



MEDIA RELEASE

We risk devastating warming of 3° or 4° Celsius if renewables are not more aggressively and rapidly deployed and energy efficiency enhanced in all sectors.

CAN urges all governments to act faster and more vigorously to respond to the climate emergency, based on findings of the REN21 Renewables Global 2019 Status Report.

18 June 2019 - We are still banking on a dangerous fossil fuel world and governments are not maximizing the benefits of transitioning to clean renewables, according to the Renewables 2019 Global Status report released today by the leading renewable energy authority REN21. Polluting fossil fuels, which threaten the future of humanity, are still dominating the energy scene and contributing to higher emissions, a growth of 2% in 2018 according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). This is the highest record of CO2 emissions and fossil fuel use ever.

The report shows that for the fourth consecutive year, the share of renewables in the power sector has grown and now supplies more than a quarter (26%) of global electricity production. However, the Climate Action Network (CAN) considers this as small progress for climate and sustainable development as the electricity sector consumes a minor portion of total energy use, only 17% of all energy used. The IPCC Special report on 1.5°C clearly stated that deep and large scale decarbonization in all sectors is needed to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals and keep warming at safe levels below 1.5°C. This means according to the IPCC that countries must increase by six folds their investments in renewables and energy efficiency each year to put the world on a path of a clean, healthy and prosperous future. The REN21 report shows that we are far from this potential reality.

The larger energy-using sectors Transport (32%) and Heat and Cooling (51%) use only 3% and 10% renewables, respectively. The growth rates for solar heating are flattening. Excluding traditional biomass, all renewables provide only around 11% of all final energy use.

Countries are still paying heavy subsidies to expensive and detrimental fossil fuels. REN21

estimates that global subsidies for fossil fuel consumption amounted to USD 300 billion in 2017, an 11% increase from 2016 with at least 73 countries providing subsidies of over USD 100 million each. New analysis by the IEA suggests fossil fuel subsidies of USD 400 billion in 2018, which are higher than all investments in renewables.

With dwindling prices of renewables compared to fossil fuels and the enormous economic (11 million jobs in 2018 as per the International Renewable Energy Agency) and health benefits they increasingly provide, the REN21 findings prove that governments are not acting in the best interests of their people.

CAN urges countries to boldly hasten the just and fair transition to renewable energy and triple efforts in energy efficiency in all economic sectors aiming for zero emissions and 100% clean energy by mid-century. Countries must phase out coal by 2030 latest and immediately stop financing and building new coal plants worldwide. They are also expected to enhance their climate targets by 2020 with strong renewable goals resulting in at least 40% renewables and enhanced energy efficiency in all economic sectors by 2030 and switch all investments from fossil fuels to clean energy.

For further information, please refer to the thorough analysis of the REN21 report available in annex.

Quotes:

Stephan Singer Global Energy Advisor, Climate Action Network, said:

“Governments have an unprecedented opportunity to prove that they have the best interest of their electorate at mind. They either grab the chance to drive economies on a path to prosperity and safety through an accelerated, transformative and just transition to renewable energy, retiring coal and keeping oil and gas in the ground and stopping all investment in and subsidies for polluting fuels or take us all to disasters. Science offers no other choices. Will they chose to listen to the rising calls of future generations or will they favor short-term personal gains?”

Jennifer Morgan, Greenpeace International Executive Director, said:

“This research further proves the enormous potential of renewable energy, and the opportunity we have before us to transform our economy to one that is cleaner, fairer and more sustainable.”

Currently, the challenges we face in this people-powered transition are political not technological, with policy decisions that are erratic and lacking in ambition.

This is madness when the climate emergency we are in demands we immediately stop propping up the doomed and dirty fossil fuel industry and urgently switch to renewables. Change is coming -- for the fourth year in a row, more renewable power capacity was installed than fossil fuel and nuclear power combined -- but it needs to come faster.”

Jean Su, Energy Director at the Center for Biological Diversity, said:

"Powering our world with 100 percent clean energy is no longer an issue of technological feasibility, but rather of sheer political will," said Jean Su, energy director at the Center. "In the face of the climate emergency, it's past time for our leaders to put the needs of the people over the interests of the fossil fuel industry. We urge all governments to be courageous and bold to undertake the urgently needed renewable energy revolution."

Ashton Berry, Global Climate Change Coordinator, BirdLife International, said:

"To meet the goals and targets of the Paris Agreement, and the recent findings from the IPBES report calling for transformational change in energy production and consumption in order to protect species from extinction, we need increased investment in energy efficiency and strategic planning to ensure the renewable energy mix is not only wildlife friendly, but country context relevant"

Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, leader of WWF's global climate and energy practice said:

"Renewables are at the forefront of the world's battle plan to tackle the climate crisis. REN21's Renewables 2019 Global Status Report brings good and bad news. Good news in that renewables continue to shape the global energy transition; and bad news in that an uncertain policy environment in many countries is undermining the impact on emissions reductions that renewables can – and should – have. Governments must reassess their energy policies and regulations in light of the review of nationally determined contributions by 2020. There will never be a more opportune time to do."

For more information, contact:

Hala Kilani

Senior Communications Officer

CAN International

Email: hkilani@climatenetwork.org or WhatsApp/call on +961 3 567 928

About Climate Action Network: Climate Action Network (CAN) is a global network of over 1300 NGOs working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels. www.climatenetwork.org