

ICELAND TO HOST WORLD CONGRESS ON ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE HYDROPOWER

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17 June, 2009 – London, UK - The International Hydropower Association (IHA), with more than 40 partner organizations, will convene its World Congress on Advancing Sustainable Hydropower in Reykjavik, Iceland, 24-26 June 2009. Representatives of some 50 countries, representing governments, business and civil society will take part in this event, under the patronage of Iceland's President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson.

Reykjavik is a particularly relevant venue, as Iceland has been the site of several internationally significant strategic meetings. More recently, it has become an important theatre of developments relating to climate change, finance and sustainability. President Grímsson states that the transformation of the water and energy sectors are crucial priorities in achieving "a more responsible and sustainable economic system", and affirms that "renewable energies have to be at the core of sustainable development".

"We are very proud that the 2009 programme includes some of the world's greatest water, energy and climate thought leaders" declares Richard Taylor, IHA's Executive Director. "For example, panellists include Dr Rajendra Pachauri of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Minister Hilary Onek of Uganda's Department of Energy and Mineral Development, Dr Robert Dixon of the Global Environment Facility, Dr Marzena Chodor of the European Commission, Dr Joerg Hartmann of the World Wildlife Fund, Raghuvveer Sharma of the World Bank, and Jeremy Bird of the Mekong River Commission."

The World Congress will tackle critical issues in relation to hydropower development, such as water and energy security, climate change and financing development. Impacts on the role of hydropower and other water and energy services will be discussed with a view to specifying action.

Delegates from a wide range of political, technical, social and environmental expertise will be present in Reykjavik, including representatives from governments, the United Nations, multilateral and private banks, NGOs and research institutions, along with figureheads from business and industry.

IHA's Congresses are organized to be interactive and dynamic; they are not only intended to be informative, but designed to challenge current strategies and to stimulate future strategic thinking. "The previous IHA World Congress was one of the best meetings, possibly the best, I have attended", says Peter Lee, Honorary President of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage: "the event was a model of what constitutes a successful meeting".

Hydropower is a major source of low-carbon renewable energy. It contributes 16% of the world's electricity, and represents 85% of all that is generated from renewable sources.

The International Hydropower Association (IHA) was founded as a not-for-profit organization in 1995 under the auspices of

UNESCO. Today, it has members in more than 80 countries. Its mission is to advance hydropower's role in meeting the world's water and energy needs by: championing continuous improvement and sustainable practices; building consensus through strong partnerships with other stakeholders; and, driving initiatives to increase the contribution of renewables. IHA is a founding partner of the International Renewable Energy Alliance, and is honoured to work alongside the world's leading associations for bio, geothermal, solar and wind energies. IHA is an international non-profit organization, with its central office in London, UK.

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