

COP19: Renewables and energy efficiency key to close the emission gap, says WWF

Renewable energy and energy efficiency are key to close the emissions gap - estimated by UNEP [1] last week to be between 8-12 GtCO₂e - between now and 2020, said WWF in a submission paper to the UNFCCC [2]. WWF calls on parties to the Warsaw Climate Change Conference to enhance and scale up initiatives related to energy efficiency and renewable energy to help save the climate.

“Despite positive action from UN members around the world, it’s clear that we aren’t doing enough to tackle climate change and that the window for effective action is rapidly closing. Putting off action until later will only be more expensive”, **said Tasneem Essop, Head of the WWF’s COP Delegation.**

She added: “The energy sector is the biggest source of manmade greenhouse gas emissions, so we need to urgently decarbonise it and renewable energy and energy efficiency are key to achieve this. Scaling up renewable energy is not only good for the climate, but also for people and the economy. ”

According to the IEA World Energy Outlook [3] released yesterday, based on existing policies, the world is on a pathway to exceed global warming of 3.5°C in the long term and between two thirds and 80% of all remaining fossil fuel reserves need to stay in the ground and not be used to avoid 2°C of warming. If we want to achieve the ultimate objective of the UN Climate Convention, the fossil fuel based energy sector has to fundamentally change over the coming decades.

Due to the maturity of relevant technologies renewable energy and energy efficiency scale-up offers excellent potential to close the existing emissions gap by 2020 while making it much easier to achieve longer-term targets and global economic transition.

Climate analytics estimates that taken together renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements could contribute to closing the emissions gap by 1-2.5 Gt CO₂eq and up to 4-5 Gt CO₂eq [4] respectively by 2020.

“The UNFCCC can play a unique and valuable role in facilitating the scale up of renewable energy and energy efficiency by mobilizing financial and technological resources, sharing knowledge, and building support and momentum around crucial actions to close the emissions gap in the short term”, Tasneem Essop added. “The time is ripe for the UNFCCC to start acting as an effective implementation forum, in addition to its traditional role as a negotiating forum.”

In parallel WWF is running a global Seize Your Power campaign [5] calling on governments and financial institutions worldwide to phase out investments in coal, oil and gas and increase investments in renewable energy by at least US\$40 billion over the next 12 months.

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Notes to editors:

1. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Emission Gap Report 2013
<http://www.unep.org/pdf/UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2013.pdf>
2. WWF Submission on Increasing pre-2020 Mitigation Ambition through scaled up Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiatives <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/smsn/ngo/369.pdf>
3. IEA World Energy Outlook 2013:
http://www.iea.org/newsroomandevents/pressreleases/2013/november/name,44368,en.html?utm_content=buffer94113&utm_source=buffer&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Buffer
4. UNEP. 2012. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Gap Widening as Nations Head to Crucial Climate Talks in Doha:
<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2698&ArticleID=9335>
5. WWF's global campaign is [Seize Your Power](#).

For more information:

Mandy Woods, Head of Communications, WWF Global Climate & Energy Initiative, email: mwoods@wwf.org.za, mobile: [+27 72 393 0027](tel:+27723930027), skype: mandibles-sa, twitter: @MandyJeanWoods

George Smeeton, Media Relations Manager WWF-UK, email: GSmeeton@wwf.org.uk, mobile: [+44 \(0\)7917 052 948](tel:+44(0)7917052948), skype: georgesmeeton, twitter: @GSmeeton