

**Plenary Session A:
Opening Ministerial Segment
Thursday, 3 June, 9.00 – 12.00 h
Venue: Plenary Hall IKBB**

Internationale Konferenz
für Erneuerbare Energien, Bonn
International Conference
for Renewable Energies, Bonn



STATEMENT

Margot Wallström

European Commissioner for the Environment

Dear Chancellor, Dear Colleagues, Dear Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.
Dear friends.

The British philosopher Samuel Johnson once wrote "*The future belongs to those that purchase it today*".

This certainly holds true for the future of our energy systems.

I believe that renewable energy is the future but it is up to us all, political leaders, business and, of course, consumers – to reach out and seize the benefits renewables can bring.

I would like to put 3 messages to you:

- The future of renewables depends on our political will and our capacity to be forward-looking.
- Renewables are a winning concept - they promote economic growth, employment and the improvement of the environment.
- We have to act together – solidarity with the developing world is of crucial importance.

The need for political will

The EU is at the forefront for renewable energy. It is the market that will ultimately determine the use of renewables. But we – the political authorities – need to set the conditions for renewables and address the market failures that exist.

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The EU has set targets for renewables in energy and electricity. We remain committed to these targets and we have adopted a range of measures covering electricity, biofuels, cogeneration and energy performance standards.

Last week, the Commission concluded a first review on the state of renewable energy in the EU. It shows us that progress has been made. The EU will reach a share of renewables in electricity of 18-19% in 2010. But more needs to be done if we are to meet our targets of 21% electricity and 12% of total energy consumption.

We will act - We have already identified further actions, mainly on heat and biomass.

We will look at the future. The Commission does not yet propose a target – it is too early to do so. But the Commission will now start preparing new targets for the period after 2010. We will do so together with all stakeholders and we should have these targets adopted by 2007. In doing so, we will examine the recent proposals for a 20% target as a benchmark.

Renewables – a win/win/win situation

In Sustainable Development, we often talk about win-win-win situations – maybe we use these words a bit too easily. But renewable energy is really such a win-win-win situation.

Renewable energy offers a low-carbon energy system, which will help us tackle climate change and other forms of air pollution. It strengthens Europe's security of energy supply, which we all know has far-reaching political and economic consequences – the recent surge in oil prices risks reminding us of this simple fact. And it promotes new avenues for economic growth and employment. The growth of the European wind energy sector and the more than 75.000 people it employs bear witness of this.

Of course, there will still be complaints from the sceptics.

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There will talk of intermittency problems as if we are considering moving to a higher share tomorrow. We will still hear that renewables imply higher cents per kilo-watt hour at generation.

We know the solutions are there or emerging– and we know the future will prove these sceptics wrong.

Renewable energy sources bring promises of a truly *sustainable* energy system.

Solidarity – working with the developing world

The EU's drive for renewables is not only inward looking - focusing only on Europe. It reaches out to build a global coalition.

This is why, when it became clear at the World Summit on Sustainable Development that no targets for renewable energy would be agreed, the EU launched the "Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition" – the JREC.

Renewable energy should be a concrete example of solidarity with the developing countries. We are all set to learn from each other.

Today, the JREC counts 88 like-minded countries. And the group is set to grow.

We also need to move from words to deed. This morning, we have decided on a JREC roadmap from Bonn onwards.

I am also pleased to present to you two further actions that the Commission is submitting to the International Programme of Actions. Both of these will benefit the developing countries:

- To tackle the information deficit and to help capacity building, we are proposing to further develop **a global on-line database on renewable energy policy**.

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- To reduce the financing gap, we are proposing to further develop a “**patient capital fund**” to support innovative public-private partnerships.

These initiatives will complement the many actions proposed by other stakeholders, including the action proposed here by the EU Energy Initiative for which the Commission also holds the secretariat.

Conclusion

As you can see from these short words, the Commission, the EU and the JREC community are strongly committed to the success of the Bonn conference.

We need to move beyond Johannesburg. We need to set new guidelines for renewables at the global level and we need to do so together.

Somebody I met once said :

If you are failing to plan, you are planning to fail.

Lets take this opportunity to avoid that.