

Welcome speech on the occasion of the
Board of Trustees Meeting for the
Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy
Efficiency (RCREEE) on February 3, 2009

Your Excellency Dr. Hassan Younis,

Minister for Electricity and Energy

Dear Delegates from RCREEE-Member Countries

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the German Government I wish to welcome you all to this remarkable event. Remarkable, because it is significant that after only two meetings all together, we are meeting as if the Center had already been in place for quite some time. In fact, we are in the midst of building the house on a solid platform, thanks to your help and continuous interest and support.

In these times of financial crisis and political turmoil the value of regional cooperation becomes even more visible. As we depend on each other, it is mandatory to establish and to strengthen regional cooperation. I don't say that this is always easy to achieve, but it is worth every effort. It is a learning process accompanied by finding compromises, being flexible, not to get stuck in formalities. Shaping, not administering the process is our task, and we are on a good way.

We want RCREEE to be a strong tool for all of you to closely work together in real partnership. Here we need the Board of Trustees as a dedicated and well organized body to guide RCREEE.

We also need a solid regulatory platform on the basis of which the center can work. Nevertheless we should not over-regulate our procedures, so to stay flexible and preserve the ability to take decisions when we feel that an issue to be decided has been sufficiently discussed, instead of insisting on formalities for their own sake.

We need a strong Executive Committee with the participation of the private

sector. Please file in proposals of personalities from the private sector that you consider capable and interested to work with us.

A strong Secretariat with innovative ideas must be the engine of RCREEE, networking in the region and at the same time knowing of how to tap funds in EU - member countries. As we haven't finished the process of registering the center and the host country agreement still has to be signed, we propose to continue with the interim secretariat until the registration process has come to a close. At this moment let me thank the members of the interim secretariat and the task force for its work in the last year. Thanks to your commitment we have achieved a lot.

Cooperation in this region alone may not be enough these days. Cooperation across the Mediterranean with Europe is one choice and the offers from Europe are plentiful, be it bilateral or with the EU Commission.

One of the issues that came up last year is the Union for the Mediterranean. We are very keen to make the best out of it, to support the idea for a solar programme within the region. A prerequisite for success is to create the necessary platform and frame work conditions in order to enable investments, although the technology is economically still not viable yet.

We are at the beginning of a long process with this solar Programme, and nobody should expect quick solutions. But the aim must be to have you -- all-- on board for this idea. RCREEE and MED-EMIP should both guarantee the necessary transparency and flow of information so that all of you at any given time can enjoy being an active member of this process.

We are confident to achieve results with RCREEE soon as your continuous support will enhance the region's interest to foster national programmes as well as being a strong regional partner to deal with in future development of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.