense possibilities of our location in the United Arab Emirates, which is emerging as a global hub for renewable energy.

This is a moment of great opportunity and significance as the world looks for solutions to the twin challenges of climate change and sustainable development, and it is our commitment to you that we will do our very best to ensure that the first Assembly of IRENA launches this process.

Adnan Z. Amin

IRENA prepares for the first session of its Assembly

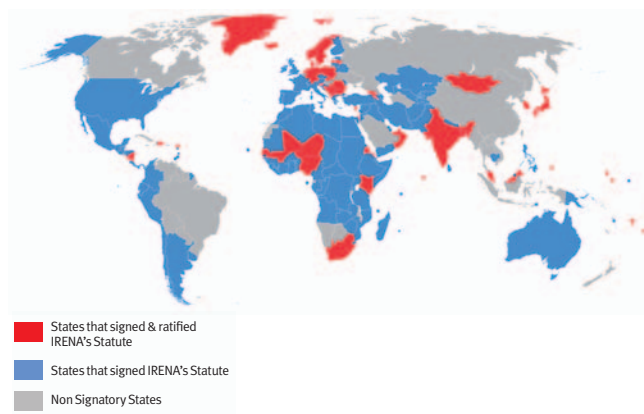
On 4th-5th April 2011, IRENA will cease to be a preparatory commission and its permanent organs will be in place

To date, 148 countries and the European Union have signed the statute of the Agency and 50 countries have ratified it. Representatives of governments and entities active in the field of renewable energy will gather in early April for the first session of the Assembly of IRENA.

The meeting will be a major milestone in the history of the Agency. On 4th April, the Preparatory Commission of IRENA will no longer exist. Instead, its permanent organs will be defined: first, the Assembly, composed of all members of the Agency; and second, a Council of 11-21 members will then be elected for two-year terms. The Council will have the responsibility of facilitating consultations and cooperation. Its representatives will be in

charge of submitting the draft versions of work programmes and the budget to the Assembly.

In April, IRENA's budget and work programme for 2011 will be adopted and the strategic direction and priorities of the Agency will be set.



IRENA's Interim Director-General

Adnan Z. Amin

Interim Director-General of IRENA

Kenyan citizen

Joined IRENA in November 2010



Mr Amin was appointed as Interim Director-General of IRENA on 1st November by the Preparatory Commission. He brings to this position over 20 years of experience in the field of international environment and sustainable development policy, as well as in the political, management and interagency coordination functions of the United Nations (UN).

Most recently, Mr Amin served as Head of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Secretariat. The CEB is the highest level coordination mechanism in the UN system and oversees UN coordination on policy, management and field operations. In this function, he was responsible for overseeing the Secretariat supporting the CEB in its UN system-wide policy coordination under the chairmanship of the UN Secretary-

General and comprising the Executive Heads of UN System organisations. Mr Amin also served as the Executive Director of the Secretariat of the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence, co-chaired by the prime ministers of Mozambique, Norway and Pakistan. The Panel undertook an ambitious and unprecedented level of consultation on development, environment and humanitarian aspects of the work of the UN System, and proposed an ambitious reform programme that still continues in the UN General Assembly under the framework of the "One UN". Mr Amin served at the United Nations Environment Programme in various capacities, ranging from providing institution and capacity-building support to developing countries to leading key processes on international environmental policy and governance.

President of Iceland visits IRENA

President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson shared his vision of a successful renewable energy policy with IRENA staff

“In the 70s, in my youth, Iceland was dependent on fossil fuels for 80% of its energy needs and Iceland was considered as a developing country,” recalled the Icelandic President in front of IRENA staff. “Now, after three decades of successful technology deployment and policy making, about 81% of the country’s total primary energy supply is derived from domestically produced renewable energy sources.”

“Iceland is an inspiring example of the successful use of renewable energy sources,” affirmed Mr Amin, Interim Director-General of IRENA.

Geothermal energy provides roughly two-thirds of Iceland’s primary energy, while hydropower accounts for 15%. By developing geothermal energy for electricity production and

district heating, the country gained and shared expertise. Three decades ago, the Geothermal Training Programme of the United Nations University was created in Iceland. This postgraduate training programme aims to assist developing countries in capacity building. It involves six months of annual training for practicing professionals from developing countries which have significant geothermal potential. Courses are also held in Kenya, El Salvador, China and Indonesia.

“About 100 countries have a considerable geothermal potential, most of them in the developing world,” stated President Grímsson.



“In Iceland, we don’t have to go to international conferences to be convinced of the reality of climate change. Tackling this issue will help to revolutionise the whole energy system around the world,” insisted President Grímsson. “I have always been a strong supporter of IRENA. The Agency’s role in connecting potential partners – policy makers, engineers, financial partners, etc. – to new projects is invaluable,” he added.



