

Mr. Chairperson,  
Yours Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with great honor and pleasure that I find myself in Johannesburg, in order to participate in this important event that allows me to share and discuss with the distinguished participants, the major concerns and the many global challenges and, above all, those afflicting the African continent.

Indeed, the theme of this annual conference – *African Agenda for the 21 Century Energy* – gives us an excellent opportunity to ponder on the situation of the continent's energy shortage and, also, on the search for innovative solutions to this crucial question for the future of our countries, namely with regard to the availability, energy security and climate change.

Before proceeding, I should like to express my gratitude to the Government and to the people of the Republic of South Africa for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to us since our arrival. I would like to express my appreciation to the "*African Presidential Archives and Research Centre of Boston University*" for the organization of this event, a real forum for a multidisciplinary reflection on the continent's development.

The world is faced with enormous challenges directly related to the availability and sustainability of modern and efficient energy services. The promotion of sustainable and long-term solutions, with the ability to keep up with the increasing demand for energy, is one of the leading challenges for the global development and, mainly, for the African countries.

Regardless of its recognized wealth of natural energy resources, the Sub-Saharan Africa has currently the lowest rate of access to electricity (24%) being the traditional and inefficient biomass responsible for more than 85% of satisfaction of current energy needs. Such situation has a very negative impact on the socioeconomic development of the region, contributing to the persistence of the current poverty.



By the end of 2011, the 47 countries of the Sub-Saharan region, excluding South Africa, with a population of 780 million inhabitants, had an installed capacity of electricity of only 30 Gigawatts. We are talking about an installed capacity of less than one third of the installed capacity in Brazil (about 100 Gigawatts) country with a population of about 193 million inhabitants.

The performance of the energy sector in Africa has been deficient all through the times. In spite of the reforms implemented in the sector, with the objective of its liberalization and the consequent attraction of private investment, the national energy enterprises remain, in general, operating in precarious financial and economic conditions, largely supported by Government subsidies, unable, therefore, to attract and access sources of financing that allow them to modernize and keep pace with new demands.

In accordance with experts of the sector, to meet the increasing demand of energy, capable of supporting an effective social and economic development in the coming years, it will be necessary to install annually around 7.000 Megawatts of energy production, representing an investment of around 40 billion dollars. Therefore, it is clear the extent of the challenge that lies ahead.

It should be emphasized, on the other hand, that large part of the production of electricity in Sub-Saharan region is made with basis on oil originated products. The recent and extraordinary escalation in oil prices came to stress the weakness of such bet, with devastating repercussions for the economies of the countries, in particular for those non oil-producing countries.

However, the African continent has a huge potential in what refers to solar, wind, geothermal and biomass resources, capable to contribute largely to satisfy the demand of energy required by a rising development. To this end, it is urgent that renewable energies and energy efficiency are placed at the center of public policies, combined with a firm bet in the training of local human resources, so that they may contribute to overcome the challenges created by the sustainable development of the sector.

I believe that it is imperative for us, as priorities, the attraction of foreign investment, as well as, the preparation and training of national technical and



academic cadres in order to take in hand the battle for overcoming this huge deficit.

Likewise, it is imperative the preparation and commitment of education, research, and training institutions at different levels, so they can take over the necessary leadership of the development process aimed at the energy sector. Similar task fell upon African public and private enterprises and investors.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I estimate that the success of a program of expansion of renewable energy in the continent goes necessarily with the adoption of different technologies adapted to the needs of rural regions, urban and sub-urban areas, where the interested communities are called to participate.

As an example, the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) identified the importance of sustainable energy as a critical factor for the success of their development. They also recognized that, in order to achieve the satisfactory goals of access to energy and energy security, the renewable energies and the efficient use of the available energy will play a decisive role.

This community has been assuming a pioneering role in the promotion of renewable energies and energy efficiency, through a regional approach. Hence, the creation of *ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency* (ECREEE), whose head office is located in my country. The main objective of this Center is the creation of a favorable framework for the development of a regional market for renewable energies and energy efficiency, through the promotion and support of innovative activities leading to the mitigation of different existing barriers.

Besides, the location of ECREEE head office in City of Praia is not a mere chance. In fact, beyond the indispensable institutional support that the country has been giving to the Center, Cape Verde has achieved lately significant advances in the promotion of the renewable energies sector.

The Cape Verde experience, in this sector, goes back to the 80's, with the installation of the first wind park connected to the electricity network. Since then until today, the country has registered considerable development of the sector,



with the installation of two photovoltaic solar parks and four wind parks currently responsible for the production of around 25% of the electricity needed.

In addition, the Cape Verde Government has established, as an objective, to reach 50% of penetration of renewable energies by the year 2020. Recent studies point to an exploitable potential of about 2.600 MW, value well above the energy needs of the country.

But, the goal of 50% of penetration of renewable energies has already revealed itself insufficient, taking into account the huge wind and solar potential of the country, the total dependence on oil products, the volatility of oil prices and the clear awareness that oil resources are limited, urge Cape Verdean authorities to aspire to higher rates of penetration, conscious that the sustainable development of the country, in terms of sustainable energy, is going largely to depend upon the utilization of its huge renewable energy potential.

In my view, the crucial role of energy in the process of development of African continent is properly recognized. What lacks, however, is the implementation of procedures leading to the utilization and evaluation of the existing resources and the subsequent increase in the rate of access to energy, at a satisfactory level.

In conclusion, I hope that the outcome of this Forum will also contribute to pull together ways and means leading to the accomplishment of the common aspiration of all Africans to place energy, in its clean and sustainable form, at the service of the prosperity of the Continent and well-being and social progress of its people.

Thank you very much!

Johannesburg, 2012-05-23.