

Dear Dignatories on Dais – Ms Elizabeth Warfield – Deputy Mission Director USAID/ India, Mr L Radhakrishnan IAS, Prof V K Damodaran, Mr S Padmanabhan , Mr A M Narayanan- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first thank the organisers for giving me the honour to represent not just the government of Kerala but also as a woman to represent women across the South Asia.

The women across the globe are trying to bring good things to their families. They prioritize their family before their health and their basic necessities. We find them malnourished and unhealthy than the other members of the family. Most of their services inside a household are unaccounted and uncared. It is found in families using firewood the women normally spend 4 – 5 hours of their productive hours for firewood collection, leaving them little or no time for any productive activity. Further to this they spend their time breathing the hazardous smoke inside the kitchen. Till recently the kitchen was a much neglected area in a house. Perhaps like someone said – If men were cooking then micro wave oven would have been an earlier invention than a CFL or even incandescent lamps. Even now an average woman married and with children hardly get time for leisure or community activity. It is perhaps her selfless work that we are taught in our families to respect mother before father, guru (teacher) or god –Known in Sanskrit as Matha Pitah Gurur Devam.

Energy is a basic necessity to enjoy a safe and dignified life for women. Among us there are a good number of unprivileged who doesn't enjoy the basic necessity of energy supply. This affects women more due their vulnerability to security issues as well as their responsibility as a cook and mentor to the family. Health and energy services are very much related. Indoor air pollution is a silent and unrecognized killer. The lack of electricity not only affects productive activities and security of women it also affects the village medical health sector since they are not able to keep vaccines and other medicines for a longer period. In such a situation I would like to congratulate USAID- SARIE programme and Energy Management Centre and also those who worked behind the making of this Centre of Excellence.

Women Institute for sustainable energy research is a great venture. This Institute was an outcome of a training programme one year prior at Thiruvananthapuram for a selected group of highly acclaimed women in the various sectors related to energy from the SAARC nations. This initial conference led to a women's network known as South Asia Women in Energy (SAWIE) which eventually became the Women Institute of Sustainable Energy Research

The Centre for Excellence I believe will be very helpful in providing a platform for women across the South Asia to share their knowledge their potential and their ability to reach out to their counterparts across the globe. Energy Management

Centre have been undertaking several women centric programmes in the past years such as the energy clinic programmes where women volunteers across the state where trained to provide awareness in the State.

As a minister of health it is with this understanding as well as the fact that I represent a less represented section of the society- women, I am indeed happy to inaugurate the Women Institute in Sustainable Energy Research- the Centre for Excellence for South Asian Women. I wish the venture success as well as I welcome the delegates from Afghanistan who are here to attend the first training programme of this centre of excellence.