



# PRESS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,  
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

## **Clean, affordable energy key to ending poverty in poor countries – UN official**

**New York, February 27:** The UN envoy for the poorest countries has called for new directions in addressing the energy needs of developing nations.

“Developing clean, affordable and sustainable energy sources is central to winning the war against poverty and protecting our only habitat,” Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, said in a keynote speech to an international conference on energy in Daegu, Republic of Korea, yesterday.

Noting that about 80 percent of the world’s energy comes from fossil fuels, the main source of man-made greenhouse gases that are a major factor in global warming, and that burning fossil fuels gives rise to air pollution and acid rain, Mr. Chowdhury called for “a revolution” in the way we generate and use energy.

Unequal energy consumption, he said, is one of the glaring features of the disparity between rich and the poor countries. The world’s richest countries, with only a fifth of the world’s population, account for 60 per cent of commercial energy use.

“One person in the United States consumes as much fuel as 250 people from poor countries like Niger, Tanzania and Ethiopia every year. In the meantime, 2 billion people, or one in every three human beings, have no access to modern energy,” he said.

Mr. Chowdhury added that the three groups of vulnerable countries - Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States - faced particularly steep energy challenges.

“The Least Developed Countries lack the resources to meet their ever-growing energy needs; the Landlocked Developing Countries have to contend with the high cost of importing oil, a problem also faced by the Small Island Developing States because of their relative remoteness from the major markets,” he said.

He added that these vulnerable countries are also less equipped to deal with the consequences of climate change while some of them, especially the Small Island Developing Countries, are more prone to its negative consequences.

“The primary question for developing countries is how to develop clean, efficient, affordable, sufficient and sustainable energy, without which they would not be able to reach the Millennium Development Goals and achieve their broader development objectives,” Mr. Chowdhury said.

He noted that while a number of developing countries have oil resources and are becoming major players in the energy sector, this has brought many of them new challenges which, if not addressed, could leave them in a worse situation, including increased risk of conflict. He called for transparent ways of making sure that the newly generated revenues go towards improving the quality of life of the common people.

He emphasized the importance of international arrangements, including south-south cooperation, in addressing the energy needs of developing countries. He revealed that the potential for international cooperation in the energy sector will be one of the main topics of discussion at a forthcoming conference on globalization and LDCs, which will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, later this year.

The three-day conference on “Sustainability: Energy for Developing Nations” in South Korea was jointly organized by the New York Institute of Technology (NYIT); Uiduk University; the city government of Taegu and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

For further information, please contact: Fred Kirungi, Advocacy and Outreach Officer, United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Tel: (917) 367-3431. Email: [kirungi@un.org](mailto:kirungi@un.org). Website: <http://www.un.org/ohrlls/>