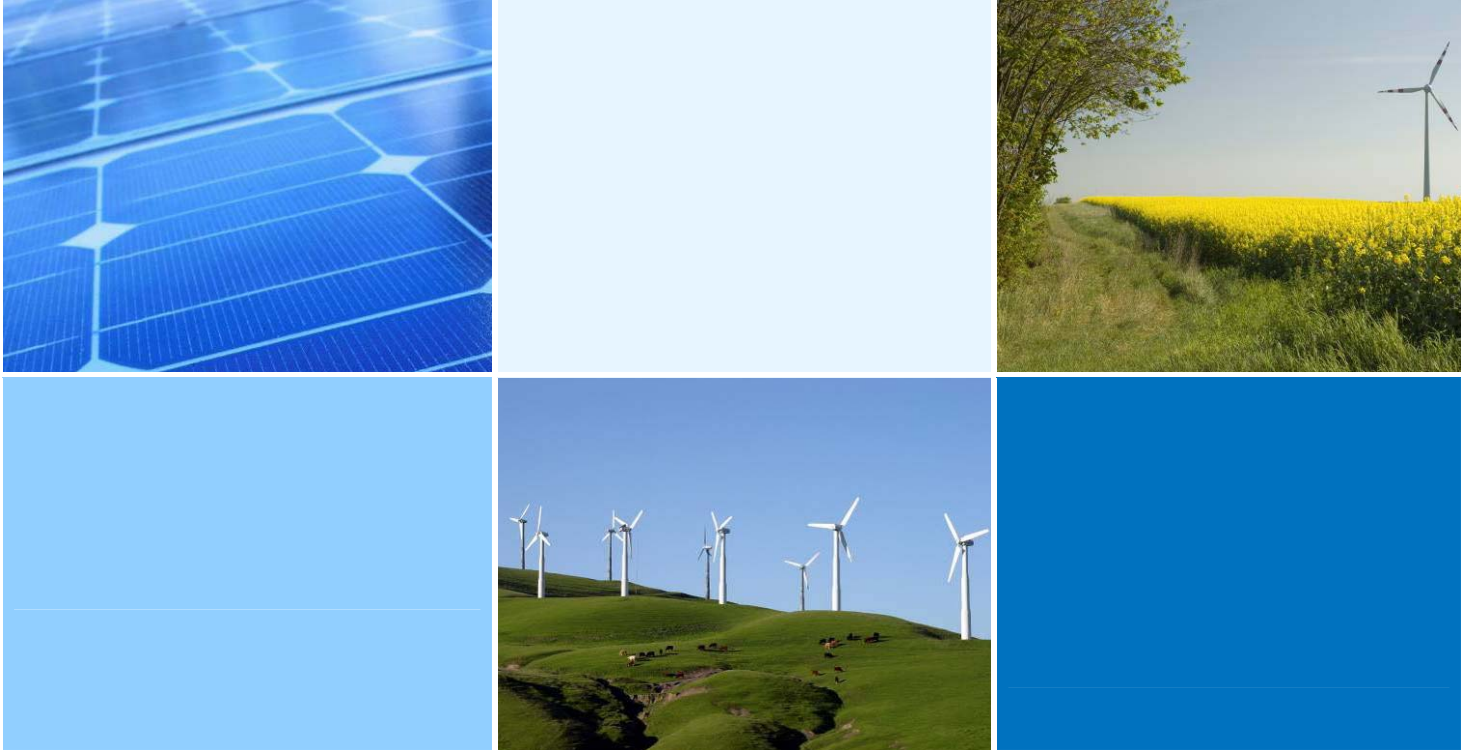


CONCEPT NOTE



Global Renewable Energy Forum Scaling Up Renewable Energy

7–9 October 2009
León, Guanajuato, Mexico

SENER

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SUMMARY

The Mexican Ministry of Energy (SENER) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) have joined hands to organize the **Global Renewable Energy Forum 2009**. This event will take place on 7-9 October in León, Guanajuato, Mexico.

