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Editorial:

Dear readers,

As forecasts for 2009 take shape, it looks as if this could be an important year for progress on climate change and energy access goals, despite or maybe because of the economic downturn. This edition reports on a number of encouraging developments.

Perhaps most significant is the founding of an International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). The 75 signatory nations set an important signal of international commitment to reaching sustainable energy supplies and combating climate change in challenging and uncertain times at the founding conference in January 2009. Let's hope that international decision-makers keep following this forward-looking course. Many developing countries will be relieved at the drop in energy prices in 2009, but dismayed at drops in their GDP. However, wise policy-makers will face the challenges by developing long-term strategies for diverse and resilient energy supplies that will make their countries healthier, more productive, and less economically vulnerable to the vagaries of international oil and gas markets and the effects of climate change.

The Editorial Team

01 | Successful Programme Enters New Phase, Sustainable Access for 2.5 Million Planned

In September 2008, the German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul and the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation, Bert Koenders, agreed during the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra to intensify the successful collaboration between The Netherlands and Germany on promoting an energy supply from renewable energy sources to the poor in developing countries. Access to energy services is recognized as an essential element for combating poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Dutch-German partnership began working under the name “Energising Development” (EnDev) in 2004. The programme has since supported 24 development measures in 21 countries and as of June 2008 had provided 3.72 million people with electricity or improved cooking technologies. This program is now being ramped up significantly due to its success. The Dutch government made available an extra €500 million for the period 2007-2011 for renewable energy supply in developing countries, with a focus on Africa. Out of this, €68 million will be used for the continuation of the successful EnDev programme on access to renewable energy focussing on African countries to a large extent. EnDev II aims to continue the success of the first phase, but will place even more emphasis on the sustainability of the energy solutions. It will again focus on Africa and aims to provide at least another 2.5 million energy-poor people sustainable access to modern energy services.

[>| CONTENT](#)**02 | International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is Here!**

Renewable energies are key to a global supply of sustainable energy and an absolute must in light of commitments to battle climate change. The growing international consensus on this is reflected in the swift international action taken in the last year to found the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). The founding conference for IRENA was held on 26 January 2009 in Bonn, Germany, where 175 delegations took part and 75 countries signed the statutes. IRENA is a milestone on the road towards a future-oriented energy supply. The conference was chaired by Germany's Federal Environment Minister, Sigmar Gabriel, and the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul, who remarked, “Renewable energies are clean, virtually inexhaustible and available locally. As IRENA is open to all countries worldwide, the Agency will help developing countries to give their people better access to renewable energies, combat poverty and find alternatives to forms of energy that are harmful to the climate and the environment.” Under its international mandate, IRENA aims to become the main driving force in promoting a rapid transition to the widespread and sustainable use of renewable energy on a global scale. It will support both industrialised and developing countries in improving regulatory frameworks and building capacity. The agency also plans to facilitate access to information including reliable data on the potential of renewable energy, best practices, financial mechanisms and state-of-the-art technological expertise. The Founding Conference initiated the first phase of IRENA. In June 2009 the Preparatory Commission, to which all signatory states belong, will decide in Egypt on the location of the Agency's interim seat and elect the interim Director-General. More information is available at www.irena.org.

[>| CONTENT](#)**03 | Exemplary Coordination for Renewable Energy in Afghanistan**

Although much of the news from Afghanistan was discouraging in 2008, the GTZ energy programme, called ESRA and funded by the BMZ, had a good year – crowned by the invitation of the government of Afghanistan to set up a Subcommittee for Renewable Energy and Rural Electrification under a Inter-Ministerial Commission for Energy (ICE). The Subcommittee, formed by a Presidential decree, is composed of 20 members from the ministries for rural development, economics, and energy; the national electricity supplier; embassies; and international donors such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and USAID. Its goals are drafting a national development strategy for renewable energy and rural electrification with the ICE and to coordinate donor-contributions in this field. “The main priority of the Government of Afghanistan and the donor community in strategy development is rural electrification through renewable energies”, said Ahmed Wali Shairzay, Deputy Minister for Energy at the subcommittees second meeting. The GTZ was also asked by the Minister for Energy and Water, Ismail Khan, to assist in managing the Secretariat for the Subcommittee and to facilitate the strategy development process. The GTZ energy programme also supports the Energy Planning Department in technical and organizational development. More information [here](#).

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04 | Mali Examines Climate Vulnerability and Adaptation for Energy Production

A workshop on “Vulnerability-Adaptation-Energy Resilience (VAR)” was held in Bamako, Mali in October and sponsored through the GTZ Climate Protection and Energizing Africa programs on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development along with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The workshop was a first step to identifying projects that reinforce the resilience of energy systems that may be threatened by climate change. The idea for the workshop emerged from concerns that the rising temperatures, extreme weather events and changes in precipitation patterns associated with climate change threaten energy supplies in many developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where hydropower and biomass are important energy sources and changes in river flows and precipitation patterns are of particular concern. By developing indicators to test the vulnerability of energy systems, adaptation plans can be developed to anticipate changes and increase resilience through such activities as diversifying energy sources, siting power sources differently, expanding linkages with other regions and investing in technological change that includes energy efficiency measures and use of renewable energy sources. National energy experts from five francophone and four Anglophone countries convened at the workshop to discuss these vulnerability indicators. Now each is tasked with producing a report by early 2009 that compiles information about the indicators in their countries and can be used to guide policy decisions on energy adaptation in sub-Saharan Africa. The VAR project is being developed by Helio International, which presented its methodology for the studies at the UNFCCC conference in Poznan. More on the GTZ Climate Protection programme [here](#).