Mr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson with IRENA team members at IRENA’s headquarters, Abu Dhabi 2010

Busy in Cancun



Mr Amin meeting with Dr Georgina Kessel Martinez in Cancun

IRENA at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, Cancun

During a four-day visit to Cancun for the 2010 UN climate summit, Mr Amin met many senior government officials as well as NGO leaders. "COP16 attracted high level officials from all over the world: it was a great opportunity to highlight the potential of renewable energy and the role of IRENA," commented the Interim Director-General. Mr Amin also participated in two panels during the Green Solutions Forum -- a side event organised for the private sector. The first was moderated by Andrew Steer, Special Envoy for Climate Change at the World Bank. The objective of the panel was to show the interest of public-private partnerships in implementing solutions to climate change. Along with Mr Amin,

Mr Tanaka, Head of the International Energy Agency, and senior members of Iberdrola, Ericsson and Acciona, discussed this issue with Dr Georgina Kessel Martinez, Minister of Energy of the United Mexican States. During another Green Solutions panel, Mr Amin, along with industry leaders, participated in a discussion on the perspectives and potential of renewable energy.

On the road to IREC 2013

The Delhi International Renewable Energy Conference (DIREC) brought together 13,000 experts from 70 countries. The next session of this successful high-level ministerial meeting will be in Abu Dhabi in 2013

"Since its creation in 2004, IREC has been the main international policy event that brings together all stakeholders – governments, business and NGOs – and it is very important for IRENA to commit to this multi-stakeholder process," stated Mika Ohbayashi, Scenarios and Policy Regional Manager at IRENA.

DIREC 2010 is the fourth in the series of International Renewable Energy Conferences. Held from 27th to 29th October 2010 in New Delhi, it attracted 13,000 experts from 70 countries.

IRENA organised two side events: (1) "Access to Energy from Renewables in Small Islands" was coordinated with Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP); and (2) "The Role of Renewable Energy in Tomorrow's Energy Systems" was

co-organised with IEA-RETD (International Energy Agency - Implementing Agreement on Renewable Energy Technology Deployment).

Hugo Lucas, Director of Programmes, Capacity Building and Outreach at IRENA participated in two plenary sessions: a multi-stakeholder discussion on "The Role of Renewable Energy in Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Security" and a session on "Capacity Building".



Hugo Lucas and Mika Ohbayashi at the "Access to Energy from renewables in Small Islands" side event

The United Arab Emirates host the 1st Meeting of the Discussion Groups of the EU-GCC Clean Energy Network

Mr Mustapha Taoumi, the IRENA expert for the MENA region was a keynote speaker at the first meeting of the Clean Energy Network's Discussion Groups between the European Community and the Gulf countries. Held in Dubai in November 2010, this event was launched with the support of the European Commission with the objective of developing cooperation activities on clean energy, including the related policy and technology aspects, among various players across the EU and GCC countries. "There is a huge solar potential available in the GCC countries. The region could become an attractive renewable energy hub," commented Mr Taoumi.

Regional workshops on track

After the success in the United Arab Emirates, Korea is the second country to hold a regional workshop on policy, in cooperation with IRENA

Speaking during the second regional workshop on policy held in Seoul in October 2010, Mr Eun-Seok Kim, ambassador for Energy and Resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea said “The paradigm shift in the use of energy is critical for the continued growth and prosperity of Korea. The development of renewable energy is an important part of the Korean Government’s effort”.

The objective of the workshop in Korea was to understand the current status of renewable energy deployment and the policy landscape in the Asia Pacific region. The aim was to identify the barriers and define ways to overcome them through the exchange of best practice. “The Asia Pacific region is actively

promoting renewable energies, but the countries are diverse and they need tailor-made policies to overcome their barriers. IRENA has a role to play in meeting this challenge,” commented Yungsoo Shin, Policy Project Manager at IRENA.



Hugo Lucas at the IRENA-korea joint Workshop

Cooperation on potential mapping

Mr Adnan Amin, Interim Director-General of IRENA met with Mr Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

The WMO has at its disposal records with a century’s worth of data on wind velocity and solar radiation levels around the world. This kind of data will prove useful for some of IRENA’s projects. IRENA plans to develop a global geo-referenced database on renewable energy potentials. Such a database would be developed based on measured data, satellite information and – eventually – more refined simulation models.



Mr. Amin meeting with Michel Jarraud of World Meteorological Organisation

This combination of data is necessary to ensure the high resolution and reliability needed to clarify renewable energy potentials at a global level. “The collaboration with WMO will jump start IRENA’s work on energy potentials using reliable and tested data,” commented Mr Amin.

