

## FIFTH SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION AND FIRST SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY: 3-5 APRIL 2011

The fifth session of the Preparatory Commission for the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) opens today at the Abu Dhabi National Convention Center (ADNEC), in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), to be followed by the first session of the Assembly of IRENA on 4-5 April. The Assembly will be the first meeting of IRENA's governing body.

The Preparatory Commission and Assembly will focus on issues such as the: appointment of the Director-General; finalization of the work programme and budget for 2011; creation of rules of procedure and transitional arrangements; designation of the permanent seat of the Agency; selection of a permanent emblem for IRENA; consideration of the host country agreements and staff and financial matters; and organization of the second session of the Assembly. The Assembly will include a High-Level segment on Monday afternoon. On Tuesday, a Ministerial Round Table will be held in parallel to the Assembly to discuss the strategic needs for a clean energy future.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF IRENA

The IRENA statute was adopted on 26 January 2009, and entered into force on 8 July 2010. IRENA's purpose is to promote the widespread and increased adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy. One hundred forty-eight countries and the European Union are signatories of IRENA, with its statute having been ratified by 65 States.

**Preparatory Conference:** The Preparatory Conference for the Foundation of IRENA was held from 10-11 April 2008, in Berlin, Germany. Delegates from 60 countries expressed support for the creation of an international agency for renewable energies, and discussed issues such as objectives, activities, organizational structure, and financing for the new agency.

**Preparatory Workshops:** Two preparatory workshops for IRENA met in Berlin on 30 June and 1 July 2008. The workshops focused on IRENA's work programme, statutes and finances.

**Final Preparatory Conference:** This meeting took place from 23-24 October 2008, in Madrid, Spain. Delegates concluded discussions on IRENA's statute, resolving issues such

as financing, criteria and procedures for selecting the Interim Director-General and the interim headquarters, and the design of the initial phase of IRENA.

**Founding Conference:** IRENA's Founding Conference took place on 26 January 2009, in Bonn, Germany, where 75 countries signed the IRENA statute.

**PrepCom 1:** The first Preparatory Commission of IRENA met on 27 January 2009, in Bonn, Germany, following the founding conference. Delegates discussed next steps for IRENA and established a Committee for the selection of the Interim Director-General and a Committee for the selection of the interim headquarters. The Commission also established an Administrative Committee, chaired by Germany, to facilitate the effectiveness of the Commission's work, including through assisting in organizing regular sessions and contributing to the development of relevant documents.

**PrepCom 2:** The second Preparatory Commission of IRENA met from 29-30 June 2009, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, to decide on the interim headquarters and interim Director-General for IRENA. Abu Dhabi was designated as the interim headquarters, and H el ene Pelosse (France) was appointed interim Director-General. Delegates also decided that Bonn, Germany, would host IRENA's centre of innovation and technology, and Vienna, Austria, would host IRENA's liaison office for cooperation with other organizations active in the field of renewable energy. Delegates also addressed issues such as the initial work programme, financial regulations, staff regulations and the budget.

**PrepCom 3:** The third Preparatory Commission of IRENA met on 17 January 2010, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Delegates completed IRENA's 2010 budget and work programme, as well as other measures to make IRENA operational.

**PrepCom 4:** The fourth Preparatory Commission of IRENA met on 24-25 October 2010, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The Commission accepted the resignation of H el ene Pelosse as Interim Director-General, and appointed Adnan Amin (Kenya) to the position until the first session of the Assembly.

### UN MEETINGS AND SUMMITS ON RENEWABLE ENERGIES

**UN CONFERENCE ON NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY:** This conference, convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 10-21 August 1981, marked the international community's first major attempt to develop a

strategy for the use of alternative energies. The conference examined alternative forms of energy and adopted the Nairobi Programme of Action for the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy as a blueprint for national and international action. The Nairobi Programme identified five broad areas for concentrated action: energy assessment and planning; research, development, and demonstration; transfer, adaptation, and application of mature technologies; information flows; and education and training. Endorsing the Nairobi Programme later that year, the General Assembly, in Resolution 36/193, set up an interim committee to launch immediate implementation and, in 1992, established the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy, open to the participation of all states as full members.

