

**EU – MEDITERRANEAN – GULF  
RENEWABLE ENERGY CONFERENCE**

**9th October 2009, Brussels**

Statement by

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United Arab Emirates

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Commissioner,

I would like to first thank you for inviting the United Arab Emirates to Participate in a conference that tackles one of the most pivotal issues of our time; Renewable Energy.

According to the UNDP, the world's population will grow to 9.1 billion people in 2050 – Resulting in a major increase in Energy consumption.

Today, 1.5 billion people are without energy among the 6.3 billion inhabitants in the world. The population is expected to cross eight billion by 2030.

The world relies on generating 90 per cent of its electric power from traditional energy sources, - chemically, thermally or from natural sources.

Simultaneous to this growth is a decrease in world oil reserves.

If we pool these two very important topics along with the crucial issue of Global warming and the energy security risk due to sensitive geopolitical stability, the solution is quite simple.

The infinite source of energy, renewable energy is the most technologically viable solution.

Over three years ago, the UAE took a pioneering step in being the first hydrocarbon economy to create a clear mandate with regards to renewable energy.

The realization manifested itself into the creation of the Masdar Initiative, a global renewable energy hub attracting researchers, educators, industry leaders and government. Together we will strive to resolve the ever-increasing global issue of climate change mitigation.

As part of its Energy Policy, due to be released this week, the Government of Abu Dhabi has recently committed to a 7% renewable energy target by 2020. This is a strong statement of intent and demonstrates that we, as an OPEC nation and a developing nation participating in the Kyoto Protocol, are planning for a future less dependent on oil.

Our nation's leaders have also singled out environmental sustainability as one of the four pillars crucial to achieve our Economic Vision 2030. Furthermore, Abu Dhabi's Urban Planning Council has launched a Community Sustainable Responsibility initiative (Estidama) to promote economic growth while enhancing the overall quality of life and protecting environmental resources oil.

However, one of the UAE's greatest demonstrations of intent is the successful bid to host the first ever International intergovernmental agency, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

Our commitment to IRENA clearly demonstrates the UAE's real and solid steps towards committing to a sustainable future.

## GCC and Energy

Current forecasts project demand for gas in the GCC to grow at 6.66 per cent annually from 2007 to 2012, while oil demand is expected to grow at nearly three per cent during the same period<sup>1</sup>.

GCC countries are expected to spend close to USD70 billion in energy projects in 2009, roughly in line with their actual capital expenditure of USD60-70 billion estimated in energy projects in 2008[Note:1]

About a half of this spending will be in the power and water sectors.

Of late GCC countries are diversifying their sources of energy.

The Gulf region is in a unique position to harness and eventually export solar energy with an abundance of space and ideal climate conditions.

Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Kuwait all have programs for solar and wind power farms, solar powered desalination, more efficient use of oil through fuel cells, carbon sequestration, oil gasification, and green building .

Lower oil prices may have distracted the private sector away from renewable-energy investment, but the Gulf, having for decades done little more than invest in small, pilot solar-power projects, is now investing large sums to catch up with other countries .

The challenge for Gulf governments is to sustain investment

for the long term, to ensure renewable energy can help take the place of oil and gas when the wells run dry.

### UAE and Alternative Energy

To keep up with the growing energy demand, recent reports have indicated that the UAE will need to invest around USD10 billion to satisfy the country's future energy requirements for at least the next 10 years<sup>1</sup>—

A recent poll shows that 92 per cent of regional business leaders think that the UAE must invest in research and implementation of projects for solar, wind, bio-fuel and other alternative sources of energy[Note:2]

In 2005 the UAE ratified the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Convention on Climate Change, becoming one of the first major oil-producing countries to do so. Abu Dhabi has also established one of the world's most comprehensive renewable energy initiatives, Masdar.

The UAE was the first International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) member country to ratify the IRENA statute. This showed to the world at large the Emirates' support and commitment to bringing renewable energy solutions to all nations, developed and developing.

I believe that urging other IRENA member states to ratify the statute as soon as possible is quite important to the Agency's success – but more so is encouraging non-IRENA member states to engage in constructive dialogue and eventually join the world's first agency dedicated 100% to renewable energy.

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The UAE has committed significant resources to IRENA

Dubai has launched a green building initiative and will introduce a sustainable building code in 2008, most likely modeled after the US Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standard.

With all that said – one issue needs to be addressed before we embark on our aggressive mandate – the issue of climate change is a global one – it transcends borders and relationships – without a collective effort, our joint goal of reducing carbon emissions for the survival of our future will fail. We need to, without fail, collaborate on our initiatives and we need, without fail, to work closely together to ensure a sustainable future for all mankind.

Thank you