

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



OPENING SPEECH

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Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Biomass, geothermal energy, the sun, water, wind – we have been given an introduction to our topic based on artistic imagery. Thank you very much to the artists.

I would like to welcome you to the opening of the Ministerial Segment of the International Conference for Renewable Energies.

We have assembled here in Bonn because there is a vision we share – the vision of making renewable energies the most important energy source of the future. Now it is up to us to make that vision a reality. Over 154 countries of the world are represented here. More than 3,000 delegates and observers – this is the largest demonstration on behalf of renewable energy which the world has ever seen. Now it is up to us to take the necessary steps which we have been discussing over the past 2 days: transfer of technology, financing, using the experiences of best practices we have come to know.

There have been 38 side events and other meetings like the International Parliamentary Forum, the Business Forum or the Day of Geothermal Power. These events made clear that there is a great interest in renewable energies.

The United Nations Millennium Assembly resolved that the proportion of people who are forced to live in extreme poverty should be reduced by half by 2015. If we want to achieve that goal, far more people than in the past need to be given access to energy. We could provide one billion people with access to modern energy from renewable sources if we succeed in developing the markets and in improving financing. The discussions of the past

two days have shown that it can be done. There are examples all over the world that give evidence of the feasibility of this endeavor. The right strategies exist, the right technologies are developing, and, above all, we are encountering, all over the world, a commitment to change energy policies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Renewable energies provide us with a great opportunity:

- we need them in order to fight poverty;
- we need them in order to protect the climate and the environment;
- and we need them in order to overcome our dependency on oil.

Renewable energies are a central prerequisite to sustainability, peace, and security in our world.

What is at stake is our common future. This is why I believe it is so important that you as national government delegations are represented here, as well as representatives of the private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders. We also have prominent representation, in particular, from the United Nations, the World Bank, and many other international organizations – because we need a global architecture for this common future.

Before we listen to this morning's contributions, I would like to introduce Mohamed El-Ashry to you. I am glad that he has agreed to be our conference facilitator. Mohamed El-Ashry served as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility for many years and enjoys tremendous international standing. He will be supporting Jürgen Trittin and myself as conference chairs, and I am convinced that his experience and reputation will help us a great deal in making the conference a success.