

CONCEPT NOTE



Global Renewable Energy Forum Scaling Up Renewable Energy

7–9 October 2009
León, Guanajuato, Mexico



SUMMARY

The Mexican Ministry of Energy (SENER) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) join hands to organize the **Global Renewable Energy Forum 2009**. This event will take place on 7-9 October 2009 in León, Guanajuato, Mexico.

By gathering a broad range of stakeholders, this Global Forum will create a suitable environment for a proactive dialogue in order to strengthen interregional cooperation and encourage innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at scaling up investments in renewable energy. The Global Forum will provide a platform for profiling leadership in regard to the promotion of renewable energy, thereby increasing the visibility of political commitments towards the development of alternative energy systems. It will enable multi-stakeholder dialogs and encourage partnerships, as well as facilitate the development of innovative frameworks aimed at supporting initiatives related to clean energy.

It is expected that some 1000 officials, planners and energy experts from all world regions will participate in the event, including representatives from governments, international organizations, academia, civil society, and private sector.

The Global Forum will feature a series of plenary sessions around the following themes:

- Energy Poverty, Financial Crisis, and Climate Change;
- Energy Transition and Economic Transformations;
- Renewable Energy Potential;
- Renewable Energy and the Access Agenda;
- Biofuels;
- Investments in Renewable.

Parallel sessions will convene stakeholders around specific topics, such as New Technologies, Industrial Applications, Energy Efficiency, and Institutional and Innovative Financial Mechanisms.

SENER will be responsible for providing the venue and related logistics, as well as ensuring the political buy-in of the event. UNIDO is in charge of the substantive coordination of the event. SENER, UNIDO and other partners are however working closely together on all those issues.

CONTEXT

An energy landscape largely dominated by fossil fuels

Despite a strong increase in the interest for renewable energy technologies, business-as-usual scenarios depict an energy future largely dominated by fossil fuels. Dedicated actions are therefore required for profiling renewable energy as an attractive alternative to fossil-based energy.

The threat of climate change

Continuously growing greenhouse gas emissions pose a significant threat to the global climate system. The impacts of climate change are likely to hit the poor the hardest. The current dominant paradigm of carbon-intensive energy combined with the expected significant growth in energy demand in the next few decades call for an energy transition if climate change impacts are to be restrained to manageable levels.

Biomass reliance vs. modern energy services

A significant share of the world's population relies on traditional biomass. Providing impoverished communities with access the modern, reliable, environmentally-sound energy services is often seen as a prerequisite to development. Renewable energy has a key role to play in this regard. For instance, small-scale renewable technologies are often particularly appropriate for providing remote communities with adequate energy services.

Market volatility and opportunities

The high volatility in regard to fossil energy prices represents a challenge for development and a barrier to investments. At the same time, it is an opportunity for market forces to gradually shift towards alternative sources of energy, such as renewables, provided that enabling policies are in place. For instance, wind energy has experienced rapid growth over the recent years. Furthermore, a diversification of energy sources and the use of domestic renewable energy in particular assist in mitigating national energy security concerns.

Energy Financing in Times of Crisis

The global economic and financial crisis could have a major impact on infrastructure financing in general and energy financing in particular. Some sources suggest that the financing for energy infrastructure will be severely affected – a view that is somewhat moderated by a more optimistic outlook from the renewable energy market. However, some shortfall in the financing for energy sector could be expected.

Large untapped potential of renewable energy

There is a very high potential for renewable energy in most world regions. Specifically, there are large untapped opportunities to use renewable energy for productive uses and industrial applications. Yet, the full potential does not unfold for the numerous challenges and barriers a wide-spread deployment of renewable energy faces. It is crucial to address those challenges and barriers in a timely and comprehensive fashion.

Sustainability issues

In light of the current controversy in regard to the competition between biofuel and food, the large-scale deployment of renewable energy requires a careful assessment in order to avoid unintended adverse effects. Food security is crucial, also in Latin America where pockets of malnutrition persist. Therefore, an integrated approach is necessary when it comes to scaling up renewable energy.

Energy efficiency as necessary complementary measure

Energy efficiency is a complementary strategy to the promotion of renewable energy. Indeed, the combination of a low-carbon energy production with a well-managed and effective energy use will pave the way towards sustainable energy systems. The industrial sector in developing countries is commonly characterized by relatively high energy intensity. While energy efficiency measures are often presented as low-cost (or even negative cost) options for reducing the energy demand, significant barriers of various kind remain for a wide-spread deployment and application of such measures. It is therefore of utmost importance to put emphasis on promoting technologies and policies to allow for the potential energy savings to occur.