By gathering a broad range of stakeholders, this Global Forum will create a suitable environment for proactive dialogue to strengthen interregional cooperation and encourage innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at scaling up renewable energy. It will provide a platform for highlighting leadership in regard to the promotion of renewable energy, thereby increasing the visibility of political commitments towards the development of alternative energy systems. It will promote exchange of views among various stakeholders and encourage partnerships, as well as facilitate the development of innovative frameworks aimed at supporting initiatives related to clean energy.

It is expected that some 1000 officials, planners and energy experts from all world regions will participate in the event, including representatives from governments, international organizations, academia, civil society, and private sector.

The Global Forum will feature a series of plenary sessions around the following themes:

- Energy Poverty, Economic and Financial Crisis, and Climate Change;
- Renewable Energy and Energy Transition;
- Renewable Energy Potential;
- Renewable Energy and the Access Agenda;
- Biofuels;
- Investments in Renewable;
- Policy and Innovative Institutions.

Parallel sessions will convene stakeholders around specific topics, such as New Technologies, Industrial Applications, and Energy Efficiency.

SENER is responsible for mobilizing political support for the event, and providing the venue and related logistics. UNIDO coordinates substantive inputs for the event. SENER, UNIDO and other partners are however working closely together on all these issues.

CONTEXT

An energy landscape largely dominated by fossil fuels

Despite a strong rise in interest in renewable energy technologies, business-as-usual scenarios depict an energy future largely dominated by fossil fuels. Dedicated action is therefore required for profiling renewable energy as an attractive alternative to fossil-based energy.

The threat of climate change

Continuously growing greenhouse gas emissions pose a significant threat to the global climate system. The impacts of climate change are likely to hit the poor the hardest. The current dominant paradigm of carbon-intensive energy combined with the expected significant growth in energy demand in the next few decades call for an energy transition, if climate change impacts are to be restrained to manageable levels.

Biomass reliance vs. modern energy services

A significant share of the world's population relies on traditional biomass. Providing impoverished communities with access to modern, reliable, environmentally-sound energy services is often seen as a prerequisite to development. Renewable energy has a key role to play in this regard. For instance, small-scale renewable technologies are often particularly appropriate for providing remote communities with adequate energy services.

Market volatility and opportunities

The high volatility of fossil energy markets and prices represents a challenge for development and a barrier to investments. At the same time, it is an opportunity for market forces to gradually shift towards alternative sources of energy such as “renewables”, provided that enabling policies and supporting institutions are in place. For instance, wind energy has experienced rapid growth over recent years. Furthermore, diversifying energy sources and promoting use of domestic renewable energy in particular assist in mitigating national energy security concerns.

Energy financing in times of crisis

The global economic and financial crisis could have a major impact on energy financing. Some sources suggest that financing for energy infrastructure will be severely affected – a view that is somewhat challenged by a more optimistic outlook for the renewable energy market. However, some shortfall in financing for the energy sector could be expected.

Large untapped potential of renewable energy

There is a very high potential for renewable energy in most regions of the world. Specifically, there are major, untapped opportunities for the application of renewable energy for productive uses and industrial applications. Nevertheless, the sector faces numerous challenges and barriers. It is crucial to address these challenges and barriers in a timely and comprehensive fashion.

Sustainability issues

In light of the current controversy relating to competition between biofuels and food, any large-scale deployment of renewable energy requires careful socio-economic impact assessments to avoid unintended adverse effects. Food security is crucial, including in Latin America where pockets of malnutrition persist. Therefore, an integrated approach is necessary for scaling up renewable energy.

Energy efficiency as necessary complementary measure

Energy efficiency is a complementary strategy to the promotion of renewable energy. Indeed, the combination of low-carbon energy production with well-managed and efficient use of energy would pave the way towards sustainable energy systems. The industrial sector in developing countries is commonly characterized by relatively high energy intensity. While energy efficiency measures are often presented as low-cost (or even negative cost) options for reducing the energy demand, significant and diverse barriers remain for a wide-spread deployment and application of such measures. It is therefore of utmost importance to put emphasis on promoting technologies and policies to allow for the potential energy savings to occur.

