

## CONFERENCE SUMMARY STATEMENT BY IVAN VERA

1. I have been given the impossible task of summarizing the rich experience of the past three days in the next 10 minutes. First of all as one of the main organizers of this Conference I would like to say that we have a very well attended conference with
  - More than 250 participants;
  - Representing about 40 countries;
  - Featuring more than 79 panelists some of them providing remarks and others full presentations
  - I think we have a total of 27 organizations exhibiting their technologies and equipment; and
  - Many enlightening statements, questions and interventions from the floor.
2. We have come together, demonstrating shared ownership and common cause. I think for one of the first time we are all gathered in one room, focused on one goal: the single goal of universal access to modern energy services, targeting in particular the rural isolated communities where many of our poorest people live.
3. We have had the participation of:
  - Governments, including both policymakers and energy sector managers;
  - Donor organizations and international bodies including regional associations and financial institutions;
  - Practitioners from various sectors including a diverse group of NGOs and civil society organizations; and
  - Private Sector entrepreneurs, companies, and association.
4. In the course of these past three days...
  - We have focused both on opportunities and on challenges at multiple levels.
  - We have learned about successful initiatives in a wide range of contexts, including here in our host country of Ethiopia.
  - We have discussed many diverse approaches, with the clear understanding that there is no single “one size fits all” solution – no “magic bullet.”
  - We have recognized that our goal is ambitious, and that business as usual will not be sufficient.
  - We have repeated to each other, over and over, that the time has come to scale up and accelerate our work, to move beyond pilots and projects.
  - Naturally, our emphasis has been on Africa, but it has been informed and enriched by experiences in Asia and Latin America.
5. We began the conference looking at **the big picture**, focusing on the importance of our unified global goals and targets, and the role of energy in the emerging post-2015 framework of sustainable development goals.

6. We next turned to a series of conversations about **the nexus approach**. We heard about the need to demonstrate clearly the reality that energy is in fact the key enabler for a wide range of sustainable development concerns, and that investment in energy access is a synergistic investment in health, in food security, in poverty eradication and wealth creation, in gender equality, and in environmental protection.
7. We discussed in many ways the importance of moving beyond the “silo thinking,” including the linkage of energy to humanitarian assistance settings and the importance of engaging young people. To make a nexus-based approach a reality in government, we recognized the need for inter-ministerial mechanisms to facilitate integrated planning and programming.
8. In our discussions about **National, Regional and Global Programmes**, and the **Enabling Factors** required for sustainable, scaled-up action, we highlighted, among many other issues:
  - the need for a supportive policy environment and political mechanisms at the national and local levels;
  - the importance of addressing regional and cross-border concerns;
  - the recognition that conservation, energy efficiency and demand-side management can make a real contribution;
  - the positive and negative impacts of subsidies and grants in building sustainable enterprise-based models;
  - the challenges of managing and reducing investment risk for entrepreneurs, and the potential for use of public-private partnership models to do so;
  - the need for, and the difficulties involved in, strengthening local value chains and fostering local production of components and equipment, including the need for capacity building and robust distribution networks; and
  - the importance of standards and quality control.
9. And finally, we heard many times, in many ways, the clear message that the end users of energy services – the people we are working to reach – must be at the center of all programs and strategies. This has been referred to as a bottom-up approach, as a demand driven (rather than supply or technology-driven) approach, and as a customer-driven approach. Because ultimately, they are the customers who will pay the bills for the services they consider important. Listening to them, designing programs based on their needs, and focusing on customer service, are keys to success.
10. There are of course many other concerns which were raised and discussed, including, for example:
  - the complex of issues surrounding bio-energy production and use;
  - the changing landscape of urbanization and its implications for energy access;
  - consideration of transportation and motive power issues; and

- getting a better understanding of what we mean by the word access in different contexts.
11. The bottom line, though, is clear: We have a big challenge. Business as usual won't get us where we need to go.
  12. But recent advances in technology and practice at all levels – technological innovations, economic and innovative financial tools such as micro-finance, pay-as-you-go, have made decentralized electricity access possible.
  13. A recognition of the nexus reality – that, for example, a clean, efficient cookstove may be the most powerful intervention there is to promote health – can help mobilize the kind of holistic, integrated actions that result in real change.
  14. The basic energy resources are there – in Africa and around the world – to achieve the goals even though they are challenging. Successful pilots exist that we can learn from and scale up. Information-sharing toolkits, networks, hubs and multiple forums and alliances are being created to support these efforts.
  15. Of course, these few points are only the tip of the iceberg. And although there was a tremendous amount of information exchanged, we know that the presentations and discussion were themselves extremely limited by the available time. There is much more to explore, to learn, and to share.
  16. Fortunately, this is not the end. While we all leave here and go back to our work, we do so informed and enriched with new ideas, new information, new partnerships, and new possibilities.
  17. We at UN DESA have taken the responsibility of capturing as much of this learning, including the presentations which have been given here, and we will put them on the website as soon as possible. We will also prepare a final conference summary highlighting the key issues discussed here. This will take us a little time to do, but we will be sure to be in touch with you very soon. We hope this will contribute to a continuing catalytic conversation, and we welcome your inputs.
  18. And while this conference is not in itself a deliberative body, we have attempted to pull together some of the most clear and important consensus recommendations – things we heard repeated over and over in the past three days, that we can share widely and use to bolster commitment and action.
  19. Mr. Soteri GATERA, from the UN Economic Commission for Africa, will share these draft recommendations with us and to give us his closing remarks.
  20. Before I do so, let me express my deep thanks to Mr. GATERA and all of the hardworking UNECA staff – particularly Ms. Dinknesh Assefa and Mr. Monga Mehlwana, for taking such good care of us. On behalf of UNDESA, UN Energy, SE4All,

and, I think, all of the participants, we deeply appreciate your welcome, your support, and your partnership. You have given us a clear demonstration of the Secretary General's statement that we are, truly, one UN. Thank you.