

Spanish Prime Minister hails Abu Dhabi's vision and its leading role in renewable energy sector posted on 02/03/2011

Prime Minister of Spain Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero visited Tuesday Abu Dhabi's Masdar City to experience firsthand the visible progress of the sustainable, cutting-edge urban development and to reaffirm the growing cooperation between the two nations in the development and deployment of renewable energy.

The Prime Minister was received by Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, CEO of Masdar, and provided with a comprehensive overview of Masdar's unique integrated approach to tackling the complex energy challenges the world faces.

Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, said: "I am most satisfied with the visit to Masdar, which I consider one of the main centres in the world for research and development in renewable energy. Masdar is working closely with Spanish companies in the development of solar energy. I support enlarging and deepening the cooperation in all sectors of renewable energy - in the UAE, Spain and other regions of the world".

Spain and the UAE have a strong and growing business relationship. Founded in 2008, Torresol Energy - a commercial developer of Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) plants - is a strategic venture between Spanish multinational technology leader SENER Grupo de Ingenieria, S.A., and Masdar.

Torresol is developing three solar power plants in Spain, all of which are expected to be running in 2011. Using proprietary molten salt thermal storage technology, the CSP plants are capable of generating electricity at night and through periods of intermittent sunlight, enabling a continuous supply of electricity and overcoming the challenges of intermittency.

Construction of the twin Concentrated Solar Power plants - Valle 1 and Valle 2 - in Cadiz, Spain, will generate up to 7.5 hours of thermal storage capacity and provide clean and safe energy for 80,000 homes.

The third plant, Gemasolar, is the first commercial-scale plant in the world to apply a central tower receiver and molten salt heat storage technology. The CSP plant will produce electrical power 24 hours a day and deliver renewable energy to 25,000 homes throughout the region of Andalusia, Spain.

Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, CEO and managing director of Masdar, said: "Spain is a renewable energy champion and has played a major role in driving the global adoption of renewable sources of power. Spain has helped pave the way for renewable energy, and we are pleased to receive the Prime Minister to Masdar City and Abu Dhabi.

"Our nations have a lot in common, as we see a future driven by a healthy mix of energy. The visit by the Prime Minister underscores the global recognition that Masdar is a viable gathering place for collaboration, and a test-bed for the development and commercialisation of renewable energy and clean technologies," Dr. Al Jaber added.

During the Prime Minister's tour of Masdar City, he met with students and Spanish professors teaching at the Masdar Institute - the Middle East's first graduate research institution dedicated to renewable energy and environmental technologies. The Prime Minister also learned about the various pilot projects at Masdar City, including the Solar Beam Down, the solar test field and the fully-operational 10 MW solar power farm, the largest grid-connected facility in the Middle East and North Africa.

"We hope to build on the visit by the Prime Minister and continue to grow our relationship with Spain," added Dr. Al Jaber.

"Spain has long been a supporter of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and we look forward to the continued support in ensuring IRENA delivers on its mandate to drive the global acceleration and adoption of renewable energy".

Spain is one of the world's most advanced renewable energy players and continues to lead by example. In 2009, renewable energy represented 12.5 percent of total energy generation in Spain, and the nation has set a target of generating 20 percent by 2020. As a result of the ministerial ruling in 2004, and through feed-in tariffs, Spain removed economic barriers to the installation of renewable energy to the national power grid.

Masdar is Abu Dhabi's multi-faceted initiative advancing the development, commercialisation and deployment of renewable and alternative energy technologies and solutions. The company serves as a link between today's fossil fuel economy and the energy economy of the future - developing a pathway for how we will live and work tomorrow. Backed by the stability and reputation of the Mubadala Development Company, an investment vehicle of the government of Abu Dhabi, Masdar is dedicated to the Emirate's long-term vision for the future of energy.

