

**ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF NATURAL  
RESOURCES DURING THE 7<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF GLOBAL FORUM  
ON SUSTAINABLE ENERGY IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA:  
LESOTHO'S EXPERIENCE  
21-11-07 TO 23-11-07**

It is now universally accepted that the world is today facing a potentially catastrophic process of climate change. It is also universally accepted that the major contributor to this change is the way we generate and consume energy. Of necessity we all have to change a lot, ourselves, if we are to survive the present threat of change to our climate and our environment. The most appropriate question is: is it wrong to change? The answer is no. In fact without change mankind stands at the crossroads of a potential catastrophe of apocalyptic proportions. A lot of world thinkers have left us a wealth of wisdom on why and how we should accept, and indeed, manage change. Let me share with you, this morning, just a few quotations from some of these wise men and women.

John Dewey said:

**“Since changes are going on anyway, the great thing is to learn enough about them so that we will be able to lay hold of them and turn them in the direction of our desires. Conditions and events are neither to be fled from nor passively acquiesced in; they are to be utilised and directed.”**

John Dewey was an American Educationist and Internationalist who studied in Japan, China, Mexico, Turkey and the Soviet Union, as well as his native United States of America. He taught at the universities of Vermont and Chicago.

A famous Turkish proverb says: **“No matter how far you have gone on a wrong road, turn back!”**

Dietrich Boenhoeffer said:

**“If you board the wrong train, it is no use running along the corridor in the other direction.”** Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of a few German clergymen who steadfastly resisted the Nazi Regime from its very beginning and he was ultimately executed for having joined the plot to kill Adolf Hitler.

Any agenda on sustainable energy is not complete without energy efficiency. Delegates are invited to recall that one of the thematic clusters of the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development was energy and sustainable development. In this regard energy efficiency was identified as a practical critical option to promote industrial development while protecting our natural environment.

However, the promotion of energy efficiency continues to go at a slow pace in many countries. Therefore, this Seventh Meeting of the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy is expected to play a pivotal role in fostering accelerated promotion of energy efficiency particularly in developing countries, including Lesotho. While energy efficiency has been regarded as an important issue by the Government of Lesotho, there are a number of challenges which need to be addressed for energy efficiency initiatives to have a truly positive impact. Attraction of the private sector to participate in energy efficiency is critical, either in the form of investments, or in the form

of implementation of energy efficiency programmes. Energy auditing needs to be promoted. Such audit would be an important management tool to promote energy efficiency. Capacity building in energy auditing needs to be intensified in our case. There is an urgent need to review the energy tariff policies so that they support energy efficiency practices. Government personnel have to be encouraged and supported to be energy efficiency conscious. Poor energy efficiency practices in Lesotho's government sector have lead to unnecessary financial costs. For example, early this year, one of the government offices in Lesotho caught fire as a result of a heater which was left on over a whole weekend! The cost of repairs to this office came to about one million United States Dollars! There are numerous reasons for the need to promote energy efficiency, such as inadequate energy supplies. In Lesotho, the local power generation capacity is 72 MW, while the peak demand was recorded as 105MW last winter. The greatest challenge facing the electricity sector of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is to satisfy the regional demand for electricity. In this context, the potential of implementation of energy efficiency programmes has to be exploited.

Lesotho has relatively little experience with energy efficiency. Regional SADC initiatives have been instrumental in enhancing industry awareness and capacity building in energy auditing. In the late 1990s a project known as SADC Industrial Energy Management Project (SIEMP) was introduced in our region. We were able to train more than twenty professionals representing major electricity consumers in Lesotho. They carried out energy audits of their respective companies as part of the course assessment. The project has supported, through training of instructors and availing

energy auditing equipment, the local main Technical Training Institution (Lerotholi Polytechnic) to offer energy audits. This institution is already offering energy efficiency training to its electrical engineering graduates. The project also supported industry to engage in demand side management and this led to a number of industries improving the power factor of their electrical systems. The SADC Programme for Biomass Energy Conservation (ProBEC) is currently distributing institutional energy efficient stoves to primary schools in Lesotho. About 500 energy efficient stoves will be distributed by the end of this phase of the project. Energy efficiency has been introduced in secondary schools curriculum. This measure is aimed at spreading the message to all sectors of our society. Passive design principles have been incorporated into the Building Control Regulations of 1999. This measure aims to ensure that newly constructed structures consume less energy.

The current initiatives to promote energy efficiency in Lesotho require substantial reinforcement for positive impacts to be realised. This calls for close cooperation between the Government and the Private sector as well as between Lesotho and other countries in the SADC region and beyond. Cooperation on research and development on energy efficient appliances as well as general information and experience exchange in energy efficiency will be crucial.

Lesotho is reviewing its overall energy policy. Energy efficiency and renewable energy are receiving special treatment. In this regard, the challenges for promotion of sustainable energy will be transformed into real achievements by sound energy policy measures. The policy aims to focus on

enabling environment through appropriate institutional and legislative instruments that support; enhanced participation of the local private sector, capacity building of the private sector, cooperation between the local private sector and its counterparts regionally and internationally and cooperation with development partners.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasise the importance of urgently transforming concepts and plans in sustainable energy into practical actions that will truly contribute to both the global industrial development and the protection of our natural environment. This calls for a rich cooperation between developed and developing countries at different levels – cooperation which includes, but is not limited to, information and experience sharing. Developing countries, Lesotho included, need to strengthen their cooperation with their valued development partners.

I would like to end this keynote address by thanking the Government of Austria and UNIDO for hosting this important event as indeed energy is an important vehicle for sustainable economic development.

I wish and trust that the outcomes of this Seventh Meeting of the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy will be instrumental in achieving the United Nations goals on sustainable development.

Thank you for your attention.