

**Speech by Max van den Berg, Queen's Commissioner and chairman of Energy Valley at the kick-off meeting of the European North Sea Energy Alliance (ENSEA), Papenburg, 8 October 2012**

**Energy Alliances**

Ladies and gentlemen,

The International Energy Agency (IEA) made no bones about it last year: it is five to twelve. In the latest World Energy Outlook, the IEA warns that “without a bold change of policy direction, the world will lock itself into an insecure, inefficient and high-carbon energy system.” This message reflects the future scenarios published by Shell. In which energy demand in 2050 is three times as much as in 2000. Yet, unless there is a change of policy, we will only be able to produce about one and a half times as much energy.

In short: we know what is expected of us. The energy issue is a hot item worldwide. The later it becomes, the greater the urgency to work on solutions. We cannot burden the generations to come with an uncertain future, a threatening shortage of energy, a world polluted by CO<sub>2</sub>. We must bundle all our knowledge, strength and know-how to prevent this.

And that is why I think it's wonderful that we are all here. This region, the North Sea region, is the 'place to be' for working on a reliable, affordable and sustainable energy management. Our geographic location alone offers many possibilities for this. Our position in natural gas, and the things we have accomplished with regard to renewable energy. We have fantastic knowledge institutes: Two weeks ago we started the Energy Academy Europe in Groningen for instance. We have a strong energy business community. And of course the ambition to work towards this so much needed solutions and to join forces to get there. All this ingredients secure the success of the European North Sea Energy Alliance we start today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is five to twelve. That means that time is running out. But we may not be too late. We must and we can accept the challenge to move towards a sustainable energy management.

And to do so we must work together. No single region, no single country or company is able on its own to solve problems that arise on a world-wide scale.

'Collaboration' is a key word in the energy policy of North Netherlands. Together with Niedersachsen we started in a

project called Hansa Energy Corridor. Both our parliaments stress the importance of this cross border cooperation. David Mc Allister visited us before the summer and told me and my colleagues (also here: Ms Mansveld en Mr De Vey Mestdagh) about his ambition to realize an Energy Valley Niedersachsen in parallel to our own Energy Valley. This all served as a stepping stone towards the project that starts today in which Scotland and Norway join our forces: the European North Sea Energy Alliance. The aim: generating more sustainable energy, contributing to a stable and secure supply of energy and creating jobs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It may be five to twelve. But it's not yet too late. Let us bundle our strengths for a responsible and sustainable use of energy. Now and in the future. In our countries, in Europe, in the world. This Alliance would like to play a leading role. We want to and we can. I hope that we will learn from each other. That we will share our knowledge and experience. And that new collaborations and projects will arise from this. With fine results for our regions and for an energy supply that is ever more sustainable. I wish you all much inspiration and many new ideas.