

Closing remarks
by
the OPEC Secretariat
to the
Joint OPEC/World Bank Workshop on Global Gas Flaring Reduction
30 June – 1 July 2005, OPEC Secretariat, Vienna

Ladies and gentlemen,

After one and a half days of high-quality presentations and stimulating discussions, it is now — sadly — time to close the workshop. The weekend is almost upon us, and some of you have a long way to travel, to get home to your families.

Let me thank all of you for your active involvement in the proceedings, from which everyone has benefited. I should like to thank, in particular, the speakers, for their interesting and lucid presentations, as well as all those involved in the organisation and administration of the event. Needless to say, we are indebted to the co-host of the workshop, the World Bank, for its tireless efforts in helping bring it to fruition, as well as the expertise that it has injected into the event, in the framework of the Global Gas Flaring Reduction Public-Private Partnership (GGFR).

While participants have, on the one hand, been impressed by the elaborate apparatus that has been set up by the Partnership in just four years to reduce gas flaring, as well as by just how much progress has been made to date, they have, on the other hand, been brought back down to Earth again by the fact that there is still such a long way to go in helping reduce, if not eliminate, gas flaring. As has been made clear here, this cannot be done overnight, and it will require outside support, through such institutions as the GGFR.

Some issues of real concern to our Member Countries have been raised at this workshop, and these involve, in particular, the practical aspects of reducing gas flaring, since these countries are all agreed on the need for this to occur. For example, how can the clean development mechanism and carbon credits actually be used by Member Countries, with GGFR support, to help reduce gas flaring? And can the GGFR's voluntary standard be a vehicle that can be endorsed by a country or company, and what supporting actions are required for this to be successful?

There are also important issues involving use of the latest technologies, the reasonable — and not excessive — dissemination of data, and joint actions. Notably, these are matters which also relate to the broad spread of our Member Countries' activities, involving other important areas.

Finally, let me stress once again that the holding of this workshop indicates how seriously OPEC takes the reduction of gas flaring, as well as other issues that relate to oil-use and the state of the environment, and that we shall continue to pursue this matter with the required vigour within our Organization in the future.

Thank you and have a safe trip home.

... Before you go, however, I should like to cordially invite you to attend a presentation that will be made in this conference room shortly. Its title is "Global Perspective on Petroleum Resources", and it will be delivered by Dr Thomas Ahlbrandt, World Energy Project Chief of the United States Geological Survey.