

Dr. Fatih Birol Acceptance Speech

**German Cross of Merit (Bundesverdienstkreuz / Verdienstkreuz 1. Klasse) –
Berlin, 19 November 2009**

Excellencies, dear State Secretary, distinguished guests, dear colleagues,

It is a great honour to receive this very prestigious recognition from the German government. I will speak only briefly.

Looking at the years to come, I see that the energy issues will dominate more and more the international and national policy agendas. On the one hand I am happy as an energy expert that energy is moving up the agenda but sometimes I am afraid that energy and geopolitics are becoming too much interwoven. I prefer that energy stays as energy and energy sector as a key part of the economy.

Our current energy system is on a totally unsustainable path and there are at least three reasons for that. First we have rapidly growing challenges in energy security, second climate change mainly caused by energy use is a major risk for the equilibrium of our planet and we all know that we are having a crucial meeting in Copenhagen very soon to address this issue. And the third challenge that I see is that today 1.5 billion people, about ¼ of global population, in sub-Saharan Africa and India do not have access to electricity.

So because of these three strategic challenges, I think we are on an unsustainable path in terms of the global energy system. Together with my colleagues at the IEA and two of them are here with me today, Mr. Pawel Olejarnik and Dr. Timur Guel, we are trying to analyze these challenges and propose the ways to address these challenges, what should governments do, what should the citizens do, what should companies do.

However, although the challenges are so huge and complex, our work and the work of others will end up in pushing a transformation in the current unsustainable use and production of energy and mankind will be able to produce and use energy in a much more sustainable way than today. I firmly believe that and let me get help at this from my favourite German poet,

namely Bertolt Brecht. A great Berliner, Brecht said “because the way things are, things will not stay the way they are”. So it is the reason why I believe the current energy system will have to change and will change.

I promise that I personally will do all I can to make a contribution to bring global energy system in a sustainable path.

Some words in German....

Some words in Turkish....

Once again, Mr State Secretary please do accept my sincere gratitude to the German Government for presenting this prestigious award to me.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Fatih Birol