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Page 1 of 1

Limiting global warming to 2°C requires major efforts, not least from the energy sector

The International Energy Agency's forecasts are clear: unless the necessary decisions are made, energy-related CO₂ emissions will continue to rise in synch with increasing global demand for electricity. Unchecked, these increased emissions could raise average global temperatures by 6°C in the long term.

Such a temperature rise would have catastrophic consequences, but such an outcome is not inevitable: clean, low-carbon power generation technologies exist and are already making a huge difference.

Wind is one of them. Wind energy is clean, renewable and fast to install, thus making it an obvious choice to meet growing energy demands at the same time avoiding substantial greenhouse gas emissions. In an era of growing constraints on the supply of fresh water, wind also has the advantage of consuming no water in the production of electricity, in marked contrast to conventional energy forms.

A new energy model is therefore possible. The Copenhagen Climate Conference presents world leaders a tremendous opportunity to make a difference for our collective future. At Vestas, we urge our leaders to take two strong measures to rapidly accelerate the transition to a low-carbon energy future:

First, the Copenhagen Climate Conference must set clear and ambitious targets for the reduction of CO₂ emissions, with intermediate targets for the short-, medium- and long-term. We cannot wait any longer. The time is now for action.

Second, the Conference outcome must lead to a price on carbon sufficiently high and stable to change people's behaviour and investment decisions. This is an indispensable condition to encourage substantial and sustained additional private investment that will rapidly accelerate "green" growth.

The future of our societies will depend on our ability to optimize the energy mix through the use of readily available, clean and inexhaustible resources. For example, if the right policies are put in place, wind energy could account for 10 percent of global electricity demand by 2020 – thus eliminating the emission of 1,500 million tons of CO₂ every year – equivalent to removing 625 million cars from the road in Europe every year.

Vestas Deutschland GmbH

Otto-Hahn-Straße 2-4, 25813 Husum, Germany
Tel: +49 4841 971 0, Fax: +49 4841 971 360, vestas-centraleurope@vestas.com, www.vestas.com
Bank: Dresdner Bank Frankfurt, Code 500 800 00, Account 980 814 000, IBAN
DE9650080000980814000, Swift DRESDEFF, Nordea, Hamburg, Code 514 303 00, Account 212 571
0001, IBAN DE59514303002125710001, Swift NDEADEF
Commercial register: Flensburg B-463, Sales tax identification no.: DE 134 657 783, Tax No.: 1 529 211
237
Managing Director: Hans Jørn Rieks, Company reg. name: Vestas Deutschland GmbH

There's not much time left but solutions to global warming do exist, and wind energy has an essential role to play. In Vestas' home country of Denmark, wind energy already covers 20 percent of the country's electricity consumption. Wind is an energy alternative that is for real.

Contact:

Hans Jørn Rieks, President
Vestas Central Europe, Germany
Phone: +49 4841 9710