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Thirty-first meeting of the Council

Abu Dhabi, 21-22 May 2026

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## Background Note

### Renewables: An energy security imperative

#### Background

1. The present energy crisis stemming from the conflict in the Middle East re-iterates the inherent structural weakness and vulnerability of national energy systems that remain reliant upon fossil fuels, and markets where the costs of oil and gas are highly influential on electricity prices. There is an immediate need, however, to reassess these fundamentals and prioritise reactions that enhance long-term energy security.
2. According to IRENA's new policy advisory on the crisis, renewables are already reducing dependence on fossil fuel imports across countries - from Spain and Portugal in Europe, to China, India and Pakistan in Asia. Globally, renewable power capacity continues to grow rapidly, with a record 692 GW added in 2025.
3. Secure energy from renewables also makes economic sense. Falling costs have transformed the economics of power generation. More than 85% of new renewables are now cheaper than new fossil fuel alternatives. Since 2010, the cost of solar has fallen by 87%, onshore wind by 55% and battery storage by 93%. Meanwhile, 'firm' renewables, which combine wind or solar with battery storage, provide 24/7 power at lower costs than most fossil fuel-fired alternatives.
4. To take full advantage of the benefits of renewables and to limit the impacts of the current crisis, policy makers must urgently intervene to direct investment and emergency responses to accelerate the deployment of renewable power generation capacity, and the electrification of energy-consuming processes and sectors.

#### Objectives of the Programmatic Discussion

- Present the key points and recommended actions of IRENA's policy advisory.
- Gather insights from Members on measures they are taking to address the crisis and accelerate renewables.
- Facilitate a discussion on how IRENA can further support Members overcome barriers and how international cooperation can help address the challenges presented by the current crisis.

### Guiding questions

- **Short-term actions enabling energy security and improving energy affordability:** Which immediate actions are Members taking to strengthen energy security and ensure energy remains affordable? To what extent do these actions focus on accelerating renewables deployment and improving energy efficiency (including through electrification)?
- **Barriers to effective actions and overcoming them:** What political and structural trade-offs are Members prepared to make to overcome existing barriers (e.g. supply chain dependencies, financing, etc.)? Can these be overcome by international cooperation or solidarity mechanisms at the global/regional level?
- **Integrating short-term actions with long-term measures to achieve a just and inclusive energy transition:** What commitments are needed to ensure that short-term responses to the energy crisis are compatible with long-term objectives of the energy transition on aspects such as security, decarbonisation, competitiveness, and energy access?

### Associated publications

- [From energy crisis to energy security: Actions for policy makers](#)
- [Geopolitics of the energy transition: energy security](#)
- [Renewable capacity statistics 2026](#)
- [Renewable power generation costs in 2024](#)