International co-operation and the role of the UN

Enhanced international cooperation is central to achieving a transition to a “green economy” and “green industry”. In this regard, energy constitutes one of the core issues. Despite its unrivalled ability to raise awareness, bring the stakeholders together and galvanize international action, until recently the United Nations has not been able to fully leverage its strengths and leadership potential in the field of energy. In response, UN-Energy, an inter-agency mechanism composed of 20 UN system organizations, has been established to promote coherence in the UN system’s multidisciplinary response to the energy-related decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and to effectively engage with non-UN stakeholders. It is making a major effort to ensure that the UN system together with the World Bank, contribute in areas where strategic interventions would have a major impact. More recently, it has sought to use this excellent platform to support the efforts of countries to achieve the MDGs and to address the challenges of climate change. While UN-Energy will continue to play a key role, additional efforts are required to elevate the role of the UN system in the global energy scene and to spur international action towards a low carbon economy.

It is in this context that the Secretary of Energy of Mexico and the Director-General of UNIDO have decided that the organization of a Global Renewable Energy Forum would be timely. The purpose of this Global Forum is to discuss the role of renewable energy in the context of the most pressing global challenges.

CO-ORGANIZERS AND PARTNERS

The Mexican Ministry of Energy (SENER) has the mission of defining the energy policy for the country within the existing national framework with the objective to ensure the supply of competitive, reliable, high quality, affordable and environmentally sustainable energy to foster national development. Its vision entails wide-spread access to affordable energy services by the Mexican population; and an internationally competitive service for public and private companies operating within an effective regulatory framework. SENER advocates a substantial increase in energy efficiency and supports research and technological development. It also promotes the use of alternative sources of energy, while taking into account the security of supply.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is the United Nations specialized agency given the task of promoting industrial development in the developing countries and countries with economies in transition. UNIDO helps governments, business associations and companies to successfully face their industrial development challenges. The Organization has three thematic priorities, namely Poverty Reduction through Productive Activities, Trade Capacity Building, and Energy and Environment. It enhances cooperation at global, regional, national and sectoral levels. Following the lead of the UN Secretary-General, UNIDO strongly supports efforts to combat climate change, promote industrial energy efficiency, support cleaner production techniques and promote renewable sources of energy.

The co-organizers will seek the support and participation of leading institutions for convening the Global Forum. These, among others, would include:

Partnerships: Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), AFROLAC, Caribbean Community (CARICOM);

International, bi- and multi-lateral Agencies: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Global Environment Facility (GEF), German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), International Energy Agency (IEA), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA);

Private sector and Industry: Comisión Federal de Electricidad, Corporación Andina de Fomento;

Others: Global Energy Assessment (GEA), IPCC Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources, UN Foundation.

THE GLOBAL FORUM

Objective of the Conference

The overall objective of the Global Renewable Energy Forum is to provide a platform for proactive dialogue to strengthen interregional cooperation and encourage innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at scaling up renewable energy in Latin America and elsewhere. Furthermore, the Global Forum will represent a unique opportunity for highlighting the leadership required to promote renewable energy.

Concept

The Global Renewable Energy Forum 2009 will take place over three days, on 7-9 October 2009, in León, Guanajuato, Mexico. Technology and business exhibitions will be held in parallel to the Global Forum. Participants will have the possibility to hold working meetings with private sector representatives. Furthermore, a meeting will take place to review the latest developments by the Renewable Energy Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The working sessions will consist of plenary and parallel round-tables comprising a keynote speaker, panelists and a moderator. Sessions will address specific topics through in-depth analyses and will provide the audience with focused presentations and discussions. Following the interventions of keynote speakers and panelists, the floor will be opened to the audience for brief comments and questions. The role of the moderator is to lead the sessions, coordinate discussions and provide a brief conclusion at the end by drawing the main messages discussed. The methodology chosen for the sessions allows for highly

interactive discussions around key renewable energy themes. Special attention will be paid in mixing the speakers in such a way as to represent a wide spectrum of views, experiences and expectations.

Thematic papers will be issued in anticipation of the Global Forum. They will feature cross-cutting, salient issues relating to renewable energy, such as Policies and Investments.

The key issues, major points of discussions, as well as the conclusions of the discussions held during the sessions will be captured in a comprehensive report. The amended thematic papers and a summary of the discussions will be posted on a dedicated website.

