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Wind power ready to meet looming energy gap, says report

Brussels, 5 September 2006. A new report shows that many forecasts have considerably overestimated global reserves of oil and gas.

The paper entitled “Plugging the Gap – A survey of world fuel resources and their impact on the development of wind energy” was launched by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) (1) and Renewable Energy Systems Limited (RES) (2) at a press conference at the Renewable Energy House in Brussels. The report has been prepared by RES in co-operation with GWEC and the EUREC Agency’s Masters programme.

International Energy Agency (IEA) figures predict that 60% of the world’s energy supply could still be provided by oil and gas by 2030 – with demand for electricity doubling. The report, however, estimates that global production of oil could ‘peak’ in as little as eight years time with production of gas likely to ‘peak’ in 2030, with prices rising steeply well in advance of this. The report says that while coal could last until the end of the century and could increase its share of energy supply, its large-scale use for electricity generation will only be acceptable with the development of clean coal technologies, which still have cost and technological barriers.

As a result, the report estimates that a serious shortfall between demand and supply could become evident soon after 2010. It predicts there could be a 10% shortfall by 2020 and an 18% short fall by 2030.

Eventually this gap will be filled by a mix of technologies ranging from renewables, coal and nuclear. The report concludes that wind power, as a safe, carbon-neutral, economic and indigenous energy resource, is the best choice to fill the electricity generation gap left by gas.

According to Dr Ian Mays, Managing Director of the RES Group, “Fossil fuels cannot sustain our expected growth in energy demand and low energy prices are gone forever. Wind power is very much ready to keep the lights on and fill the gap. Wind power technologies are working successfully all over the world and with foresight and appropriate policy frameworks there is enough resource to roll out wind power on a huge-scale. Wind is a sustainable, free resource and the wind energy technology is cost effective, reliable, clean and green – so what are we waiting for?”

“GWEC forecasts that the global installed capacity for wind power will reach 135 GW by 2010. Furthermore, GWEC estimates that more than 1,000 GW of wind capacity could be installed by 2020, if significant policy changes are implemented,” said Prof. Arthouros Zervos, Chairman of GWEC. “This potential is technically realisable but will require continuing development of policies to facilitate more substantial integration of wind energy into the generation mix.”

(1) Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) – www.gwec.net
GWEC is the global forum for the wind energy sector, uniting the wind industry and its representative associations.

The member associations of GWEC represent:

- Over 1,500 companies, organisations and institutions in more than fifty countries
- All the world's major wind turbine manufacturers
- 99% of the world's more than 59,000 MW of installed wind power capacity

The following organisations are Members of the GWEC Board:

- Acciona Energía
- Airtricity
- Associazione Nazionale Energia del Vento (ANEV)
- Australian Wind Energy Association (AusWind)
- American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)
- Bundesverband Windenergie (BWE)
- Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA)
- Chinese Renewable Energy Industries Association (CREIA)
- European Wind Energy Association (EWEA)
- Gamesa
- Garrad Hassan
- GE Wind Energy
- Hansen Transmissions
- Iberdrola
- Indian Wind Turbine Manufacturers Association (IWTMA)
- Japanese Wind Energy Association (JWEA)
- LM Glasfiber
- Nordex AG
- Renewable Energy Systems (RES)
- Shell WindEnergy
- Siemens Wind
- Suzlon Energy
- Vestas Wind Systems

(2) See www.res-group.com for more information on Renewable Energy Systems Ltd.