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT:** The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and adopted Agenda 21, an action plan for implementing sustainable development. Agenda 21 addresses sustainable energy in Chapter 9, which notes the increasing need to rely on environmentally sound energy systems, particularly new and renewable sources of energy.

**COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** In April 2001, the ninth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 9) adopted a decision (E/CN.17/2001/19) on "Energy for sustainable development," addressing issues such as the role of the private sector, research and development, institutional capacities, financial support, energy accessibility and rural energy. *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* coverage of CSD 9 can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/csd/csd9/index.html>

**WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in August-September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, adopted the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), which addresses renewable energy in several of its chapters, including on sustainable consumption and production patterns (Chapter III), poverty eradication (Chapter II), small island developing States (Chapter VII), and Africa (Chapter VIII). *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* coverage of the WSSD can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/2002/wssd>

**CSD 15:** Held in May 2007, CSD 15 addressed energy issues, although delegates did not reach consensus and did not adopt any decisions. *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* coverage of CSD 15 can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/csd/csd15>

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY:** In December 2010, the 65th UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 65/151 proclaiming 2012 as the International Year for Sustainable Energy for All.

#### IREC MEETINGS

**BONN RENEWABLES 2004:** At the WSSD, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder invited the international community to a Conference on Renewable Energy. The International Renewable Energy Conference (IREC) took place from 1-4 June 2004, in Bonn, Germany, and launched the series of IREC meetings. The outcomes of the conference included policy recommendations, an international action programme and a political declaration, which led to the creation of the

Renewable Energy Network for the 21st Century (REN21). IISD Reporting Services coverage of Renewables 2004 can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/sd/ren2004>

**BIREC 2005:** The Beijing International Renewable Energy Conference (BIREC), hosted by China in November 2005, adopted the Beijing Declaration, which recognized the need for significant financial resources, both public and private, for investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency, and emphasized the need for enhanced international cooperation for capacity building in developing countries, among other issues.

**WIREC 2008:** The Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC) convened from 4-6 March 2008, in Washington, D.C., US. Participants discussed four main themes: market adoption and finance; agriculture, forestry and rural development; state and local authorities; and research and development. The conference resulted in the Washington International Action Programme, comprising over 100 pledges by countries and organizations. IISD Reporting Services coverage of WIREC 2008 can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/wirec2008>

**DIREC 2010:** The Delhi International Renewable Energy Conference (DIREC 2010) took place from 27-29 October 2010, in New Delhi, India, and concluded with the DIREC Declaration and 30 new pledges by governments and civil society under the Delhi International Action Programme. IISD Reporting Services coverage of DIREC 2010 can be found at <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/energy/direc2010>

#### INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE SPECIAL REPORT ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

**SOURCES:** At its 25th session held from 26-28 April 2006, in Port Louis, Mauritius, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) agreed to hold a scoping meeting for a special report on renewable energy sources. *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* coverage of IPCC 25 can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ipcc25/> A scoping meeting on the special report took place in Lübeck, Germany, in January 2008. The meeting produced, among others, an outline for a special report on renewable energy sources. At its 28th session, celebrated in Budapest, Hungary, in April 2008, the IPCC agreed to the preparation of a Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation (SRREN), to be completed by 2010. The approval of SRREN is scheduled to take place at IPCC 33, to be held from 5-8 May, 2011, in Abu Dhabi, UAE. *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* coverage of IPCC 28 can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ipcc28/>

#### OTHER MEETINGS

**Clean Energy Ministerial:** The Clean Energy Ministerial is a US-convened high-level global forum to promote policies and programmes that advance clean energy technology, to share lessons learned and best practices, and to encourage the transition to a global clean energy economy. The Clean Energy Ministerials involves representatives from Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The first Clean Energy Ministerial was held in Washington D.C., US, from 19-20 July 2010.