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05 | Household Energy in Focus for Climate and Poverty Goals

How can we provide 2.5 billion people with clean cooking energy? And what will it mean for poverty alleviation, climate protection and reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)? These questions were at the centre of a symposium in Bonn from 15-17 December 2008 with nearly 30 internationally active organisations from the WHO and FAO to national development agencies and NGOs like Care and World Vision. The event was organised by the GTZ household energy programme HERA on behalf of the BMZ to intensify exchanges and cooperation between German speaking development actors on household energy and to raise awareness of the wide-impact that cooking programs have in areas from climate to health and education. Discussions sessions covered topics such as carbon trading for household energy, biogas or plant oil as alternatives to firewood, financing through subsidies and micro-credits and monitoring of programs. Some conclusions were that more reliable data collection on wood fuel prices and on sustainable charcoal production are needed; cooking energy should be mainstreamed into programs for nutrition, health and agricultural services at the local level; and more effort should be made to publish information in French. The highlight of the three-day event was a panel discussion on cooking energy as “a matter of survival.” While all panellists agreed that more policy emphasis should be placed on cooking programs because of their contribution to the MDGs, Bernhard Zymła from the GTZ pointed out that the climate effect is greater than many think. According to Zymła, a household that switches to an improved stove from a traditional “three-stone” fire may save more in CO₂ emissions per year than a household in a developed country that switches from a regular car to one of the newest and most efficient models. More on HERA [here](#).

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06 | Open Regional Fund for Energy Efficiency Promotes Integration in Balkans

In 2007, the BMZ developed a new instrument for technical cooperation in South Eastern Europe called “Open Regional Funds,” (ORFs) which encourage regional cooperation on common problems. So far, ORFs have been established for trade, community services, and legal reform. In November 2008, a new ORF was established for another important common challenge – increasing energy efficiency in the western Balkan countries (members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia). In this framework, partners from several countries can cooperate on common projects related to energy efficiency or also to renewable energies. However, partners from at least three countries must be involved to qualify for funding. One of the main goals is to develop a regional dialogue about energy efficiency and renewable energy. This multilateral approach helps improve integration in a region where cross-border work is not always easy, and lays the basis for closer association with the EU. While the political mandate will lie with the national energy ministries, the project is aimed at all users of energy services in the region. Partners and implementing organisations will be ministries, energy agencies, research institutions, NGOs, and other organisations such as chambers of commerce. The fund will be managed from Sarajevo and has secured initial financing from Germany. Other donors are encouraged to participate. The first phase will run until 2011 and a second phase is envisioned to run until 2017. More information [here](#).

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07 | Plans for Concentrated Solar Power Heat Up in Tunisia

Generating solar power in North Africa is a hot topic these days, and will certainly stay in the news, thanks to the Mediterranean Solar Plan that was presented in 2008 as part of the Union for the Mediterranean. German Development Cooperation is in step with the times in Tunisia, where it is working with the Tunisian gas and electricity utility, STEG, and the company Lahmeyer to prove the feasibility of electrical generation from solar thermal power plants. A pre-feasibility study was presented to the Tunisian government in January 2009. Next steps will be the elaboration of a full scale feasibility study to determine the size and location of the first pure concentrated solar power (CSP) plant in Tunisia. The study will describe the technical, financial and economic aspects and will also include an examination of the feasibility of cooling conventional gas turbines with solar power to improve their efficiency. The German Development Bank KfW has already indicated their interest in financing the feasibility study. More about the GTZ in Tunisia [here](#).

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08 | New Publications and Announcements

GTZ International Fuel Price Newsletter and Newsgroup

A newsletter on international fuel prices is now available bi-monthly, and a newsgroup for subscribers has been established to facilitate the exchange of information on recent developments related to fuel prices, taxation, subsidies and energy demand in the transport sector. This is the result of long-effort from the GTZ on behalf of the BMZ to provide decision-makers with global fuel price data. Worldwide transparency and comparability of fuel prices is an important step to rational energy pricing policy in many countries. More information on subscribing is available [here](#).

PCIA Forum 2009 in Kampala, 24-28 March

GTZ's Energy Advisory Program Uganda will host the next forum of the Partnership for Clean Indoor Air in Kampala, Uganda from 24-28 March 2008. This is the largest global gathering of household energy and health leaders and provides an ideal opportunity for networking. More than 200 practitioners will share the latest developments in technologies, fuels, monitoring and evaluation, commercialization, carbon financing, awareness raising, and research. Visit www.PCIAonline.org for registration and more information.

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Service

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