Clean energy risks over oil price fall: French minister

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French minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy Segolene Royal says low oil prices pose a threat to efforts to boost renewable energy use

The fall in oil prices poses a threat to global efforts to boost renewable energy use and lower carbon emissions, France's ecology and energy minister said Monday.

"There is a real risk of the re-orientation of consumption towards fossil

fuels, the ones that cause global warming and thus very severe climatic changes," Segolene Royal said on the sidelines of an energy conference in Abu Dhabi.

Royal told AFP the challenge to switch to cleaner forms of energy was "not insurmountable".

"We must take regulatory, fiscal and strategic decisions to ensure that this decrease (in oil prices)... can provide new flexibility to invest in renewable energy and energy savings," she added.

Royal's comments came after the price of crude dropped by more than half since June, raising fears of a setback for renewables.

The United Arab Emirates echoed Royal's hope that oil's affordability wouldn't damage the sustainable energy drive.

"The sector has passed the stage where it could be affected by oil prices ," said Sultan al-Jaber, UAE minister of state.

Global investment in renewable power has increased by 16 percent over the last year, reaching $310 billion (265 billion euros).

Royal said she was "reasonably optimistic" that renewable energy would continue to grow despite market pressure.

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