

UAE to preside over first session of IRENA assembly posted on 10/03/2011

In an unprecedented show of commitment, 65 of the 149 members of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), have ratified the Agency's statute in time for their active participation at the upcoming First Session of the Assembly. However, the remaining 83 signatories will be able to observe the proceedings and make comments on all documents and resolutions, announced Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Special Envoy for Energy and Climate Change and Chief Executive of Masdar, in his capacity as the President of the upcoming session. With almost 50 percent of signatories having ratified the statute in record time, IRENA is hoping to adopt key decisions that will set the institutional basis of the Agency.



In 2009, the UAE was selected, by acclamation, by IRENA members as the Headquarters of the Agency. Over the past year and a half, members of the Agency have met in Abu Dhabi for four preparatory sessions, through the meetings of the IRENA Preparatory Commission, in order to finalise the drafting of all institutional founding documents that will be submitted at the First Assembly for adoption.

The Preparatory Commission consists of IRENA's Signatory States and acts as the interim body during the founding period. The Commission will be dissolved on the first day of the Assembly on April 4, 2011. The Agency will then consist of an Assembly, a Council, that will be elected by the members of the Agency, and a Secretariat.

The First Assembly of IRENA, explained Dr Al Jaber "is considered a foundational meeting announcing the official legal launch of the Agency. The institutional documents to be adopted will include the Agency's financial rules and regulations, staff rules and regulations and human resources rules and regulations as well as the work plan for 2011 amongst others." "Members of the Assembly will also be making the decision to confirm the permanent seat of the IRENA Secretariat in Abu Dhabi and select the Director General of IRENA," he added.

Dr. Al Jaber said: "IRENA has enjoyed an unprecedented level of support over the past years - This is specifically evident by the expedited level of ratifications. In this first meeting of the Assembly, IRENA will enjoy the support of 65 members - this truly is a significant achievement and we look forward to more countries ratifying by the Second session of the Assembly." The deadline for members to ratify in time for active participation at the first Assembly was March 5, 2011.

Countries who have submitted recent ratifications include Gambia, France, Spain, Qatar, Switzerland and the United States.

Interim Director General of IRENA, Adnan Amin said: "IRENA has benefited from an extraordinary support system of a large number of committed and active members. In the lead up to the crucial first Assembly we have been working hard to put in place the institutional basis of IRENA in close consultation with our members. That 65 members who have already ratified IRENA in such a short period of time is further proof of this high level of commitment and engagement. We are pleased that the United States has also now become a full member - this truly is an indicator of the members faith in the mandate of the agency and its ability to deliver."

Praising the dedication of the member states Al Jaber said: "No other agency in recent history has enjoyed such support from its members. With the deposit of the US ratification, IRENA has now been ratified by nations from every continent including its largest financial contributor to the Agency.

Al Jaber added, "The United States' early action to join IRENA underscores the US commitment to IRENA's objectives." The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) was officially established in Bonn on January 26 2009. At the Founding Conference 75 States from all over the world signed the Agency's Statute. The founding of IRENA was preceded by several meetings that paved the way for establishing the Agency. To date 148 states and the European Union signed the Statute of the Agency; amongst them are 48 African, 38 European, 35 Asian, 17 American and 10 Australia/Oceania States.

Mandated by these governments worldwide, IRENA aims to promote the widespread and increased adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy. Acting as the global voice for renewable energies, IRENA will facilitate access to all relevant renewable energy information, including technical data, economic data and renewable resource potential data. IRENA will also share experiences on best practices and lessons

learned regarding policy frameworks, capacity-building projects, available finance mechanisms and renewable energy related energy efficiency measures.

Headquartered in the United Arab Emirates, IRENA is the first truly international organisation based in an Arab country. In addition to the Headquarters in Abu Dhabi, IRENA also has a Liaison Office in Vienna, Austria, and an IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre in Bonn, Germany.