World Regional Renewable Fuel Sources
Total renewables in Gigawatts

The capacity of renewable energy produced in the world has grown by over 48 per cent in the past five years, according to statistics by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). In 2015 alone the world saw a growth of 8.3 per cent in renewable power generation, the highest annual growth rate ever recorded. By the end of last year, a capacity of 1,985GW existed globally. This is 5.3 times the amount of energy produced by all nuclear power plants. All countries in the world have at least one abundant renewable resource, but the role of renewables in domestic energy production varies significantly depending not only on the overall energy potential and demand but also on political and economic decisions made by different governments. In the European Union, the share of renewable energy was around 15 per cent in 2014, with a political target of increasing this to 20 per cent by 2020.

The above map provides a global overview of the share of renewable energy capacity across main regions in 2015 as documented in IRENA data. The depiction is a circular cartogram in which the areas of each circle relates to the percentage of total renewable energy capacity in four main sources of renewable energy: Hydropower (which accounts for approximately 53 per cent of global renewable energy capacity), wind (22 per cent), solar (11 per cent), and bio (7 per cent, here including solid biomass and biogas).

Regional distribution currently puts Asia first in global renewable energy power capacity (40.1 per cent of the world total), followed by Europe (25 per cent), North America (16 per cent), South America (9.1 per cent), Eurasia (including Russia, the Caucasus, and Turkey: 4.5 per cent). The remaining regions are around one per cent each. Most notable in this distribution is Africa's small share. Despite a large potential for renewable energy in all major sources, economic means to invest in such technologies plays an important role. Many countries on the continent who is going to believe that the Zimbabwe central bank is going to keep its promise, without the anchor of the US Federal Reserve System?' He believes that the plans, though they make sense on paper, may fail to convince Zimbabweans. Many worry that bank accounts of US dollars will be changed into bond notes. 'One thing we always have to bear in mind is that inflation - and hyperinflation - hurts the poor,' says Bittencourt. 'Meanwhile, the upper classes are able to find ways of protecting themselves against inflation with dollars or indexed bank accounts. If I had US dollars in my bank account in Zimbabwe, I would want to make sure the government does not "transform" them into something else, wouldn’t you?'