

**Presidential Address by Hon' ble Minister for Electricity, Govt. of Kerala, Shri. A. K. Balan, in connection with the Regional Workshop on "Women in Energy" for SAARC Countries.**

His Excellency Shri. R. L. Bhatia, the Governor of Kerala; Mrs Beth Hogan, Deputy Mission Director, USAID/India; Shri. L. Radhakrishnan, Secretray (Power); Shri. S. Padmanaban, Regional Programme Director, SARI/Energy; Sri. K. M. Dharesan Unnithan, distinguished participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka and dear friends

On behalf of Government of Kerala, I welcome all delegates and participants to Kerala, God's own country! Kerala State is giving great importance to energy conservation activities. It is the first state in India to introduce energy conservation measures in 1992 and to establish the Energy Management Centre in 1996. I am happy to note that EMC is providing all knowledge support to this programme. Earlier also EMC has carried out Energy Efficiency studies in Rice mills in India and Sri Lanka under SARI/Energy Project. Also I am sure this 5 day workshop will provide a platform for learning more on energy efficiency from this part of India so that you can do similar activities in our countries.

Energy Efficiency is playing a critical role in our day to day life. Along with the preservation of nature, energy conservation efforts reduces the import burden of costly petroleum fuels, all our countries depends these sources from other parts of the world. This drain in foreign exchange affects the livelihood of millions of people in our countries. In a similar case, most of the electrical equipments used in our countries are having low efficiency when compared to developed countries. Lack of finance decelerates the economic growth of our countries. We have to promote energy conservation efforts; it is the only one solution to reduce the ever increasing energy costs.

Energy Clinic (better known in local language as Oorja Clinic) is a programme of energy conservation activities in domestic sector through women as agents of change for creating energy conservation awareness among housewives. EMC's experience shows that by mere awareness on energy efficiency, 10-15% of the total energy could be saved. The Energy Clinic programme provides valuable information to the house-wives on energy conservation, energy efficient equipment and gadgets, right methods of energy use to reduce wastage etc. I

have given direction to EMC to associate with Local self Government promoting Energy Clinic programme.

We normally considers woman as the Manager of Energy, Water and Sanitation, particularly in the domestic sector. They are more conscious about the financial implication once they were informed. They can also take the support of their children for reducing unwanted use of energy in their houses. We have so many examples on this. I am sure, the experts will give the details in this regard.

I take this opportunity to congratulate USAID/SARI/E programme for organising this programme in Kerala, particularly with the support of EMC. Once you are back to your country, there should be good memories in your mind about Kerala and this programme.

I hope all delegates of this Workshop will enlighten with the knowledge on efficient energy management and renewable energy practices. I wish all the best, Thank you!

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