Energy Transitions in Germany and the United States

Abstract

Germany and the United States have both embarked on an exciting historic venture in their energy systems. Mitigating climate change, responding to the threat to energy security and prices, improving energy security, reducing air and water pollution and related negative health impacts, and stimulating technologic innovation, creating new markets and jobs, are all motivating the transition to a cleaner energy system, away from the burning of fossil fuels – which enabled the quick human and economic development in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In order to analyze current trends, challenges, and opportunities of the Energiewende (Energy Transition) in Germany and the United States, the Worldwatch Institute organized the strategic dialogue, “Energy Transitions in Germany and the United States,” on December 9–10, 2013 at its headquarters in Washington, D.C. With support of the German Embassy and the Transatlantic Climate Bridge Program, the dialogue brought together 20 leading experts from both countries. It was organized around three roundtables: on renewable energy support mechanisms (chaired by Todd Foley and Michael Mehling); energy efficiency and demand-side management (chaired by John Jimison and Alexandra Langenheld); and the future of the electric power industry (chaired by Christopher Flavin and Robert Werner). Kyle Arons, Georg Maue, and Alexander Ochs gave introductory remarks.

The presentations, agenda, findings, and list of chairs and participants are available at the Worldwatch Institute Project Webpage (www.worldwatch.org/energy-transitions-ge-us). We wish to thank our participants and the chairs for their input.

Share of Generation from Renewables (including hydropower), 1990–2012

Source: World Bank; © Worldwatch 2014