

India, China to drive natural gas market until 2040: IEF chief



India and China will drive the natural gas market until 2040, International Energy Forum (IEF) secretary general Dr Sun Xiansheng said even as he underlined natural gas's "critical role in achieving sustainable and inclusive growth". The two Asian countries will be the major consumers over the next two decades followed by Africa and the Middle East, he said while delivering the second edition of the 2019 series of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum's (GECF) monthly lecture here yesterday. Indian demand for gas is estimated to grow at 4.9% through 2040 while that of China at 4.7%, Xiansheng said while delivering the lecture entitled "Global Energy Security: The Role of Gas in Sustainable and Inclusive Growth" at the GECF's headquarters in Doha. Africa's demand will grow at an estimated 3.3% between now and 2040, while the Middle East at 2% during the period, he said. Demand in the US, the world's largest economy, will grow at 0.7% through 2040, Xiansheng said. In terms of production, the IEF secretary general noted that Africa will grow at an estimated 3.7% until 2040. Mozambique will drive the African production at 12.2% during

the period, he said. The Middle East will follow with a growth rate of 2.2% with Qatar and Iran leading gas production until 2040. In Asia-Pacific (2%), Australia and China will be major producers at 3% and 3.9% respectively. In his speech, Xiansheng underlined the critical role of natural gas in achieving sustainable and inclusive growth. This is a fact, he said, that has been proven by all major forecasting agencies, including Opec and the International Energy Agency. "In fact, the share of gas in the global energy mix will be no less than 25% by 2040," he noted. The figure also corresponds with the figures projected in the GECF's own Global Gas Outlook 2040. "Gas will continue to get momentum as it can be a solution to the Paris Agreement Goals," Xiansheng stated. Looking at producers, he said several new emerging producers are expected in the market, but Qatar will continue to be a steady producer through the forecasted period. In terms of the consumers, the IEF secretary general mentioned there would be a shift to Asia, with China and India having the fastest growth rate. Xiansheng also called for collaboration in terms of policy and investment decisions and a necessity to develop infrastructure and pricing mechanisms. In order to ultimately reach energy security supply, he stressed that "international and regional energy cooperation is the solution". This is where he praised the role of the GECF and called for the organisation's "valued contributions" to the dialogue. In order to enhance this dialogue, the GECF will participate in the '9th IEA-IEFOPEC Symposium on energy outlook' next week, of which the GECF will be the fourth partner. GECF secretary general Dr Yury Sentyurin made introductory remarks. Dr Xiansheng is an accomplished authority not only on energy policy related matters, but has ample industry experience, covering both oil and gas production, trading and pipeline construction, gathered through the various roles he held at China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). In his current role as the secretary-general of the IEF, an intergovernmental organisation that aims to foster greater mutual understanding and awareness of common energy interests among its members, he

has contributed greatly to the global dialogue on energy. The organisation has some 72 member countries and between themselves account for the bulk of global supply and demand for oil and gas. Considering their similarities and aligned interests, such as encouraging the dialogue between producers and consumers, the GECF and the IEF have been collaborating for several years, an example of that being their joint work on the Joint Organisations Data Initiative (JODI- Gas). And while the focus of the GECF is on natural gas as the cleanest, most efficient and most versatile source of energy, similarly to the IEF, it looks at the interrelation between gas and other energy sources as well as the sustainable growth of gas markets. Both organisations are united in their belief that achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and especially SDG 7 'Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all' is of prime importance.