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Renewables in 7, 6, 5, 4, ...

To truly kickstart the transition towards 100% renewables by 2050 (at the latest), governments will need to increase global annual renewable energy investments four-fold. That means US\$1.3 trillion by 2030, according to IRENA.

You might be thinking: “Whoa, that’s a lot, too much!”. But really, it’s fine -- especially when the alternative is taken into account. The annual costs of climate damages and deadly air pollution from fossil fuels would amount to \$4 trillion -- costs that mainly would impact the poor.

Similar investment growth is needed for energy efficiency, in all sectors. During the same period, investments in fossil fuels and nuclear need to decline by more than 50% from the present figure of almost \$1 trillion. This is twice the size of the combined financing of renewables and energy efficiency.

To grow renewables to 100%, we need to start a few key things both simultaneously and immediately, well before 2020. Without further adieu, ECO presents ***The 7 Steps Towards The Renewable Future:***

- 1) Governments need to regulate, legislate and incentivise the massive shift to renewables. This requires targets, steering and legislation in the financial sector.
- 2) Rich countries must significantly increase the support to poor countries for their own “*Energiewende*”. This should come from public and private sources.
- 3) Countries will need to rely on a range of renewable energy sources to realise a renewable-powered future. Wind and solar will dominate, but other sources such as geothermal, select hydropower and biomass, have a role to play too. It’s important to note that hydropower and biomass should only be deployed in a responsible and sustainable manner with respect to human rights. We have an obligation to leverage our renewable energy sources wisely and consider more than just the climate benefits of a particular source in order to reduce the risk of harmful impacts and unintended consequences.

4) Countries cannot rely on erratic markets, roller-coasting energy costs and fuel prices to get renewables in the system. Not only do countries need to stop new coal use, but they also need to start phasing out existing coal plants and avoid a lock-in into new natural gas – irrespective of the short-term economics.

5) Countries need to speed up alternatives to oil use, particularly in the transport and heating sector, such as renewable-based vehicle electrification and expansion of electrified public transport.

6) Policy regulation needs to include significant enhancement of energy efficiency and conservation across all consumption sectors and products. It is inconceivable to reach a fully renewable-based energy and industry system if the world does not harvest the many options and technologies already available on the market.

7) Advocacy and planning on the move to 100% renewables needs to include the many non-climate benefits of doing so. Avoiding deadly air pollution and health damage as well as erratic fuel import prices, while reducing manufacturing costs, enhancing water conservation and providing many more jobs than fossil fuels or nuclear, are all additional drivers for investing in renewables. And it all has to happen at a record speed if we want to limit irreversible climate damage.

ECO invites everyone to work together to make this happen. The Paris Agreement provides an excellent platform, but it is not a silver bullet. Actions have to happen everywhere by everyone.

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Friends of Renewables Unite!

ECO has discovered an opportunity for new friendships! The launch in Paris of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) was a significant outcome of COP21. AREI aims to provide universal energy access for all Africans by implementing 10GW of new renewable capacity by 2020, and doubling the continent’s electricity production through an additional 300GW of renewable capacity by 2030. At COP21, developed countries committed US\$10 billion in support by 2020.

ECO has a few ideas on how to create momentum from this. For example, COP22 can extend this ambitious initiative to a larger range of countries, including non-African LDCs, SIDs and other developing countries as another step towards a truly global renewable energy partnership. Like last year, this could become one of the most meaningful achievements of COP22.

It’s uplifting that there are indications from other developing

country groupings who are eager to undertake similar efforts. Could COP22 see the launch of a new voluntary partnership involving all friends of renewables and the delivery of new support pledges?

ECO likes friendships and thinks such an initiative could strengthen action on renewables in a wider range of countries. Friends that help share experiences and lessons, enable the scaling up of finance, and assist each other in making use of existing financial resources in the GCF and elsewhere. They could help maintain the momentum of Paris and help close the ambition gap to achieve 1.5°C.

Friendships have to start somewhere, and ECO hopes to see further progress on this opportunity here. Friends don’t leave friends behind, and we know that to keep warming to below 1.5°C, together we must all accelerate the transition to 100% renewable energy, while ensuring concrete actions and success in Morocco.

To Boldly Go...Towards More Ambition

ECO was discouraged by a lack of ambition during Tuesday’s high-level workshop on implementing NDCs, mainly because we know that merely implementing NDCs is nowhere near enough to keep us on a 1.5°C pathway. The commitments on the table urgently need increased ambition. Let’s take a look and see which new-ish governments could take the lead by revising their commitments.

Canada is coming back, right? Prime Minister Trudeau came into office with a promise to hold a first ministers’ meeting within 90 days of COP21, aimed at forming a national climate strategy. Considering the climate horror of the Harper administration and its inadequate INDC, this would surely result in a new NDC with increased ambition, right?

Well, 160 days after adoption of the Paris Agreement, the “town halls” aren’t set to finish until mid-June. So far, Canada is sticking with its dreadful INDC. But ECO still hopes that the Trudeau government will walk the talk and put forward a new and actually ambitious NDC.

Canada, bring your ambition back up north and you’ll find sunny ways!

Australia’s Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull let the world know he thought his predecessor’s climate policy (or lack thereof) was bullsh...we mean kangaroo dung.

If taken seriously, Mr. Abbott’s climate record was as unpleasant as biting into an onion, and who would want to do that? Oh wait, he did. So, where is the sweetness of increased ambition from Australia under Mr. Turnbull? Basically, there is nowhere to go but up.

Australia, come on up from down under!

Argentina’s government formally took office during COP21, bringing new airs from one of the biggest countries in South America. The new government has indicated a willingness to ramp up the level of ambition, while saying internal consultations are underway, but so far no process has materialised.

Argentina, your tango we admire, but in time your ambition can and should go higher!

These countries have new opportunities to lead, but they must take the next step and others must follow. Can your country do more? Will you help put us on a 1.5 degree pathway? Sign up below!

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