

Energy Synergy Dialogue
8th September 2008, New Delhi

“Delivering Sustainable Energy Security to Rural India”

The Chair of this session and the scientific leader of the Green Revolution Movement and Indian agricultural renaissance, **Prof. M. S. Swaminathan**, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) & Chairman M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation made this talk show exclusive. **Dr. S. K. Chopra**, Advisor (Former Special Secretary), MNRE was the guest speaker and **Mr. Anil Razdan**, Secretary, Ministry of Power/Chairman (WEC-IMC) & **Mr. R. S. Sharma**, CMD, NTPC & Member Secretary also addressed the gathering.

In his welcome address Mr. R. S. Sharma shared that over 2 billion people around the world are without access to modern cooking fuels and 1.7 billion people are without access to electricity and India alone accounts for 40% of this population. He said that while the country is surging ahead economically at a growth rate of 8-9% of GDP, the need of the day is to ensure that the benefits trickle down to economically underprivileged section of the society.

Dr. S. K Chopra in his impressive presentation, emphasized that any endeavor to rural energy development should be pro-poor, pro-women and pro-nature. Food security, nutrition security and ecology security require to be closely linked with Energy Security. Highlighting these linkages he expressed that even the fuel to cook the food is a greater constraint than the food itself. Agriculture the largest producer of bio-mass itself needs energy for harvesting, food production and transportation. Recognizing the essentiality of social engineering to involve the people, he called for Sustainability Science, a mix of Physical Science & Social Science. His model for sustainable energy security to rural India proposed an integrated rural energy programme with large utilities like NTPC to supply the grid power supported by distribution generation projects at local level which are self sustainable.

Mr. Anil Razdan recommended integration of Rural & Urban Energy programme. His prescription was that non conventional energy sources should not be limited to rural areas only but the lead for demonstration of usage of non-conventional energy sources should be taken up by urban mega cities. He advocated for a power sector wherein freedom and facility to use electricity is provided to the people.

Chairing the session, the *Living Legend & Father of Economic Ecology*, Prof. M. S. Swaminathan, highlighted correlation of Energy Security with food Security; cost of food goes up with the cost of energy. He emphasized the need of local people to be empowered for rural energy development. The democratic setup of Gram Panchayat can be used to facilitate its organization, management and administration. He suggested that we must launch community rural energy manager in villages. Appreciating the initiative of talk show by WEC-IMC, he quoted that synergy in energy use is the pathway to sustainable energy security and wished for Indian Member Committee continued success in its effort to take energy to every home and heart in the country

Followed by a lively discussion amongst the participants on the theme, the session eventually ended with the conclusion that **“Take power to the people, they will do the rest.”**