International Co-operation and the Role of the UN

Enhanced international cooperation is central to achieving a transition to a “green economy” and “green industry”. In this regard, energy will constitute one of the core issues. Despite its unmatched capacity to raise awareness, its unparalleled convening power and unrivalled ability to galvanize international action, the United Nations has yet to fully leverage its strengths and exercise a leadership role in the field of energy. UN-Energy, an inter-agency mechanism composed of 20 UN system organizations, was established to promote coherence in the UN system’s multidisciplinary response to the energy-related decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and to effectively engage with non-UN stakeholders. It is making a major effort to ensure that the UN system, together with the World Bank, contributes in areas where strategic interventions would have a major impact. More recently, it has sought to use this excellent platform to support the efforts of countries to reach the MDGs and to address the challenges of climate change. While UN-Energy will continue to play a key role, additional efforts are required to elevate the role of the UN system in the global energy scene and to galvanize international action towards a low carbon economy.

It is in this context that the Minister of Energy of Mexico and the Director-General of UNIDO have decided that the organization of the Global Renewable Energy Forum would be timely. The purpose of this Global Forum is to discuss the role of renewable energy in the context of the most pressing global challenges.

CO-ORGANIZERS AND PARTNERS

The Mexican Ministry of Energy (SENER) hold the mission of defining the energy policy of the country within the existing national framework with the objective to ensure the supply of competitive, reliable, high quality, affordable and environmentally sustainable energy to foster national development. Its vision entails a wide-spread access to affordable energy services by the Mexican population; public and private companies competitive at international level and operating within an adequate regulatory framework. SENER advocates a substantial increase in energy efficiency and supports research and technological development. It also promotes the use of alternative sources of energy, while taking into account the security of supply.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is the United Nations specialized agency given the task of promoting industrial development, mainly in the world's developing and least developed nations. UNIDO helps governments, business associations and companies face their industrial challenges. UNIDO has three thematic priorities, namely Poverty Reduction through Productive Activities, Trade Capacity Building, and Energy and Environment. UNIDO mobilizes knowledge, skills, information and technology to promote productive employment, a competitive economy and a sound environment. Furthermore, the Organization enhances cooperation at global, regional, national and sectoral levels. Following the lead of the UN Secretary-General, UNIDO strongly supports the efforts to combat climate change, promote industrial energy efficiency, support cleaner production techniques and promote renewable sources of energy.

The co-organizers will seek the support and participation of leading institutions for convening the Global Forum. These, among others, would include:

Partnerships: Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), AFROLAC, Caribbean Community (CARICOM);

International, bi- and multi-lateral Agencies: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Global Environment Facility (GEF), German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), International Energy Agency (IEA), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA);

Private sector and Industry: Comisión Federal de Electricidad, Corporación Andina de Fomento;

Others: Global Energy Assessment (GEA), IPCC Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources, UN Foundation.

THE GLOBAL FORUM

Objective of the Conference

The overall objective of the Global Renewable Energy Forum is to provide a platform for a proactive dialogue in order to strengthen interregional cooperation and encourage innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at scaling up renewable energy in Latin America and elsewhere. Furthermore, the Global Forum will represent a unique opportunity for profiling leadership in regard to the promotion of renewable energy.

Concept

The Global Renewable Energy Forum 2009 will take place over three days, on 7-9 October 2009, in León, Mexico. Technology and business exhibitions will be held in parallel to the Global Forum. The participants will have the possibility to hold working meetings with the private sector representatives. Furthermore, a meeting to review the latest development of the Renewable Energy Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean will take place.

The working sessions will consist of plenary and parallel round-tables composed by a keynote speaker, five panelists and a moderator. Sessions will address specific topics through in-depth analysis and will provide the audience with focused presentations and discussions. Following the interventions of the keynote speakers and panelists, the floor will be opened to the audience for brief comments and

questions. The role of the moderator is to lead the sessions, coordinate the discussions and provide a brief conclusion at the end by drawing the main messages discussed. The methodology chosen for the sessions allows for highly interactive discussions around key renewable energy themes. Special attention will be paid in mixing the speakers in such a way as to represent a wide spectrum of views, experiences and expectations.

Thematic papers will be issued in anticipation to the Global Forum. They will feature salient issues in relation to renewable energy, namely Policies, Investments, and civil society and NGOs.

The key issues, major points of discussions, as well as the conclusions of the discussions held during the sessions will be captured in a comprehensive report. The amended thematic papers and a summary of the discussions will be posted on a dedicated website.

