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ASTANA COMMUNIQUÉ ON ACCELERATING THE UPTAKE OF RENEWABLES IN CENTRAL ASIA

Heads of Delegations of Central Asia participating in the Ministerial Dialogue on 'Renewable Energy in Central Asia' in the context of the Ministerial Conference on Meeting the Challenges of Sustainable Energy held in Astana, Kazakhstan on 11 June discussed the opportunities and challenges in Central Asia's transition to a sustainable energy future and identified opportunities for accelerated deployment of renewable energy in the region.

The Heads of Delegation noted that, while hydropower contributes significantly to the region's energy mix, vast resources for biomass, wind and solar energy could also be harnessed to help provide Central Asia with clean, indigenous, cost-effective and sustainable energy supply. They observed that fast-growing deployment worldwide and continued technological innovation have led to sharp cost reductions and improved cost-competitiveness, particularly for solar photovoltaic and wind energy.

The Heads of Delegation emphasised the role of renewables in addressing the region's emerging energy challenges, which include: rising electricity demand; ageing power infrastructure; limited energy access for remote and nomadic populations; and the impact of climate change on the energy systems. They also acknowledged the broader macroeconomic impact of renewable energy deployment, including notable socio-economic benefits, such as creating employment, developing local manufacturing industries, avoiding health and environmental costs, and addressing climate change.

Central Asian countries are committed to scaling up all forms of renewable energy in line with adopted targets extending to 2020 and beyond. In this context, The Heads of Delegation highlighted ongoing efforts across the region to create more conducive policy, regulatory, institutional and financing frameworks for renewable energy investments.

The Heads of Delegation, moreover, confirmed their countries' readiness to take additional steps and address key challenges to enable increased renewable energy uptake. They commended the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) for scaling up its engagement in the region, including an intensive regional consultative process during the preparatory period for the present conference.



Mindful of respective national policies and priorities, the Heads of Delegation identified the following areas for collaboration with IRENA to facilitate the deployment of renewable energy in the region:

- **Resource Assessments:** ensuring detailed and up-to-date information on the renewable energy potential available in each country, supporting the planning process for the expansion of power generation and transmission.
- **Integration of Variable Renewable Energy into Power Grids:** improving understanding of technical and regulatory aspects, including design, operation and planning; and facilitating the planning, construction and operation of power grids with substantial shares of variable renewables.
- **Policies and Regulations for Renewable Energy Deployment:** strengthening enabling frameworks for renewables, including support schemes to facilitate investments, and ensuring decision-making based on reliable data.
- **Renewable Energy Statistics and Data Collection:** helping to advance the collection of data for renewables and harmonising it with international standards, as well as making the resulting information freely accessible through publications or online resources.
- **Project Development Support:** supporting the private sector's involvement in renewable energy development in the region, through a range of actions, including improving the bankability of renewable energy projects, demonstrating best practices, and encouraging enhanced regional dialogue on renewable energy finance and risk mitigation.
- **Awareness Raising:** advancing understanding among decision makers and the public about cost-competitiveness and related macro-economic and socio-economic benefits of renewables, along with facilitating a regional dialogue to help improve the perception and visibility of renewable energy in Central Asia and beyond.

The Heads of Delegation underscored the importance of collaboration with IRENA and other regional and international partners, in a co-ordinated and collaborative manner, for Central Asian countries to realise accelerated renewable energy deployment.