

**Welcome Note - Ms. Brigitte Öppinger-Walchshofer,
Managing Director, Austrian Development Agency**

**Honourable Ministers,
Director General of UNIDO,
Distinguished Participants
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all let me welcome you to Vienna and its Seventh Global Forum on Sustainable Energy on the occasion of which I have the honour to greet you in my new capacity as Managing Director of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). Many of you have travelled long distances to join us in this Forum either as participants or presenters and I hope that your travel was enjoyable.

For many years now energy is high on the political as well as the economical agenda in the regions of the world. Particularly countries in development face nearly unsurmountably large problems because of the lack of energy security and some of these countries are Austria's partners in development. Supply bottlenecks, rising prices of and dependency on fossil fuel imports place a considerable burden on these governments and their tight budgets, to the detriment of national economies and private households alike.

Let me remind you of only a few facts:

- At present, only about 23 per cent of the African population have access to electricity.
- 90 per cent of rural populations in developing countries meet their energy needs by burning traditional biomass such as wood, charcoal, dung and agricultural waste.
- About 1.6 million people a year die of respiratory illnesses caused by open domestic fireplaces (indoor pollution).
- To meet the mounting demand for biomass, forests are cleared leading to eroded soils.
- Air pollution through transport and industry is a grave health hazard.

Consequently discussions on energy efficiency are an urgent necessity and this GFSE under the title “Energy Efficiency in Developing Countries” comes just in time.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and the follow-up meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development called international donors to scale-up their support for sustainable energy projects in developing countries as a prerequisite for attaining the MDGs in 2015.

The ADA - as the executing body of Austria's Development Cooperation - is committed to transform this political obligation into concrete action. ADA supports its partner countries in implementing sustainable energy strategies, particularly through stepping up the use of renewable energies and improving energy efficiency.

In collaboration with NGOs, enterprises and government authorities, ADA already promotes energy projects in Africa, the Himalaya region, Central America, South Eastern Europe and in future also the Caribbean.

ADA also supports international efforts of harmonising donor activities and takes part in joint initiatives contributing to the EU-Africa Trust Fund on Infrastructure, the EU-Energy Initiative, the Private Infrastructure Development Group.

ADA recently joined the Energy and Environment Partnership for Central America together with Finland and is supporting the Economic Community of West African States implementing their rural energy policy. My organisation will also join the Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme of the World Bank (ESMAP) in the course of this year.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

Let me finish these few welcoming and introductory words by wishing you well for your deliberations. I hope that you will enjoy the work of the Seventh Global Forum on Sustainable Energy as well as your stay in Vienna.

Thank you for your attention.