

**Remarks by Neil McGuinness, Advertising and Marketing Communications
Manager (Europe and Middle East), BP Solar, España.**

Ambassador, ladies and gentlemen

I was trying to think if something funny to say about politicians disappearing into a cloud of smoke – there are times when we wish we could make it happen more often. Tonight is not such an occasion and it is a pity that an tAire Ryan cannot be with us. However safety comes first at all times, even if it does cause inconvenience.

“Energy security through energy diversity” is core to any sustainable future both for companies and societies.

BP realized this when, as far back as the early 70’s, investments were started in solar energy which eventually gave birth to BP Solar, for whom I work managing the AdMarcomms in Europe and ME.

Over 37 years and a 10m dollar annual investment in solar, through a dedicated Alternative Energy business unit, is a clear message that, as one of the largest oil companies in the world, BP understands the importance of renewable energy sources in complimenting the fossil fuels we have today. Alternative Energy brings together the renewable portfolio of BP – wind, bio, solar and hydrogen.

Sometimes, we at BP Solar are asked if it’s just “greenwash” – an attempt by Big Company Inc to produce pretty ads and use the words “environmentally friendly” on all communications.

Well I can assure that we are real and we do exist and we do add value.

Tony Hayward has been forthright in his commitment to renewables - the key word is diversity and he has spoken of the transition to a more sustainable energy future, with lower carbon emissions.

So, what are the challenges of marketing SOLAR?

I prefer to see them as JOYS.

One of the JOYS is being able to provide the credibility behind labels such as green and environmentally responsible. BP España is currently in the process of signing up to AutoControl, an association which verifies companies' green credentials, before allowing them to use the term in their communications.

Another of the JOYS of marketing SOLAR is the range of segments we are addressing globally. And while how we approach each segment varies, our messaging however remains the same – clear and concise information about the benefits of solar energy and BP Solar.

For those looking at investing in solar, perhaps as free field or industrial roof mounted systems it is a viable asset and the benefits are clear: a long-term, attractive return from a source that's not going anywhere – the sun. And this, backed by warranties and guarantees from the fourth largest company in the world.

When we are addressing our Distributors and Installers, it's important that we recognize that the relationship must be of mutual benefit. BP Solar is not just about sustainable energy, it's about sustainable BUSINESS. Our partners benefit from the fact that we are part of one of the world's largest

energy companies, with a track record and financial stability second to none.

For domestic customers, who may have a house where they want to put solar panels, there may be an emotional element (doing something that is right for the environment). Safety is of priority at all times – and BP Solar can stand by this thanks to our Certified Installers, who are trained and specialized in installation and safety.

So while some companies like to use iconic images of smiling children, adoring grandparents and sunflowers (incidentally – I used to love sunflowers), we recognize the need to give each customer the information they need and to understand where they are on their solar journey. And how we can accompany them on that journey.

Where we can educate, we will. Where we can learn, we must.

For the future, which energy sources and how much of each we will use globally will be largely driven by four competing factors:

- **Cost**
- **Technological innovation**
- **National Energy Security**
- **Environmental Concerns**

Depending on the market, solar can play a key role in providing a pathway to locally produced energy, thereby contributing to energy independence.

And to return to my initial point:

a mix of energy sources, woven together by sound government policies and business practices is the future that we at BP Solar see as bright.

Go raibh maith agaibh, muchas gracias.