

STATEMENT BY THE HON. OUSMAN JAMMEH, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY OF THE GAMBIA AT THE FOUNDING CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY (IRENA), BONN-GERMANY, 26 – 27 JANUARY 2009.

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the Government and the people of The Gambia, I wish to express our appreciation and thanks to Government and people of the Federal Republic of Germany for hosting this very important conference and for extending an invitation to The Government of The Gambia.

The provision of adequate reliable and efficient energy services in an environmentally sound manner is recognized by the Government of The Gambia as one of the principal ingredients for any meaningful socio-economic development that can uplift the living standard of the people and reduce poverty.

At the national level, the Government of The Gambia has developed a National Energy Policy 2005 to provide a clear perspective and direction for the provision of energy services, including the use of renewable energy, in an efficient and sustainable manner. The strategies for achieving the policy goals and objectives have indeed posed challenges for The Gambia given the limited available resources.

The Government has however recognized that it cannot depend on the conventional energy resources alone in order to achieve its desired overall energy policy goals and objectives. Therefore, in the mid 1980s, a research, development and promotion Centre for renewable energy was established called the Gambia Renewable Energy Centre (GREC). In addition, in 1999, Government approached the African Development Bank (ADB) to conduct a study on renewable energy resources potentials and develop a master plan for the sub-sector.

From the Renewable Energy Master plan, two (2) projects identified as follows:

- i. Solar photovoltaic for home systems, health centers, schools and IT centers; and
- ii. A wind electrical park on a pilot basis.

Detailed feasibility study was conducted on the two identified projects and the Government of The Gambia is currently seeking the necessary financing to implement these projects.

To further encourage the promotion and development of renewable energy in the country, the Government adopted another policy in March 2007 and granted tax exemption to imported renewable energy devices and energy efficient bulbs.

Mr. Chairperson, The Gambia is proud to be among the founding members in the establishment of an international organization for renewable energy.

I am therefore hopeful that IRENA would spearhead the promotion, development and widespread application of renewable energy resources especially in our parts of the world. In addition, IRENA would serve as a facilitator and catalyst for policy support, capacity building, technology transfer and financing guidelines in providing energy services using renewable energy in remote and isolated regions and areas particularly in the developing countries.

Mr. Chairperson, with these few remarks, I thank you for giving me the floor and wish every success for the smooth running of the agency.

Thank you.