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PRESIDENT GORBACHEV CALLS FOR DRAMATIC BOOST TO SOLAR ENERGY TO REVITALISE ECONOMY, FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY POVERTY

*Solar Report Card Highlights Potential for Governments to Spur Robust Solar Markets
US receives a C+ Grade, UK D-, Germany A-, China D-, Russia F*

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30 March, Geneva -- Green Cross International Founder Mikhail Gorbachev has urged world leaders and the private sector to make big investments in solar energy swiftly as a way out of the current economic crisis and as part of an emergency response to climate change. Mr. Gorbachev held a press conference at San Antonio, Texas, where he addresses the 33rd NPRA International Petrochemical Conference.

“The oil industry is a key stakeholder. Their commitment is essential to turn the tide against the massive pile up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere,” Mr. Gorbachev pointed out. “This economic crisis must mark the beginning of a new sustainable development path. That has been long overdue. Solar power needs big investments to expand for noticeable effects. For the 2 billion people currently living without electricity, the sun is the best hope.”

Talking about the enormous potential that tapping solar energy holds, Mr. Gorbachev referred to the Green Cross Solar Report Card, the first of its kind, analyzing 16 countries’ investments in solar energy. The full report can be found at www.globalgreen.org/solarreportcard

“Solar is a key strategic investment that can help combat energy poverty and help fight climate change,” noted Green Cross Energy Program Chair and Global Green president Matt Petersen. “Sadly, investments in solar markets, despite recent growth, have been historically low due to cost concerns. Governments have a responsibility to promote cost reductions through the assurance of long-term commitment to solar so the private sector may deliver economies of scale.”

“The challenge today is to embed Green Economic policy in national economies worldwide,” said Alexander Likhotal, President of the Green Cross International. “Latest estimates by the International Energy Agency show renewable sources account for only \$10 billion of the \$250-300 billion allocated to annual energy subsidies worldwide. If we are to deal with the current crises and the ones just around the corner, then every dollar, Euro, or yen is going to have to work smarter and harder.”

Highlights of the Solar Report Card

The Global Solar Report Card by Green Cross International and its American affiliate, Global Green USA outlines successes and failures in 16 countries’ (and the state of California’s) efforts in designing promising policy frameworks for sustained solar development. It finds all countries still in the early phases of solar deployment, even Germany, which is setting the pace. The following are some of the highlights of the analysis:

- Germany remains the leader, not only in terms of installed PV capacity but also for having put in place policies that provide the long-term commitment needed for solar market development. The state of California, considered in the report because of its significance in the global solar and economic context, also scored well in 2nd place, having implemented a 10-year \$3 billion rebate program for solar.
- Spain, which saw tremendous growth up until 2008, overtook the US as the 3rd country with the most installed

PV. A period of uncertainty as to its commitment to solar followed by a decision to cap the market for 2009 negatively affected Spain's grade. However, based on Spain's installed capacity for 2008 Spain would score a B instead of C+.

- In the United States, recent changes under the leadership of the Obama administration and in the context of the stimulus package signal efforts to stimulate solar market development in the face of an economic slump. Still, more can be done to take advantage of the country's solar, financial and technological resources.
- Japan, once the leading country in terms of both production and installed capacity, scored low after ending its flagship program in 2005. Japan however, hoping to regain its solar panel makers' competitive edge in the world market, recently put in place the first step of a new residential PV program.
- Countries such as Italy, France and Greece that fared moderately because of still young markets, have all put in place substantial drivers for growth. Recent efforts focused on lifting bureaucratic hurdles, which have in all 3 cases, acted as significant barriers to market take up. Solar industries are expected to grow in these countries moving forward.
- With recent policy changes, Australia missed an opportunity to put in place a considered federal level support mechanism to capitalize on tremendous solar resources and spurred significant investment in the country's solar sector. Similarly to the US, Australia is a country with tremendous solar, technological and financial resources that could do much more to reach its solar potential.
- China, which seems committed to developing a clean energy infrastructure to meet its growing energy needs, has set ambitious targets and put in place a comprehensive renewable energy policy framework. However, the country scores poorly here because the specifics for solar PV remain unclear. China stands to gain a lot from supporting the deployment of PV, given its tremendous energy needs, its high insolation and position as one of the three largest PV producers in the world.
- Finally, countries that continue to fare poorly in the study are Russia and Poland, with no solar markets and no mechanisms to capitalize on their solar potential, and to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom with a very small market and no significant support for solar growth at this time. While the United Kingdom is in the process of designing a solar support program, its impact will not be seen until end 2010.

About Green Cross International

Green Cross International's Solar Initiative seeks to raise awareness about the potential of solar energy and promoting greater investments in solar markets in developed and developing countries alike. Through its network of 31 organizations, GCI wishes to support advocacy for solar support measures and education efforts on the benefits of solar energy. GCI also aims to launch a Global Solar Fund, an investment vehicle mobilizing public and private capital to support the growth solar markets in the developing world so as to combat climate change and energy poverty through solar electrification. In this perspective, the next Solar Report Card will include developing countries, examining barriers to investment in solar projects.

About Global Green USA

Global Green USA is the American affiliate of Green Cross International. For the last fifteen years, Global Green has been a champion of solar power as a smart climate solution and has helped influence state and national legislation to create incentives for solar power – particularly to benefit low-income families and communities. Global Green is building The Holy Cross Project – the first solar powered, net-zero energy housing development in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward as a model sustainable village with lead funding support from the Home Depot Foundation. In 2007, Global Green provided the technical expertise and resources to help Community Housing Works build the first solar powered net-zero affordable housing complex in California – the Solara.

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