

PRESS RELEASE

Decision Makers' Workshop on Geothermal Energy
Addis Ababa – 8-10 June 2009

Ministers and High Level Officials from ten East African countries, the Commissioner for Energy of the African Union and twenty experts from Europe, Latin America and Asia, as well as from the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the European Commission, have gathered **in Addis Ababa from 8 to 10 June 2009** to participate in the **“Decision Makers’ Workshop on Geothermal Energy”**, organised by ICS-UNIDO with the sponsorship of the **African Union**, the **Ethiopian Government**, the **International Geothermal Association (IGA)**, and in collaboration with the **Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (BGR of Germany)**. Burundi, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia are the **countries of the East African Rift region sharing a great geothermal potential, which is still today almost unexploited.**

The President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, H.E. Girma Wolde-Giorgis, attended the opening session of the Workshop.

The Workshop was dedicated to technological and environmental aspects of exploration and exploitation of geothermal resources, and to their political, economic, financial and social implications. It has thus offered a unique opportunity to share experiences among decision makers and renowned experts in the field. Geothermal energy is a clean, stable and sustainable resource that is likely to emerge as one of the main alternatives for future energy challenges. Such challenges are related to the world energy demand, which is rapidly depleting the stock of fossil fuel, and to the increasing concern for the emissions impact on global climate change: the combined effects of these issues are driving the search for new energy supplies.

As a conclusion of the Workshop, the 7 Ministers for Energy and the 3 high level representatives from the countries of the East African Rift system signed the Addis Ababa Declaration on Geothermal Energy, with a set of strategic guidelines. In fact, after acknowledging the role of geothermy as a mainstream option for future energy challenges, the Declaration recommends to the African Union Commission to urgently launch a joint regional programme on geothermy development and to establish a Geothermal Energy Development Agency, as well as a permanent Regional Forum among the countries of the East African Rift system. More specifically, the Declaration also mandates the AUC to promote, in co-operation with ICS-UNIDO, a strategic, collective, regional project on geothermal energy development to be submitted for funding to the European Commission, and to be implemented, when approved, by UNIDO.

The project, currently in the course of definition by the African Union Commission and ICS-UNIDO, foresees a series of actions among which there is the creation of a data-base of all the physical and human resources available in the Region, and other data essential for the development of geothermy; scientific/technological advanced training concerning the state-of-the-art exploration and exploitation methods and the support to related pilot operations; various activities concerning technical assistance, as well as activities aimed at public awareness creation on the great potential of this inexhaustible source of clean energy.

The International Centre for Science and High Technology (ICS), based in Trieste (Italy) and funded by the Italian Government, is the relevant research arm of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

More about ICS on www.ics.trieste.it ; more about UNIDO on www.unido.org.

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