

Alternatives to fossil fuels key to energy sustainability in Kuwait

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KUWAIT (KUNA) -- Kuwait has to step up research into alternatives to fossil fuels in order to ensure sustainability of energy on the long run, a local scholar said on Wednesday.

The country has to develop a clear-cut strategy for the renewable energies, said Ali Hajjiyah, a researcher at the water and power technologies division of the Environment and Urban Development Department of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR).

"Renewable energy is a reliable source of energy given the fact that the fossil fuels are depleting across the globe," he said in statements to KUNA.

The Arabian Gulf region has 40 percent of the world's total oil reserve and 24 percent of the gas reserve.

"Aware of the vital importance of research into renewable energy, Kuwait started such research at KISR as early as 1983 when it launched a solar power station with a capacity of 100 kilowatts at Al-Salibiya area in cooperation with Germany.

"More solar stations, including the photoelectric station of Kuwait English School, have been launched since that time," Hajjiyah pointed out.

However, the research process in the solar and wind energies came to a standstill in late 1980s because such energies were expensive compared with the abundant oil and gas resources.

The gas emissions notably the carbon dioxide ensuing from fossil-powered electricity stations prompted political and economic decision-makers as well as environmentalists to refocus on renewable energy in a bid to stop global warming, he explained.

This scientific process made a good progress and reached an advanced stage. Wind-powered turbines that could operate with low speed wind have been developed.

Such turbines can operate in all countries of the world and in all seasons of the year, he said, noting that each country can be classified now according to its speed of wind.

Kuwait can also make use of its abundant solar energy resources to power its power station and water desalination stations.

The exploitation of 10 percent of Kuwait's solar potentials can generate energy equal to 500,000 barrels of oil, the scholar said, citing estimates of German experts.

Renewable energies could control Kuwait's overdependence on fossil fuels, thus ensuring sustainable energy security for the generations to come, Hajjiyah added.

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