

PRESS RELEASE

“Mainstream” Renewable Energy Continues Double-digit Growth

Best option to mitigate carbon emissions says new report

Bali, 8 December 2007 -- In less than a decade since the Kyoto Protocol was adopted, renewable energy has evolved rapidly from an ‘alternative’ source of energy to a mainstream energy option, according to the REN21 *Renewables Global Status Report 2007*.

Compared to a total global power capacity of 4,300 GW, the report finds renewable energy (without large hydro) now provides about 240 Gigawatts (GW) of clean power.

“What’s needed now are binding targets in an international agreement to establish policies that can rapidly accelerate the large-scale deployment of renewable energy to replace fossil fuels,” said Mohamed El-Ashry, head of the global policy network REN21 that produced the report with the Worldwatch Institute.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which houses the REN21 Secretariat, said “Renewable energy can make a significant contribution to de-carbonizing the global economy and its contribution to combating climate change is now really beginning to emerge.”

“I call on governments to send market signals that will accelerate the use of renewable energy even further and to also reverse the declines in research and development spending so as to accelerate the commercialization of other renewables waiting in the wings,” he said.

The new report follows two earlier Global Status Reports in 2005 and 2006, and shows that renewable energy sources continue their strong double-digit growth in 2007 (see table).

- **Wind energy** has the largest share of renewable energy investment and **continues to grow at 25-30%** per year to reach more than 90 GW cumulative capacity in 2007 – 11 times the capacity in 1997.
- **Grid-tied electricity from solar photovoltaic technology (solar PV) continues to grow at 50-60% annual rates**, and now accounts for almost 8 GW.
- **Solar hot water** systems now provide hot water to more than **50 million households** worldwide and **25 million rural households benefit** from biogas, small wind power, household solar power, and other technologies.

Growth Rates 2006	
Wind	25-30%
Solar PV	50-60%
Solar Thermal	15-20%
Biofuels	15-20%

“With more than 70 countries installing wind power and biomass power generation expanding in more than 40 countries, renewable energy is clearly a global sector”, said El-Ashry, adding “growth is being driven by policies to promote renewable energy, which have mushroomed over the past few years.”

More than 50 countries worldwide have adopted targets for future shares or amounts of renewable energy, including 13 developing countries, all EU countries, and many states/provinces in the US and Canada. At least 56 countries now have some type of renewable energy promotion policy, and 44 countries, states, and provinces have enacted renewable-portfolio-standards requiring future shares of power generation.

Pointing to an earlier report this year by the UNEP Sustainable Energy Finance Initiative (www.sefi.unep.org), El-Ashry said “the \$100 billion of global investment in the sector during 2006 is a vote of confidence by investors.”

Virginia Sonntag-O’Brien from REN21 and UNEP SEFI said that as the numbers for renewable energy continue to escalate, there seems to be “a disconnect between the markets and policy makers and negotiators”.

“In terms of options to mitigate carbon emissions, renewable energy is here now, unlike other options. There is no such thing as ‘clean coal’ today, and it is likely to be more than a decade before any advanced technology to capture and store carbon can be widely deployed” she said.

The *2007 Renewables Global Status Report* concludes that current trends are set to continue as the costs of renewable energy technologies decline and the sector continues to diversify production and technology development to a broad base of countries, including emerging economies. With more than 2.5 million jobs in the renewable energy industry, and strong rural development benefits, renewable energy is an avenue to economic development, energy security, local environmental benefits, and climate change mitigation.

Note to Editors

REN21 is a global policy network that provides a forum for international leadership on renewable energy. Its goal is to bolster policy development for the rapid expansion of renewable energies in developing and industrialised economies. It’s Secretariat is hosted by the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics in Paris with the support of the German government.

The REN21 Renewables Global Status Report was first published in 2005, with an update in 2006. The 2007 report is forthcoming in January 2008. For copies of the 2005 and 2006 reports, visit <http://www.ren21.net>. Translations in German, Chinese, and Japanese are available

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The pre-publication summary can be downloaded on the REN21 website at: www.ren21.net