

International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) could start work as early as 2009

International workshop in Berlin to prepare the establishment of IRENA

Berlin, 1 July 2008

"The outcome of today's workshop to prepare the establishment of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) shows that there is a real possibility that IRENA could start work as early as 2009", according to Hermann Scheer, a Member of the German Bundestag. As President of EUROSOLAR and Chairman of the World Council for Renewable Energy (WCRE), Scheer is the initiator of the IRENA concept and, since the 1990s, has been a driving force behind the project, not only in the Bundestag but also at international level.

IRENA's main objective is to provide practical advice and support for industrialized and developing countries seeking to expand their renewable energy sectors, and to work toward improved regulatory frameworks.

The discussions conducted with more than 50 governments over the past year by Hermann Scheer and the German Government's three special ambassadors for the project, Harald Ganns, Peter Christian Hauswedell and Hans-Ullrich Spohn, have shown that numerous countries welcome the German initiative and would like to be involved in setting up the Agency. The discussions will continue until the founding conference, provisionally scheduled for early next year, so that a further increase in the number of potential founder members can be expected.

"IRENA will close a substantial gap in the international institutional architecture in the energy sector. The IAEA has existed since 1957, and the International Energy Agency came into being in 1974, but this has focussed mainly on conventional energies. There has been no intergovernmental organisation of equal status for the renewables sector", says Scheer. He believes that this institutional deficit is one reason why the expansion of renewables worldwide has fallen far short of its full potential for so long. Scheer explains: "Mobilising renewable energies on an international scale is a race against time. IRENA has an essential role to play in this context."