

Session Overview

Renewable energy technologies contribute more to society than energy portfolio diversity and carbon emission reductions. Renewable energy deployment can stimulate the development of innovative economic approaches which provide valuable co-benefits. Hosted by REN21, this session will present a series of innovative approaches, looking beyond the co-benefits traditionally associated with renewables (such as job creation and environmental improvements). This session will look at how **renewables can drive forward-thinking approaches that support increased economic development and social equity, and help meet the aim of ensuring sustainable energy is available for all.**

Renewables: Evolution and current status

The evolution of renewable energy over the past decade has surpassed all expectations. Global installed capacity and production from all renewable technologies have increased substantially; most renewable energy technologies saw significant cost reductions; support policies have spread throughout the world. Despite rising energy use, for the first time in four decades, global carbon emissions associated with energy consumption remained stable in 2014 while the global economy grew; this stabilisation has been attributed to increased penetration of renewable energy and to improvements in energy efficiency.

Rana ADIB, Research Coordinator, REN21

Gender Mainstreaming

Women's economic empowerment and sustainable energy have emerged as key components of inclusive and sustainable growth. Gender mainstreaming has become widely accepted as a precondition for the success and sustainability of any renewable energy initiative. How renewable energy deployment can improve community health, offer employment opportunities for women, as well as develop "locally-grown" entrepreneurs will be presented

Ana ROJAS, Energy Task Manager, IUCN Global Gender Office

Community Power

By putting communities and citizens at the heart of a shift to clean energy, an energy transition can be achieved more quickly, fairly and with added benefits. Community power also creates opportunities for public-private finance of community renewables projects as well as the development of innovative financing mechanisms. The role of renewables in community energy and its co-benefits for the climate, for the people and communities involved in owning or running their own energy production will be presented.

Dirk VAN SINTIJAN, President, Rescoop

Molly WALSH, Campaigner, Friends of the Earth- Europe

Renewables and Social Entrepreneurship

Renewable energy can transform potential into creative economic and financial opportunities for local people while preserving the environment. In parallel social entrepreneurship that links companies and banks, along with microfinance programmes, can generate jobs, funding, and hands-on business development training in turn creating new companies. Fuelled by renewables, social entrepreneurship can generate local solutions that bring direct benefits to communities by building the leadership and management skills and providing access to microfinance loans and matching it with energy resources that are locally sourced and managed. Examples of innovative business models using renewables for productive uses will be presented.

Ousmane OUATTARA, Executive Secretary, Mali-Folkecenter Nyetaa

Civil Society

The European Union plays a central role in demonstrating how industrialised countries can lead in combating climate change and air pollution, decreasing dependence on foreign fossil fuels, and keeping energy affordable for consumers and businesses. The role of civil society as a main player in renewable energy generation will be discussed. Specifically a study looking at the role of civil society in setting energy policy in anticipation of meeting the targets outlined in the European 2020 Energy Strategy will be presented.

Lutz RIBBE, Vice-President, EESC Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO), European Economic and Social Council

Closing

Summary remarks

Franzjosef SCHAFHAUSEN, Director-General for Climate Policy, European and International Policy, Germany