

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



REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

Hermann Scheer

Chair, International Parliamentary Forum

Ladies and Gentlemen, Your Excellencies

Renewable energy sources are dispersed everywhere and must be technologically harnessed there. That is why the direct representatives of the people are the committed political advocates of these energy sources. This was the common denominator behind the International Parliamentary Forum – with more than 300 representatives from 80 countries.

The Forum's debate and resolution underlines and states:

1. Rapid actions is indispensable. The time for paying lip service to renewable energies is over. An end to the game of “talking about renewables and postponing actions” is well overdue.
2. Renewables are a common good. It is impossible to privatize wind and solar radiation. Using these energy forms leads to greater equality in the world economy.
3. Renewable energy is not a burden, but a uniquely comprehensive opportunity – economically, ecologically, socially and culturally. Above all, it has manifold macro-economic benefits. The political aim and art is to transform the macroeconomic benefits and the benefits to society as a whole into microeconomic incentives for investors and users. Renewable energy allows new economic calculations: Savings on fuel costs, large infrastructural costs, reduced foreign currency expenditure through the replacement of imported energy by domestic energy. Only biomass has fuel costs, which will revitalize the agricultural economy. The costs of conventional

fuels will rise as they near exhaustion, whilst the costs for renewables will drop as a result of further technological development and mass production. We have now reached this watershed.

4. We underline that the most obvious option to escape from the global trap of depleting oil and gas resources - which is already feasible - is the mobilization of biofuels. We should bear in mind that the wars in the gulf region since the early 80ies would probably not have happened if the region had contained banana plantations rather than a concentration of oil reserves.
5. Renewables are the only realistic option to meet the urgently growing energy needs in developing countries. The commissioning of a large conventional power station and installation of the transmission lines requires years. Building a wind or PV installation requires less than a week or a day.
6. Renewables require non-bureaucratic financing schemes: micro-credits, low or zero interest rates, guaranteed feed-in-payments, low or zero tax on biofuels or on renewable energy technologies, tariff-free trade, the transfer of fossil and atomic energy subsidies to renewables. We urge that the recommendations of the "Extractive Industries Report", commissioned by the World Bank and written by Emil Salim, be followed. We see this as an appeal to all international development banks.
7. The International Parliamentary Forum calls for an International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) as the most important institutional measure, set up as an intergovernmental organization. Membership should be voluntary, and all governments should have the opportunity to join at any time. Its aim should be to advise authorities in the policy development phase, to promote non-commercial technology transfer, to provide human capacity building, transparent certifications and standardizations. It should be helpful to all – including the UN-Organizations, from UNESCO to UNEP and UNDP. It should overcome the double standards in the field of international energy institutions. All supporters of the International Atomic Energy Agency should rightly be in favour of an International Renewable Energy Agency. The necessity for such an agency cannot be substituted by any network. I therefore welcome the indication Federal Chancellor Schröder gave in this direction in his speech.

Ladies and gentlemen, often in history, politics began far too early to initiate the most important things far too late. We are faced with a challenge, unprecedented in history, and we are involved in a race against time. We must all speed up. To conclude I would like to borrow a metaphor from William Shakespeare: we must look to the course of the sun and ensure that we do not miss it!