

17th WORLD RENEWABLE ENERGY CONGRESS **4-6 December 2017, University of Bahrain**



Speech of H E the President of Bahrain University Professor Riyad Yousif Hamzah at the Opening:

Your Excellency Dr. Abdul Hussain bin Ali Mirza,
Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs
Your Excellency Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa bin
Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of Oil
Prof Ali Sayigh
Director General of WREN, Chairman World Renewable
Energy Congress, and Chairman of Iraq Energy Institute
Distinguished Guests and International Delegates:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here today to the *17th World Renewable Energy Congress*.

I would like to thank for Your Excellency Dr. Abdul Hussain Bin Ali Mirza, for his leadership and vision, firstly, for making this event happen and secondly, for his ongoing commitment to renewable energy and a clean environment for the Kingdom of Bahrain.

I am delighted that Bahrain is hosting a global congress that addresses the global issues of security, sustainability and clean energy. I am also very pleased to see that we have such wide representation from across the world from industry, academia, government and environmental organisations. It is only through collaboration on a global scale that solutions to the current and emerging energy problems can be found in a quicker, better and more sustainable way than ever before.

Global oil-price volatility has affected economies across the Middle East. Having seen severe price declines in the past, many countries in the region may be tempted to wait for prices to rise again. However, this situation is different; governments need new energy and development strategies. The Gulf's drive to become a renewable energy hub offers a real option for economic development in the Arab world.

The Middle East is a hot spot for renewable energy, gaining great speed over the last 18 months. The region has tripled renewable energy investment over the last 12

months, with more investment planned. The International Energy Agency reported in September that energy investment globally has reached \$1.8 trillion last year; the scale of the problem and the scale of investment are clear for all.

The Gulf region (GCC Countries) already have high solar radiation, relatively low land costs, low-cost labor, favorable loan rates, and low tax regimes. These qualify the GCC Countries are uniquely positioned to have the world's new lowest price solar leader.

With many countries now having renewable energy targets and with such a large amount of new infrastructure necessary in order for countries to hit their proposed targets, the GCC Countries will require to develop expertise in a diverse range of roles, from development, manufacturing and on-going management. This will necessitate Academia to respond and work closely with regional and international experts, industry leaders and government agencies to develop the sustainable talent pool in order to meet the challenges ahead.

University of Bahrain (UoB) have already started to tackle regional sustainability issues, our recently approved transformation plan highlights that our signature research will be in the areas of renewable energy, water and food security. Desalination is vital for the Kingdom of Bahrain: it supplies about 90% of freshwater to our islands and consumes 30% of our primary energy. The topics of water supply and energy security are closely linked to those of food security and economic security in Bahrain and more broadly across the GCC Countries.

Two weeks ago, UoB held a 2 day symposium on these particular issues with 40 universities attending from the Gulf and UK, as a result several joint projects will commence to find sustainable solutions to the regional and global challenges that we face.

In 2017 UoB will also commence long term joint research projects in our signature research areas with the University of Oxford, University of Aston and University of Surrey. These projects will integrate industry and academic stakeholders from both the UK and from the Gulf region with a view to achieving implementation and impact from our joint research. We will continue to collaborate in order to the make best use of our world class resources, expertise and environment.

Finally, I wish for a productive and valuable congress that brings great minds together to identify specific challenges and more importantly to build collaborative links in order to develop policy, projects and solutions.

Thank you.

Prof Dr Riyad Yousif Hamzah, Conference Chairman, President, University of Bahrain Kingdom of Bahrain