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An installation of solar panels said to be the largest of its kind in the world was put into operation Tuesday on the rooftops of Mexico City's massive public wholesale market, the Central de Abasto (CEDA).

The 32,000 solar panels installed over 21 hectares (52 acres) above the capital's Central de Abasto (CEDA) have 18 megawatts of capacity, and will generate up to 25 gigawatt hours (GWh) of renewable electricity per year, according to data from Mexico City officials.

They also said that the electricity generated will reduce carbon dioxide emissions annually by 11,400 tonnes and result in annual savings of 3.5 million pesos (US \$205,300) in the payment of CEDA's electrical bills.

The reduction of the carbon footprint is equivalent to the reforestation and care of nearly 29,000 pine trees for 50 years, said Mexico City Mayor Martí Batres Guadarrama.

The plant, which cost 600 million pesos (US \$35.2 million) to build, was promoted by Morena presidential candidate Claudia Sheinbaum during her 4 1/2 -year term as Mexico City mayor.

Sheinbaum has a master's degree and Ph.D. in energy engineering from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and from 1991 to 1994, she completed work for her doctoral thesis on the use of energy in Mexico at the world-renowned Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California.

Bartlett Díaz highlighted the plant as a work of economic development and social responsibility that will provide clean and cheap energy to the largest such market in Latin America.

"It is an important symbol -- not just another electricity project," Bartlett Díaz said. "It is really a sign that the [Mexico City] government has seen social and technological development as its main concern ... [It's] an example for the entire city."

Like others, he also stressed the "important social component" of the project. "Not only are we thinking about the business, about recovering the investment, but we are thinking about supporting the population, the tenants, the people, the neighboring buildings," he said.

The solar installation has been described as the largest urban solar park in the world; close competitors are the Radha Soami project in Amritsar, India and the rooftop solar park at Apple headquarters in Cupertino, California.

A ranking of the world's 15 biggest solar power plants by capacity also includes Mexico: the Villanueva Solar Park in Viesca, Coahuila, about 40 miles outside of Torreón, with 2.3 million solar panels and 754 megawatt



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capacity, making it the biggest solar plant in the Americas.

Total energy supply (TES) includes all the energy produced in or imported to a country, minus that which is exported or stored. It represents all the energy required to supply end users in the country. Some of these energy sources are used directly while most are transformed into fuels or electricity for final consumption.

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