A steering committee has been established by the partners in order to ensure smooth coordination of proceedings. The committee meets in-person on a regular basis to discuss both substantive issues with regard to the conference programme, speakers, presentation structure and media coverage as well as logistics.

Worthy of special mention is that some high-level keynote speakers such as Dr. Pachauri, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, have confirmed their participation. Institutions such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) have expressed keen interest in participating in the Global Forum, for instance by taking an active role in moderating sessions or acting as speakers.

Target beneficiaries

It is expected that some 1000 officials, planners and energy experts coming from governments, international organizations, academia, civil society and the private sector from around the world will participate in the event. Participation in the Global Forum will be free of charge, but delegates must cover own costs related to their travel and stay. To the extent possible, financial assistance might be mobilized for selected participants with limited resources.

Venue

The Global Renewable Energy Forum will take place in the Poliforum of León (www.poliforumleon.com). The city of León is located 250 km to the north-west of Mexico City, in the State of Guanajuato. There is ample hotel capacity in the vicinity of the venue, and the León/Guanajuato international airport is only 15 minutes away.

Tentative programme

Wednesday 7 October 2009	09:00	Inaugural Plenary Session
	10:30	Coffee break / Opening of Business & Technology Exhibition
	11:00	Plenary Session 1 Energy Poverty, Economic and Financial Crisis, and Climate Change
	12:30	Lunch
	14:00	Plenary Session 2 Renewable Energy and Energy Transition
	15:30	Coffee break
	16:00 - 17:30	Plenary Session 3 Renewable Energy Potential - Reality or Utopia
		Business Forums
Thursday 8 October 2009	09:00	Summary of the previous day
	09:30	Plenary Session 4 Renewable Energy and the Access Agenda
	11:00	Coffee break
	11:30	Parallel Session 1 Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy - New Technologies
		Parallel Session 2 Renewable Energy for Industrial Applications
		Parallel Session 3 Energy Efficiency
	13:15	Lunch
	15:00 - 17:00	Plenary Session 5 Future of Biofuels: Potential and Challenges
	Business Forums	
Friday 9 October 2009	09:00 - 10:15	Plenary Session 6 Scaling Up Investments in Renewable Energy
	10:30	Plenary Session 7 Innovative Policy and Institutional Framework
	11:30	Coffee break
	12:00 - 13:30	Closing Plenary Session Summary of the Global Forum and Recommendations

Expected Outcomes

The Global Forum will create a suitable environment for proactive dialogue to strengthen interregional cooperation and encourage innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at scaling up investments in renewable energy for productive uses. It will assist in identifying enabling policies, institutional frameworks and successful initiatives allowing the stimulation of market-led dissemination of renewables worldwide, including the promotion and replication of successful practices. The Global Forum will provide a platform for highlighting leadership in regard to the promotion of renewable energy in Latin America and elsewhere, thereby increasing the visibility of political commitments towards the development of

alternative energy systems. Additionally, it will enable multi-stakeholder dialogue and encourage partnerships, as well as facilitate the development of innovative frameworks aimed at supporting initiatives related to clean energy.

The Global Forum will encourage stakeholders to join efforts and launch projects aimed at increasing access to modern and sustainable energy services based on renewable energy technologies in the region and other parts of the world. Such initiatives ought to enhance a broad range of income generating activities by promoting industrial development in developing countries. Finally, another objective is to enable business and commercial networking in regard to the promotion of renewable energy sources.

In recent years, the Latin American and Caribbean region has proven to be a key player in the field of renewable energy by successfully implementing innovative projects and policies. The Global Forum will provide an ideal venue to share those valuable experiences to a diverse audience coming from academia, the private sector, as well as governments.

More specifically, the expected outcomes of the Global Forum would include:

- Enhanced dialogue and cooperation for the faster deployment of renewable energy;
- Innovative regional cooperation frameworks;
- Scaling up investments in renewable energy;
- Enhanced political commitment to promote renewable energy.

Information and Contacts

Detailed information is available at: www.GREFmexico2009.org. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require further information. Email: GREFmexico2009@unido.org.

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