

Statement by

**H.E. Frank Mollen**  
**Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**  
**to the International Renewable Energy Agency**

**11<sup>th</sup> IRENA Council meeting**

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Mr Chairman,

First of all, please allow me, on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands as well as the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, to congratulate Director-General Amin and the IRENA secretariat as a whole, with the agencies' five year anniversary. IRENA's remarkable growth and worldwide recognition are a testament to its achievements to date and evidence that the agency fulfils a vital function in the international communities' efforts to promote sustainable energy.

I take the floor today as the newly accredited, first Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to IRENA. The appointment of a Permanent Representative symbolises our commitment to IRENA and more broadly our commitment to the historic international goals agreed to last year in New York – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in Paris with the Climate agreement.

IRENA's work on renewables fits into the wider efforts of transition towards sustainable energy systems that coincide with the urgent need to eradicate poverty, to reduce social and gender inequality, to cater for a fast growing middle class, and to improve the resilience of those that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. A transition that offers economic opportunities for developed and developing countries.

IRENA, including the work of the Innovation Center in Bonn, furthermore helps to support our thinking on the long-term vision for Europe's and The Netherlands' future energy systems. In the Netherlands we have recently started the Energy Dialogue, a public consultation process on the future of our energy system. Not only to raise awareness of the huge challenges and dilemma's that are inherent to the energy transition and of the need for every citizen to participate, but also to gather useful input on how to shape the energy transition. Instruments of IRENA, for example the REmap study, can contribute to this process.

As Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, I represent not only the Netherlands in Europe, but also Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten in the Caribbean. Four autonomous countries that together make up one member state. Four countries with a wealth of experience in renewable energy technologies and applications, and with an appreciation of the challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The appointment of a Permanent Representative alone is therefore not the only sign of our commitment to IRENA and the goals of the international community:

The Kingdom of the Netherlands supports UNDP and the Government of Aruba in establishing a Centre of Excellence for SIDS, a platform for South-South cooperation and for exchanging knowledge with renewable energy as one of its focusses. We are grateful for the support IRENA has delivered to the Caribbean region and look forward to continuing this cooperation. We have pledged 100.000 EUR to the IRENA SIDS Lighthouse Initiative to host an event for all SIDS at the Centre.

We are also proud to be active and founding members of the Global Geothermal Alliance, the International Solar Alliance, the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative and the Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform. And we are glad to have contributed to the Panel of Experts of the IRENA-Abu Dhabi Fund for Development Project Facility.

Moreover in Paris the Kingdom of the Netherlands pledged to provide access to renewable energy for 50 million of the world's poorest people by 2030 through a variety of means.

As I have already mentioned, our view is that renewables can improve the resilience of communities. The Kingdom of the Netherlands supports initiatives to improve access to renewable energy for refugees and displaced peoples and has recently pledged 2 million EUR to this cause. In addition, this summer we will appoint a regional envoy for water and energy security, based in Amman, to enhance climate change resilience, with renewable energy as a focus area.

Also, the Netherlands will host the second Planetary Security Conference later this year. The direct link between climate change and the vulnerability of communities, a.k.a. *planetary security*, is a clear one. All countries are invited to come together on 5-6 December in The Hague to discuss integrated solutions to the challenges of climate change. Obviously, renewables are an important component of that solution.

While we keep seeing records being shattered, recent examples being a solar tariff of 2.99 US cents per kilowatt-hour set in Dubai, and renewable energy generation records in Germany and Portugal, we expect further acceleration of the uptake of renewable energy in the coming years. This will keep posing new challenges and opportunities for our energy systems and those of our partner countries. IRENA's roles as a platform to exchange our experiences and as an advisory and knowledge hub will help guide us along the pathways to decarbonization.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands looks forward to working with all assembled here, because tomorrow's energy needs today's commitment!

Thank you for your attention.