

**Opening Remarks  
at the  
Multi - Sector Regional Workshop  
on  
Modern Energy Services  
and  
Poverty Reduction  
October 23 - 25, 2002  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am greatly honoured to welcome you all to this Regional Workshop on Modern Energy Services and Poverty Reduction. I extend my warm greetings to all the country delegations as well as the staff of the World Bank who have travelled long distances to join us at this important workshop. I am also pleased to welcome you all to Addis Ababa.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Nothing can be more timely and useful than a workshop on poverty reduction and energy for sub - Saharan Africa at this period of global determination to confront the problems of the poor. Sub - Saharan Africa's underdevelopment and poverty levels are all well - known to all of us. To cite some indicators, about half of the sub - Saharan population has average incomes of below one dollar a day. What is more, poverty in sub - Saharan Africa is particularly acute in rural areas where over 70 % of the population lives.

Per capita electricity consumption for sub - Saharan Africa (excluding the Republic of South Africa) is about 5% of the world average. Electrification levels are also well below 30% for most sub - Saharan African countries, and in the range of 15% in some cases.

**Mr. Chairman,**

I understand that the objective of this workshop is linked to the provision of modern energy services to achieve the Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction. Energy is indeed an essential input for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction.

Modern energy services, in particular, would

- ?? improve agricultural production, especially in the case of irrigated agriculture,
- ?? broaden the range of products and services provided by small scale enterprises,
- ?? improve access to education and information for the rural poor, and
- ?? facilitate the provision of health services and clean water in the rural areas.

I hope that this workshop will come up with appropriate mechanisms for delivery of modern energy for these purposes. I am also confident that the workshop, in its deliberations, will take into account the vast energy resources of sub - Saharan Africa. Sub - Saharan Africa's hydropower resources, oil and gas resources and solar energy resources are but a few of the natural resources whose development could alter the economic picture of the region. These resources can be developed at the regional, national or even village levels. We can

think in terms of regional power trade, national power grids and stand - alone village energy supply systems. Co-operation among various stake- holders is critical in all cases. Overall development of the region, so achieved, will no doubt alter the lives of the poor for the better.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Ethiopia has recognised the importance of getting modern energy services to the rural areas. Indeed the provision of modern energy services to the rural areas has been the primary focus of our strategy of Agriculture Development - Led Industrialization (ADLI). Improving access of modern energy in the rural areas is also a major goal in our strategy of rural development. Energy is also given a prominent place in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Ethiopia.

We have already embarked on a five - year rural electrification program to electrify about 160 rural administrative centres. Implementation of the program has so far exceeded planned targets. In this connection, I am pleased to mention that the World Bank and other development partners are helping us significantly in this endeavour. I expect we will be sharing each other's experiences on these lines in the course of the workshop.

**Mr. Chairman,**

I would like to conclude by thanking the World Bank for having taken the initiative to organise and sponsor this workshop which, as I indicated earlier, is timely and extremely useful. Finally, I wish you success in the deliberations ahead and a pleasant stay in Addis Ababa.

Thank you