

**Press-Release:
German NGO Forum on Environment & Development**

German NGOs: Now it is Time to Act

Bonn, 3rd June 2004: Leaders of German NGOs today welcomed Chancellors Schröders speech at the Bonn conference Renewables 2004 and called upon governments to proceed with concrete actions to promote renewable energy.

Sigrid Jannsen, President of the German Solar Energy Society said, NGOs shared the sense of urgency Schröder attached to the promotion of renewable energies.

"Renewables are a key to climate-protection, sustainable economic development and energy security. This is the message, and it is good that the Chancellor clearly stated this," said Jannsen. Jannsen emphasized the strong applause Schröder got, when he called on governments to move from words to action. According to her, this must go beyond the conference's international action plan which still lists far more old projects than truly additional initiatives. She welcomed the additional funds Schröder announces for renewables in developing countries but cautioned against fossil fuel modernisation projects in Schröder's speech. "There is a danger that they lock capital in coal power plants for too long," said Jannsen

Angelika Zahrnt, Chair of Friends of the Earth Germany, strongly criticised the announcement of the Worldbank of an annual 20% increase in currently very low funding for renewable energies. "The average annual Worldbank funding for renewables since 1990 was 450 million dollars while in 2003 it was only 200 million dollars. An annual 20% increase means they are back at the 450 Million in 2009. That's not an increase but a thinly veiled attempt to block adoption of the Salim report calling on the Worldbank to phase out fossil fuel extraction funding entirely within 5 years."

Claudia Warning, board-member of VENRO, representing German Development NGOs emphasized the vast yet untapped potential of renewables for developing countries. "We will see benefits for the 2 billion energy-poor only if they are an active part of development programmes. Too often they have been objects rather than subjects of such programmes. Civil Society clearly has pushed governments to move away from centralized fossil fuel energy strategies toward decentralized pro-poor energy programmes. We have yet to see significant government action in response to that."

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