



**A Speech
by
the President of Iceland
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson
at the
World Future Energy Summit
Abu Dhabi
17 January 2011**

Your Royal Highnesses
Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

In the last century, the world selected a few locations to symbolize our aspirations, our vision of a successful future. A small country in the European Alps became the centre for peace, dialogue and negotiations to solve severe international conflicts. A Nordic capital hosted awards for science and human achievement and Rio signalled a new concern for our shared environment.

In the early years of the 21st century, Abu Dhabi has served as the primary venue for urgent global discussions on a clean energy future; a country rich in fossil fuels demonstrating a vision of the use of alternative energy sources which the world now must turn into concrete actions.

In the three years since its inception, the World Future Energy Summit has succeeded in becoming a significant forum for the elaboration of new policies and the demonstration of technological achievements.

The new campus of the Masdar Institute of Technology, inaugurated a few months ago, harbours a historical demonstration of how we can indeed achieve a zero-emissions and zero-waste future; that the necessary know-how already exists.

The Zayed Future Energy Prize, awarded to those who have pioneered paths towards a sustainable world, has the potential to do for clean energy what Alfred Nobel did for science and peace more than a hundred years ago.

IRENA, the new global agency dedicated to clean energy cooperation, through its headquarters here in Abu Dhabi completes the profile.

Thus, Abu Dhabi has shown how determined it is to become the primary global location for international endeavours towards a clean energy future.

It has been a privilege for me and my country to participate in these visionary transformations and to celebrate here today the success of this new journey, to honour Crown Prince Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the people of Abu Dhabi and thank them for their leadership and dedication.

Cooperation between Iceland and Abu Dhabi manifests how the world is indeed changing, how our joint efforts can open gateways towards a sustainable future.

Iceland – a country which, within a single generation, moved from an energy economy based 80% on imported oil and coal to producing – for some decades now – 100% of our electricity and space heating from clean, sustainable energy.

Abu Dhabi – a country which realizes that, sooner or later, the oil will run out and that, due both to economic necessity and the threat of climate change, all nations must actively seek new solutions.

Together, we have shown how Icelandic know-how and technology can lead to the discovery of geothermal resources here in the desert, enabling Abu Dhabi and other Middle East countries to aim for a clean-energy-based air-conditioning system, an achievement that would indeed be a game changer, not only for this part of the world but also for nations on every continent.

It has become my country's mission to bring the lessons, the technology, the methods and the know-how gained in our clean-energy programme to others, especially to countries in Asia, Africa, the Americas and the Middle East.

The South is indeed rich in clean energy resources: solar, wind, geothermal and hydro. In this new century it has the potential to lead the world in energy transformation. Yes, that vision does indeed challenge prevailing assumptions in Europe and the United States, but the South is none the less fast emerging with a fascinating potential.

By bringing us all together at this inspiring Summit, Abu Dhabi has shown what can be done, that the tools are ready; the technologies exist. Now it is up to us to take the necessary action.