



MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE: THE ROLE OF PRODUCING COUNTRIES

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As energy producers and consumers meet for the 13th IEF, it is incumbent upon us all to dwell on our joint responsibility to protect the future of our planet for coming generations. We need to lay the foundations for the economic and social development of our respective countries, without destroying our planet in the process. Our children need employment and security, but in an enjoyable world in a safe environment.

However, it is clear that sustainability and environmentally friendly development have to go hand in hand. Climate change is an undeniable fact and we all have a role to play in mitigating its effects. For its part, the UAE has not shirked this responsibility; in recent years it has announced a wide range of climate-friendly initiatives.

The exceptionally fast pace of our economic development over the last few years has given the UAE a unique perspective as we have become both major energy producers and growing energy consumers. Our national annual peak demand for electricity is set to more than double by 2020 and we have an increasing demand for other forms of energy.

Our growing population and fast-moving industrial development have forced us to choose between whether we want to continue burning fossil fuels, or find complementary energy solutions for use at home. We realised that by widening our domestic fuel mix, we could release more hydrocarbons for export, while reducing our carbon footprint at the same time.

Two years ago, we took a major step in complementing our traditional energy portfolio when the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation awarded a major contract for the construction of four new 1,400 megawatt nuclear power stations. The UAE firmly believes that nuclear power represents an important clean energy source that should be developed, along with other clean fuels. We have been able to embark on an important civilian nuclear energy programme in close collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. The nuclear plants have been designed in accordance with the latest cutting-edge technology and safety was given paramount importance in the design as well in all other operational issues, including the safe storage of radioactive waste. The first plant will be commissioned in 2017 and the objective is for nuclear energy to eventually account for 25 per cent of the UAE's power requirements.

We believe that the best way of securing a sustainable economic future in a carbon-constrained world is to develop a balanced portfolio of clean energy sources in which nuclear, renewable energy, oil and natural gas all have a

role to play. The UAE's geographic location enables us to utilise renewable energies, particularly solar energy, to the maximum, and the emirate of Abu Dhabi has recently set a target of generating 7 per cent of its energy needs from renewable sources.

Already, Masdar Power is developing the 100MW Shams One Concentrated Solar Power plant in the Western Region of Abu Dhabi, which when complete, will be the largest such unit in the world. Masdar is also developing a 30MW wind farm and a Photovoltaic array on Sir Bani Yas Island.

In addition to measures to improve its energy mix at home, the UAE is seeking to promote a sustainable future in the world as a whole.

Masdar is at the heart of a multi-billion dollar initiative to create a global cooperative platform for open engagement in the search for solutions to some of mankind's most pressing energy and development problems. Masdar's research arm, the Masdar Institute, has teamed up with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to launch a range of research programmes focused on the development of advanced alternative energy, environmental technologies and sustainability.

Masdar is building in Abu Dhabi the world's first low-carbon city built on sustainable principles. Among the first tenants will be the Masdar Institute, which will eventually host 600-800 Master and PhD students and 200 faculty members.

The other important tenant at Masdar City will be the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), now headquartered in Abu Dhabi. By promoting renewable energy and helping develop new technologies, IRENA has the potential for making a tangible contribution to the mitigation of climate change. To date, 156 nations are either members or signatories to the IRENA convention and I would strongly encourage those countries that are not members to sign up for this important initiative.

The objective of the UAE's energy policy is not just to reduce carbon emissions at home, but also to play a leading role in the development of innovative new technologies that can effectively contribute to substantial reduction of global warming.

The UAE seeks partners in the implementation of this vision. I invite attendees at the International Energy Forum and the International Energy Business Forum to contact my office for ways of partnering with UAE institutions. Together, we can work for a better future. ■