

A milestone for future-oriented energy supply

International Renewable Energy Agency being founded today in Bonn

Today an official ceremony for the signing of the Statute will mark the birth of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). IRENA is a milestone on the road towards a future-oriented energy supply. Climate change and the growing scarcity of fossil resources demand a fundamental transformation of our energy systems. More than 100 government delegations from all over the world are taking part in the Conference. The German government is represented by Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel, Federal Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul and Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, Gernot Erler.

Federal Environment Minister Gabriel: "Many countries have recognised the opportunities which renewable energies offer for climate protection, security of supply, economic growth and employment. IRENA gives renewables an international voice and political impetus. The Agency will be the global platform for renewable energies."

Federal Development Minister Wieczorek-Zeul: "Today's event sends a strong signal for joint action by the global community on an international energy policy which also gives the poorest countries access to clean energy, thus contributing to the alleviation of poverty."

Gernot Erler, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office: "Energy and climate policy are now fixed components of our foreign and security policy. With IRENA we want to assist the international breakthrough of renewables and reduce global rivalries over fossil energies and sources of supply. The expansion of renewable energies also holds major global opportunities for the industry: Germany, with its outstanding environmental technologies, is particularly well-placed in this regard. Three Foreign Office special envoys campaigned for IRENA worldwide."

The German government's initiative for the founding of IRENA was actively supported from the outset by Spain and Denmark. The aim of the new Agency is to close throughout the world the gap between the enormous potential of renewables and their current relatively low market share in energy consumption. IRENA is the first international organisation to focus exclusively on the issue of renewable energies. The main work of IRENA will be to advise its members on creating the right frameworks, building capacity and improving financing and the transfer of technology and know-how for renewable energies.

Tomorrow, Tuesday, the constituent meeting of the Preparatory Commission, to which all signatory states belong, will take place. This first meeting of the Commission will lay the foundations for the swift establishment of IRENA. In June 2009 the Preparatory Commission will decide on the location of the Agency's seat and elect the first Director-General.

The IRENA founding process was led in Germany by the Federal Environment Ministry and the Federal Development Ministry, in close cooperation with the Federal Foreign Office.

