

Vienna Energy Forum 2013

Opening Statement by H.E. Ambassador Dr. Christine Stix-Hackl, Permanent Representative of Austria to UNIDO

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the Vienna Energy Forum 2013 on behalf of the Austrian Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger. Vice Chancellor Spindelegger has asked me to transmit the following message to you.

Since the first gathering of the Vienna Energy Forum forum, back in 2009, important initiatives have influenced the international agenda:

- The visionary initiative of the UN-Secretary General “Sustainable Energy 4 ALL”, which Austria whole-heartedly supported from its very beginning, has been institutionalized. We fully recognize its far-sighted goals, global basic access to energy services for all peoples of this globe until 2030, combined with substantial progress in energy efficiency and the share of renewables in the overall energy mix, which the initiative stands ready to pursue in an operational way in the very near future. We are proud and happy to host the main office of this initiative in Vienna, which will be officially opened in September this year.**
- In Rio+20 world leaders recognized the critical role that energy plays in the development process and committed to facilitating support for the access to energy services for 1.4 billion people worldwide. Access to these services is critical for achieving sustainable development since it contributes to poverty eradication, saves lives, improves health and helps provide basic human needs. Access to sustainable energy will therefore have to play an important role in the Post-2015-Development framework.**

- **The Global Energy Assessment, anchored at the International Institute for Applied Systems analysis in Laxenburg, Austria, has been completed and was launched at a side-event on the margins of the Rio+20 Summit. It is the latest and most comprehensive international assessment of energy in the context of socio-economic development, taking into account environmental considerations.**

The good news contained in this Assessment is that the transformation of global energy systems is feasible. It is possible to overcome energy poverty, ensure energy security to power economic development and social progress while protecting and safeguarding the natural resource endowment and stabilizing the global climate system. The scenarios contained in the Global Energy Assessment show some 40 different pathways which could lead to sustainable energy futures, leaving enough leeway for policy makers and the business sector to choose the pathway that is most suited for them. It also makes clear, however, that business-as-usual-approaches will not suffice, but that political action is needed.

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Energy for sustainable development is a thematic priority for the Austrian Development Cooperation both in our global advocacy and our bilateral work with partner countries. Over the past years, Austria has financed projects in the field of sustainable energy with a total value of about EUR 35 Mio.

In addition, Austria was the first supporter and lead donor for the establishment of the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) in Praia, Cape Verde, whose mission is to contribute to the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of West Africa by improving access to modern, reliable and affordable energy services, energy security and reduction of negative environmental externalities of the energy system.

But the Austrian engagement does not stop there. I am very glad to announce that during this third Vienna Energy Forum, Austria and UNIDO will sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of an additional regional renewable energy centre with the East African Community. The Austrian Development Cooperation will thus stay engaged and continues to support the regional integration and collaboration on this important issue.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude my remarks by thanking our co-organizers, UNIDO and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), for the efforts they have undertaken in organizing the 2013 Vienna Energy Forum. UNIDO and IIASA are important partners for the debate and the launch of initiatives on global energy issues.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and thank you for your attention.