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## DAY 1 - High Level Plenary Session 1

Time: 10:30 – 12:00 | Venue: Himalaya Ball Room, Hotel Himalaya

### Title: Solar irrigation for agri-food systems & the Global Strategic Landscape

**Description:** Solar irrigation technologies are rapidly emerging as transformative solutions that hold immense promise for mitigation and adaptation co-benefits in the global south. As these technologies become increasingly affordable and accessible, they offer significant potential for addressing pressing challenges related to water scarcity, climate change, and food insecurity. This session will delve into the multifaceted dimensions of solar irrigation for agri-food systems and will aim to identify the key strategic interventions needed for an inclusive and sustainable pathway for scaling solar irrigation technologies.

**Moderator:** Dr. Alok Sikka, Country Representative, India & Bangladesh

#### Panelists:

- **Dr. Jonathan Demenge**, Head of Cooperation, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, India
- **Dr. Mohamed Mostafa Elkhayat**, Chairman, New and Renewable Energy Authority, Govt of Egypt
- **Ms. Resha Piya**, Energy Adviser, British Embassy Kathmandu, Nepal
- **Mr. Md. Enamul Karim Pavel**, Head of Renewable Energy, Infrastructure Development Company Limited, Bangladesh
- **Mr. Kifayat Zaman**, Director General, Federal Water Management Cell, Govt of Pakistan
- **Ms Phuntshok Chhoden**, Former Executive Director, BNEW and Chair of Sabah Bhutan, Chair of Independent Technical Advisory Panel of Bhutan, Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation.
- **Mr. Jeevan Kumar Jethani**, Scientist-F, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India

#### Questions to the Panelists:

Round 1 (5 mins)

Dr. Jonathan Demenge	To set the context, <b>why do you believe it's crucial to integrate solar irrigation technologies into global agri-food systems at this moment, particularly from the perspectives of sustainable agriculture, food security, and climate resilience?</b>
Dr. Mohamed Mostafa Elkhayat	So, as we acknowledge the necessity of transitioning to solar irrigation, <b>what do you see as the key challenges in the coming decade as governments in the global south try to integrate solar irrigation into existing agricultural systems?</b>
Ms. Resha Piya	Among the many challenges for scaling solar irrigation, one particularly important one is financing. There is a need for more immediate and effective access to climate finance. <b>How can we enhance developing countries' ability to prioritize solar irrigation on the global development agenda and to access and utilize global finance for solar irrigation projects more effectively?</b>
Mr. Md. Enamul Karim Pavel	While subsidy support is needed, solar irrigation projects worldwide often have very high subsidy components, sometimes as much as 80-90%. <b>How can we structure public-private partnerships more effectively and reduce the high dependency on subsidies for financially sustainable SIP projects? Based on IDCOL's experience with a more market-driven, private sector-led approach, can you reflect on that?</b>
Ms Phuntshok Chhoden	What prospects do you see for solar irrigation as a climate-resilient solution for smallholder farmers in Bhutan? In that context, what challenges do you see to promoting solar irrigation targeted at women and smallholder farming households?
Mr. Jeevan Kumar Jethani	Based on your experience in India, <b>what social and environmental considerations (especially from a groundwater perspective) do you believe must be carefully addressed as we aim to scale up solar irrigation projects in the global south?</b>
Mr. Kifayat Zaman	As you heard about different strategic challenges with solar irrigation technology, from the government perspective, <b>what policy frameworks and regulatory mechanisms are needed to address these challenges and promote the widespread adoption of sustainable solar irrigation systems?</b>

**Round 2 (2 mins each – total 14 mins):**

*As we've heard perspectives from various regions and contexts, highlighting critical factors for the successful integration of solar irrigation into agri-food systems, particularly in the global south, the importance of international cooperation, partnerships, and knowledge sharing has become evident. Could you share insights on how to enhance south-south learning effectively and in that context, what are your expectations from this global science-policy forum over the next few days?*