The African Union and IRENA to work together

Dr Elham Ibrahim, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union Commission and Hugo Lucas, Director of Programmes, Capacity Building and Outreach at IRENA discuss ways of collaborating

“In Africa, only a third of the population has access to electricity,” stated Dr Elham Ibrahim, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union. Her goal is to reach the target of 50% by 2020, “which means giving access to electricity to about 250 million people,” said the former Under-Secretary of State of Egypt.

The role of the African Union Commission is to set common ground rules for all of its 53 Member States. Its objective is to develop intercontinental cooperation on energy and in fields such as infrastructure and social development. “In Africa, we have expertise and knowledge, but IRENA – which has the leverage of 149 Member States – is an invaluable partner for us,” said Dr Ibrahim, who has worked in the renewable energy field for the past 15 years.

“Working with the African Union Commission would help us to harmonise data collection on the whole continent as well as to

accelerate capacity building programmes in other possible fields of cooperation,” stated Mr Lucas.



Dr Elham Ibrahim, commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union Commission and Hugo Lucas, Director for Programmes, Capacity Building & Outreach at IRENA.

Africa has an immense renewable energy potential, but only a small fraction is used: 7% for hydro and 1% for geothermal. Half of the energy supply of African countries comes from renewable energies. Biomass (mostly used for cooking purposes) represents almost 60% of the final energy consumption. In Africa, 16% of the electricity comes from renewables.

Climate change and energy policy in the Arab region

The German Federal Foreign Office and the environmental think tank, The Ecologic Institute, organised a media conference in Abu Dhabi

Mr Klaus-Peter Brandes, the German Ambassador in the United Arab Emirates, and Mr Adnan Amin were among the main keynote speakers at the conference, which was attended by the German and local media. Mr Amin thanked the German Government for its commitment to the success of IRENA and paid tribute to the role of Hermann Scheer in the creation of the Agency. The Member of German Parliament, who died in October 2010, is recognised by IRENA as one of its founding fathers.



Mr Amin told the audience that IRENA was going to position itself as the platform for international cooperation to address the challenges of climate change and energy access. In this regard, the location of IRENA in the United Arab Emirates was a great advantage as Abu Dhabi is emerging as a global leader in renewable energy innovation. Furthermore, there are great synergies with the World Future Energy Summit (WFES) and the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology.

Among other projects, he mentioned a possible collaboration with the World Meteorological Organisation (see page 5) and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Ways of sharing the huge database on the intellectual property rights of renewable energy technologies are under discussion with WIPO.

IRENA welcomes its new directors



Hugo Lucas

Director of Programmes, Capacity Building and Outreach

Spanish citizen

Joined IRENA in January 2009

"IRENA's priority is the promotion of well-designed policies and capacity-development programmes that will increase the use of renewable energy worldwide, in particular in developing countries."

As well as his role as Director of Programmes, Capacity Building and Outreach at IRENA, Hugo Lucas is a lead author of the chapter on policy, financing and implementation for the Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation (SRREN) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change (IPCC). Before joining IRENA, Mr Lucas established the energy and renewables policy for the Spanish Government: the Energy Efficiency Law; the Renewable Energy Law; and the Renewable Energy Plan 2011-2020. He was also very involved in forming European renewable energy policies. He is an agronomy engineer from the Polytechnic University of Madrid Spain (UPM) and a postgraduate from the Federal Polytechnic University of Lausanne, Switzerland (EPFL).



Dolf Gielen

Director of the Innovation and Technology Center in Bonn

Dutch citizen

Joined IRENA in January 2011

"We have just scratched the surface of what can be done with renewable energy. Venture capital in combination with technological progress will open up many new avenues; the Bonn Center will assist in accelerating this development."

Before joining IRENA, Dolf Gielen was Chief of the Energy Efficiency and Policy Unit at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Vienna. In that capacity, he managed a

number of large projects involving energy efficiency and renewable energy (including those in Sri Lanka, Ukraine and India). Previously, he was a Senior Energy Analyst in the Energy Technology Policy Division of the International Energy Agency, Paris. Dolf Gielen has a PhD in Energy and Materials Modelling from the Technical University of Delft. He graduated with an MA in Environmental Sciences at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Gauri Singh

Director of Knowledge Management Innovation and Technology

Indian citizen

Joined IRENA in January 2011



"My priority at IRENA is to build a focused work programme that meets the aspirations and expectations of the various member countries."

Since 2007, Gauri Singh has been Joint Secretary in India's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. Her responsibilities include all policy formulation and international cooperation. Gauri Singh developed the policy framework of the National Solar Mission to generate 20,000 MW of solar power by 2022. She created

a level playing field for foreign direct investment companies and independent producers to double the annual installed wind capacity. She initiated a shift in the off-grid policy paradigm to upscale renewable energy systems. She was also in charge of designing the framework for renewable energy certificates. Ms Singh holds a Bachelor of Economics from Delhi University and an MBA in Marketing and Finance from the Podar Institute of Management, Rajasthan University.



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Copy and design

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