

Havana renewable energy storage

Speaking at the event opening, State Secretary Jochen Flasbarth of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) said, "We commend Cuba on its goal to increase its share of renewables in total electricity production to 24 per cent by 2030. Raising the share of renewable energy is key for the necessary transformation of the energy sector to limit global warming in line with the Paris Climate Change Agreement and also for realising the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda."

The International Climate Initiative of BMUB is supporting low-emission development pathways in partner countries. Keeping global warming to well below 2°C, even to below 1.5°C, means decarbonising the world economy. Helping developing countries expand renewable energies is therefore of high priority.

It is envisioned that as part of the successful implementation of the workshop, additional areas of support may be identified by IRENA and partner organizations that can facilitate renewable energy deployment in Cuba.

"Cuba has excellent technical potential for renewable energy to meet its ambitious government targets, particularly for solar, wind and biofuel," said Dolf Gielen, Director of IRENA's Innovation and Technology Centre. "By pursuing ambitious strategies on renewable energy that focus on integrating high shares of variable renewables, Cuba can improve the security, reliability and sustainability of its energy systems."

"The energy transformation offers a path of prosperity and sustainable development, particularly in islands. But an ambitious effort to boost economic growth and diversification requires leadership, which we are seeing here in Cuba and with this forum," said IRENA Director-General Adnan Z. Amin, opening the Cuba Sustainable Energy Forum 2018 to delegates from the Cuban energy sector and government, the European Union, international energy companies, and the private sector.

Held in Havana from 30 to 31 January 2018, the forum provided a platform for the Cuban authorities to present the country's sustainable energy and foreign investment opportunities, and for the EU to showcase renewable energy technologies, lessons learnt and financing instruments available to Cuba.

IRENA's Director-General used the opportunity to underscore that strong partnerships are vital for accelerating Cuba's energy transformation and realising its goal of generating 24 per cent of its electricity from renewables by 2030.

Today, less than five per cent of Cuba's electricity is generated from renewables. The government's goal is ambitious and backed by a well-educated labour force and domestic renewables organisations such as the Centro de Investigaciones de Energía Solar, that are working to build the

technical capacity throughout Cuba to scale up renewable energy.

However, the country faces a key barriers to accessing financing for renewable energy projects. With the government's renewable energy investment goal of USD 3.5 billion, foreign investment in the small island state is critical.

In this context, Cuba is strengthening its engagement with IRENA through the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative, which has surpassed its initial goals of mobilising USD 500 million for renewables and deploying 100 MW of solar PV in SIDS by 2020. The Agency has been supporting Cuban renewable energy deployment since 2013, at both technical and political levels, through convening technical expert exchanges with other countries, and by participating in Cuban energy conferences and workshops.

Furthermore, IRENA has recommended a state-owned 10-megawatt solar PV project in Cuba to its partner, the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), for an award of USD 15 million in co-funding — Given Cuba's renewable energy financing constraints, the IRENA/ADFD Project Facility has the ability to inspire investor confidence and attract further finance.

During a meeting with Cuba's Vice President of the Councils of State and Ministers, Minister of Energy and Mines, and Minister of Science, Technology and Environment, the IRENA Director-General agreed to strengthen the partnership between IRENA and Cuba in support of the country's energy transformation.

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