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Making Renewable Energy Markets Work for Africa International Conference opens in Dakar

Vienna, 10 April 2008 – An International Conference on Renewable Energy in Africa will open in Dakar, Senegal on 16 April 2008. The three-day conference entitled “Making Renewable Energy Markets Work for Africa - Policies, Industries and Finance for Scaling-Up” is jointly organized by the Government of Senegal, the African Union, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

Africa is a continent with an abundance of energy resources. But although readily available, these are mostly undeveloped. Renewable energy resources, in particular, could make an important contribution to the continent's energy challenges. To date, there have been many initiatives aimed at developing renewable energy markets in Africa. Yet, despite the experience gained from these, the contribution of renewable energy to Africa's energy needs remains minimal.

As economies in Africa continue to grow, there is an urgent need to increase access to modern energy services and security of energy supply. The conference will examine bottlenecks in the development of renewable energy markets in Africa and make use of experience from past and ongoing initiatives to develop a common and market-oriented strategy for scaling-up renewable energy use. This will be achieved through assessing the potential role of renewable energy in meeting the continent's energy needs; policy and regulatory options that will encourage their development; capacity needs for market facilitators and players; research and development needs for renewable energy technologies; and addressing barriers related to financing of renewable energy projects.

The conference will bring together high-level decision makers from a wide-range of governments, international organizations, financial institutions and from the private sector, to provide leadership and commitment to a common strategy for market-based scaling up of the use of renewable energy in Africa. The first two days of the conference are dedicated to technical discussions with a view to share experience on critical success factors. The third day will feature a high-level dialogue on a market-oriented strategy for scaling up the use of renewable energy technologies in Africa, to address the continent's energy problems as well as enhance industrial competitiveness.

Further information on the conference programme and registration procedure is available at:

<http://www.unido.org/doc/76539>

Further information about the conference organisers is available under the following links:

www.unido.org

www.bmz.de/en/index.html

www.gtz.de

www.africa-union.org/

www.gouv.sn/