

WWF backs IEA call to change global energy system

Responding to the publication of the International Energy Agency's (IEA) World Energy Outlook today (12 November) [1], WWF said that the report and the opening of the UN climate talks in Poland had been overshadowed by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

Samantha Smith, Leader of WWF's Global Climate & Energy Initiative, said: "This report by the IEA comes after the horrible typhoon a few days ago in the Philippines which has shocked the world.

"The typhoon has also cast a pall over the UN climate talks starting in Warsaw, highlighting the urgent need to shift the world's energy system towards clean renewables and energy efficiency to combat climate change."

WWF said that it shares the concern of the IEA that based on presently agreed policies the world is on a pathway to exceed global warming of 3.5°C in the long term. WWF also endorses the IEA's support for strong energy efficiency measures, but shares the IEA concerns that energy efficiency efforts by all countries are far away from what is economically possible. These measures would have many positive effects beyond tackling climate change, such as reducing import bills, but WWF said that also means reducing or abolishing fossil fuel subsidies.

Dr Stephan Singer, Director of Global Energy Policy at WWF, said: "WWF strongly supports the IEA view that changing the energy sector – which is responsible for the majority of global greenhouse gas emissions - is the most important action to take. But we can't have our cake and eat it and the IEA is being too positive about new energy sources like shale gas.

"As the IEA themselves recognise, we need to leave more than two thirds of all existing fossil fuels underground to have a decent chance to avoid overstepping the threshold to dangerous levels of climate change. We need vision and leadership from world leaders on this issue – starting now in Warsaw."

WWF remains critical, however, of the IEA's projection for renewable energy. Although the organisation expects almost 50% of new power capacity to come from solar and wind by 2035, WWF said that this share should be closer to 100% of all new capacity to have a chance of the world not exceeding 1.5 degree global warming.

WWF's COP 19 submission at the UN climate talks calls on the UNFCCC to provide a strong policy signal in favour of a 25% aggregate global renewable energy target and a doubling of global energy efficiency by 2020 to combat climate change [2].

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Notes to editors:

1. The International Energy Agency's (IEA) World Energy Outlook is launched today (12 November) in London at 10:00 am GMT.
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>

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