

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to welcome you here today. This exhibition has been organised by the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA) and it is a great honour for me to have been invited to co-host this event together with Fiona Hall and Jo Leinen.

Europe has an active role to play in the implementation structure for grand projects.

We need a whole array of clean and efficient technologies that take into account local circumstances and potential. Wind power is one of these potential sources.

Wind power has the advantage of being mature, the European coastline is particularly well-adapted to offshore wind farms and Europe is a leader in the field. Finally, wind power technology is well placed to benefit from the infrastructure and labour market created by the oil industry.

There is a high potential transfer rate in skills and infrastructure from the oil and gas industry to wind farms. This should benefit industry in terms of employment, technology and existing infrastructure.

According to EWEA figures, by the end of 2009, the wind sector employed 192,000

people in Europe. In addition, European companies employ tens of thousands outside of Europe.

Strong growth is expected in wind energy employment in Europe over the coming years. Employment levels in the sector should rise to 280,000 by 2015 and 450,000 by 2020. That's an average, of 450 new European wind energy jobs per week over the next decade.

There are three key areas - offshore wind, electricity grids, training and education of more engineers and technical staff - were identified as critical to creating these new jobs. Existing and planned European offshore wind projects would, if implemented, supply 10% of

Europe's electricity. Offshore employment is expected to exceed onshore employment by 2025, and by 2030, over 60% of the total employment in wind energy is expected to be in offshore wind energy.

The exhibition displaying the photos resulting from the Global Wind Day photo competition is an inspiration to launch the energy debate discovering wind power.

All that remains for me to say is that I hope you will have the time to visit the exhibition and to marvel at the wonderful pictures on wind power.