A steering committee has been established by the partners in order to ensure smooth coordination of the organization. The committee meets in-person on regular basis to discuss both substantive issues with regard to the conference programme, speakers, presentation structure and media coverage as well as organizational matters.

Noteworthy is to mention that some high-level keynote speakers such as Dr. Pachauri, Nobel Peace Prize, have confirmed their participation. Institutions such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) have expressed keen interest in participating in the Global Forum, for instance by taking an active role in moderating sessions or acting as speakers.

Target beneficiaries

It is expected that some 1000 officials, planners and energy experts coming from governments, international organizations, academia, civil society and private sector from around the world will participate in the event. Participation to the Global Forum will be free of charge, but delegates must cover the costs related to their travel and stay. To the extent possible, financial assistance might be mobilized for the selected participants with limited resources.

Venue

The Global Renewable Energy Forum will take place in the Poliforum of León (www.poliforumleon.com). The city of León is located 250 km to the north-west of Mexico City, in the State of Guanajuato. There is ample hotel capacity in the vicinity of the venue, and the León/Guanajuato international airport is only 15 minutes away.

Tentative programme

Wednesday 7 October 2009	09:00	Inaugural Plenary Session	
	10:00	Coffee break and Opening of Exhibition	
	10:30	<u>Plenary Session 1</u> Energy Poverty, Financial Crisis, and Climate Change	
	12:30	Lunch	
	14:00	<u>Plenary Session 2</u> Renewable Energy and Energy Transition	
	15:30	Coffee break	
	16:00 - 17:30	<u>Plenary Session 3</u> Renewable Energy Potential - Reality or Utopia	
		Social event (tbc)	
Thursday 8 October 2009	09:00	<u>Plenary Session 4</u> Renewable Energy and the Access Agenda	
	11:00	Coffee break	
	11:30	<u>Parallel Session 1</u> Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy - New Technologies	<u>Parallel Session 2</u> Renewable Energy for Industrial Applications
	13:15	Lunch	
	15:00 - 17:00	<u>Plenary Session 5</u> Future of Biofuels: Potential and Challenges	
		Social event (tbc)	
Friday 9 October 2009	09:00 - 10:15	<u>Plenary Session 6</u> Scaling Up Investments in Renewable Energy	
	10:30	<u>Parallel Session 3</u> Energy Efficiency	<u>Parallel Session 4</u> Institutions and Innovative Financial Mechanisms
	11:30	Coffee break	
	12:00 - 13:30	Closing Plenary Session Summary of the Global Forum	

Expected Outcomes

The Global Forum is consistent with Mexican President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa's commitment to support and promote renewable energy and energy efficiency, as well as with UNIDO's priorities in the field of energy. Also, the Global Renewable Energy Forum 2009 stems from the continuation of a series of UNIDO-led events and is in line with the Organization's objective to promote global collaboration, information exchange and capacity building in regard to highly relevant contemporary issues related to energy and development.

The Global Forum will create a suitable environment for a proactive dialogue in order to strengthen interregional cooperation and encourage innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at scaling up investments in renewable energy for productive uses. It will assist in identifying enabling policies, institutional frameworks and successful initiatives allowing the stimulation of market-led dissemination of renewables worldwide, including the promotion and replication of successful practices. The Global Forum will provide a platform for profiling leadership in regard to the promotion of renewable energy in Latin

America and elsewhere, thereby increasing the visibility of political commitments towards the development of alternative energy systems. Additionally, it will enable multi-stakeholder dialogue and encourage partnerships, as well as facilitate the development of innovative frameworks aimed at supporting initiatives related to clean energy.

The Global Forum will encourage stakeholders to join efforts and launch projects aimed at increasing access to modern and sustainable energy services based on renewable energy technologies in the region and other parts of the world. Such initiatives ought to enhance a broad range of income generating activities by promoting industrial development in developing countries. Finally, another Global Forum's objective is to enable business and commercial networking in regard to the promotion of renewable energy sources.

In recent years, the Latin American and Caribbean region has proven to be a key player in the field of renewable energy by successfully implementing innovative projects and policies. The Global Forum will provide an ideal venue to share those valuable experiences to a diverse audience coming from academia, the private sector, as well as governments.

More specifically, the expected outcomes of the Global Forum would include:

- Enhanced dialogue and cooperation for the faster deployment of renewable energy;
- Innovative regional cooperation frameworks;
- Scaling up investments in renewable energy;
- Enhanced political commitment to promote renewable energy.

Information and Contacts

Detailed information will be posted in due course at: www.GREFmexico2009.org.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require further information. Email: GREFmexico2009@unido.org.

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Scaling up Renewable Energy
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