

# **“ENERGY FOR ALL”**

*by*

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## **PROTOCOL**

I will like to begin by thanking the Government and people of Austria, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, IIASA, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UNIDO, for convening yet another forum aimed at reaching a consensus on a common understanding towards energy access, effective and efficient strategies for local and universal access, and increase in energy efficiency, enhancement of identified indicative targets and policies in support of these objectives.

I also want to express my sincere appreciation to the Director General of UNIDO, Dr. Yumkella Kandeh, who sent a personal invitation to me many months ago, on behalf of the organizers, and followed it up with several messages to ensure that I put other engagements aside to be here.

In the last few months, I have been opportune to speak at different forums on a number of problems facing our world in general. In all these meetings and discourses, focus was on looming, impending and or existing crisis like water security, food security, climate

change, intra- and inter-state conflicts, unemployment and lack of social justice.

On deep reflection, I see that the topic for this meeting, “Energy for All – Time for Action” has implications for and bearing on all these other issues. There is direct correlation between energy and almost all other issues that the world is engaged with, today. This is more the case with development issues. Some have attempted to measure level of development of a country or community by energy consumption per capita. The phenomenal development and growth that the world has enjoyed over the last three centuries had been fuelled by energy, and the main source has been fossil. It is not ubiquitously available and it is becoming commercially, environmentally, geographically risky and disastrous.

Apart from the danger posed by the indiscriminate use of fossil fuel to human environment and human existence, there is the issue of limit to availability in the long run.

In recent times, revolution has been brought into communications through technology. The whole world has been better for it even though the initial research and development took place in very few developed economies. But, today, even an illiterate farmer in my village is a beneficiary.

If anything is a measure of Africa’s under-development, energy deficit is a glaring indicator of African poverty and inadequate

development. If there will be energy for all, which will not go the failed way of “education for all” or “health for all”, the governments and the private sector of a few committed developed and emerging economies must take the lead and blaze the trail. This is why the position that has been taken by President Obama in the US, Chancellor Merkel of Germany and President Hu Jintao of China must be commended and encouraged. We will not have energy for all unless and until there is revolution in renewable energy with cost-sharing and burden-sharing among those who can afford the initial cost of research and development.

We, in Africa, believe that our salvation for adequate energy supply for domestic and industrial use lies in fast and revolutionary development of renewable energy resources, the sources of which are limitless. To get electricity to the millions who need it in Africa will require large, medium and small size of units centralized and decentralized technologies in grid, mini-grid and off-grid solutions in renewable energy sources.

The cause of energy deficiency for domestic and industrial use in Africa is fund – fund for power generation, fund for power transmission and fund for power distribution, all on mega scale. But, if three or more developed and emerging economies in a joint collaborative effort among them and among their private sector work seriously together for ten to twenty years, I strongly believe that the world would achieve a breakthrough in renewable energy

from solar, wind, water/hydrogen, sea, biomass, geothermal. The combined spirit of innovation and discovery available, added to entrepreneurial spirit will make a difference to individual effort at governmental or private sector level. Such combined effort will also save cost and time. Talking to researchers and scientists with technologists, I have been able to believe that with combined and concentrated efforts, there could be large scale, medium and domestic scale availability of power from solar, wind, biomass and hydrogen within the next decade or two.

Renewable energy is imperative because of the benefits and advantages it provides. The technologies are clean sources of energy that have a much lower environmental pollution impact than conventional energy technologies. Renewable energy sources will not run out as other sources of conventional energy that are finite and will, some day, be completely depleted. In technological terms, the renewable energy technologies extend the boundary of technology and knowledge much more so than the technologies of conventional energy. Since the sources of renewable energy are local, investments will be essentially made where the sources are, labour will also mainly be local. It will essentially boost local economy, particularly in the area of job-creation. For every nation involved and where sources are local, it will increase energy security.

The energy challenges of Africa seem daunting while they are at the same time urgent. Much as Africa is making appreciable progress in other areas, progress in the energy sector is neither fast nor determined enough. Compelling evidence on the continent and elsewhere have shown that Africa has no alternative to clean, efficient and adequate energy supply than renewable energy from solar, wind, sea, biomass, etc.

The sources are Africa-based, and African leaders, in appreciating this as the appropriate solution, have separately and collectively embarked on policies and programmes to support renewable energy revolution. African leaders, through the AU and NEPAD with the collaboration of UNIDO, have adopted a renewable energy action plan consisting of programmes and actions designed to make renewable energy pivotal to their solution of energy deficiency and general development problems. The action plan by itself is realistic and forward-looking but it would need consistent and focused attention and collaboration of Africa's development partners and friends for its successful actualization. Africa must not be delinked from the renewable energy revolution, the benefit of which must be globally available and enjoyed.

Africa is blessed with the sources of renewable energy that with technological breakthrough, we should not only be self-sufficient, we should be great exporters of renewable energy to other parts of the world. So, what some African countries may lose in the export

of fossil energy products can be made up in renewable energy export if they will partner with foreign entrepreneurs and investors. But more importantly, all Africa will have access to adequate energy.

With a breakthrough in renewable energy and subsequent reduction in price that will follow in due course, renewable energy holds the promise for Africa's energy self-sufficiency and availability and energy access to all and everywhere for domestic and industrial use. Those who paid for the initial research and development will also make their money back. I see renewable energy revolution as a win-win for all. But more importantly, we can have uninhibited use of energy, provided we can pay for it without polluting the environment and adding to the danger of climate change and without endangering the existence of human beings and other lives on earth. With renewable energy revolution, we can all help to keep nature in balance and ensure sustainable development.

I thank you for listening.