



Brussels, 16 April 2012 -

Thank you Commissioner Andris Piebalgs,
Your Excellency President José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, Your
Excellency Christian Friis Bach, in your capacity as President of the European Union,
Honourable Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank,
Honourable ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great honour for me to address this very distinguished group of European Union on this occasion when we discuss about the very important, crucial issue for humanity -sustainable energy for all.

I thank President Barroso for his eloquent statement on how Europe and the United Nations can work together to help to end this global energy poverty in our lifetime. In that regard I wholeheartedly welcome, and am grateful for, this initiative which he has just announced energising development. This is in line with the Sustainable Energy for All initiative which I announced in November last year.

I am again pleased to join you today. Thank you for your gracious and generous welcome.

When we entered this room, most of us did not question whether there would be a light here in this room or power in this place, because we take it for granted. But there are many people in whose houses there is no light, no power. Access to electricity seems so basic that it can all too

easily be taken for granted.

Unless, of course, you do not have it.

Today, despite mobile phones and the internet and all our technical sophistication, one out of every five persons on our planet earth still does not have access to modern energy services. Two out of five - three billion people - still rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating.

This seems to be unbelievable, but it is happening now around the world

I myself was once one of those people, until I was a freshman in college in Korea.

Korea was totally devastated out of the Korean War. It was 1963. I was studying under very dim kerosene lamplight.

Can you believe that, now I am standing before you as the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

It was only possible through industrialisation and economic development which brought me to be able to use all this modern technology; electricity, so basic to many modern and developed world.

Access to modern energy helped to transform my world – and my country.

We need to make such a transformation possible for all - all the people around the world.

Energy poverty is a threat to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

It is inequitable, unjustifiable and unsustainable.

Children cannot study in the dark.

Girls and women cannot learn or be productive when they spend hours a day collecting firewood.

Businesses and economies cannot grow without power.

We must end this indignity and inefficiency.

But we must do so in a way that is smart and sustainable, so that it protects the natural resources and eco-systems we depend on for our survival.

Sustainable energy can power economies and empower women... it can turn on the lights for students... and allow families to cook their meals on clean cook stoves that do not fill their children's lungs with smoke.

It can generate the jobs and opportunities that will bring hope and prosperity to a generation of young people throughout the developing world.

Excellencies, ladies and Gentlemen,

That is why the United Nations is striving to bring sustainable energy to all – starting with those who need it most, those at the base of the pyramid... the bottom 1.3 billion people.

We need to provide them with energy that is accessible... affordable... cleaner... and more efficient.

But we also need to overcome the many barriers that stand in the way.

That means putting in place the policy and regulatory frameworks that will provide the right incentives for sustainable energy for all.

It means access to finance, technologies and knowledge.

The good news is that increasing numbers of success stories are emerging, showing the great economic value for energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Our challenge is to join forces and bring those efforts to scale.

This is the central concept behind my Sustainable Energy for All initiative. It is bringing together the key stakeholders needed to create the transformative change we need in the world's energy systems.

It engages the broadest range of possible stakeholders to work toward the shared global vision and nationally tailored objectives. It offers an unrivalled convening power that will help build a common agenda and a strong consultative action. It will leverage large-scale investment while fostering enabling conditions for success and tapping into a broader array of businesses and sources of financing and by connecting all stakeholders it presents an unparalleled knowledge network.

I am delighted that European Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs is a member of my High-Level Group for this initiative.

He has made many important contributions, including co-chairing this Summit today.

With Commissioner Piebalgs's active engagement, the European Commission has been a strong and essential partner for Sustainable Energy for All from the earliest days of the initiative.

I thank President Barroso again for the very significant commitments he has announced to advance this effort, energising development.

The European Commission has set an ambitious objective of providing access to sustainable energy services for half a billion people by 2030.

This is a powerful political statement and commitment.

I commend the European Commission's bold vision and leadership, and I encourage other governments to follow the suit.

I also thank the European Commission for its other commitments today, including to create a Technical Assistance Facility... to make new investments... and to expand and improve innovative financial instruments that can leverage much larger private capital flows. These will go a long way toward reaching the three objectives I have set for this Initiative, all to be achieved by 2030.

First, ensuring universal access to modern energy services by 2030.

Second, doubling the global rate of energy efficiency.

Third, doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030.

These objectives are ambitious. You may think they are too ambitious, but they are necessary. And they are achievable, if you demonstrate your political leadership... and if you are wise and if you are creative in prioritizing your available resources.

They are very much in line with the European Union's own aspirations.

I commend the European Union for making energy central to its development policies, and for advancing the issue of energy access, along with renewable and energy efficiency, to the forefront of the global development agenda.

The Africa-EU Energy Partnership, which aims to provide access to modern energy services to an additional 100 million people by 2020, is an excellent example of a robust and long-term commitment.

The European Union is also doing much to practice what it preaches at home on renewable energy and energy efficiency, including through its 20-20-20 domestic targets.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

Sustainable Energy for All is a true global partnership, a true global public/private partnership, between governments, the private sector, and civil society.

It can bring actions and initiatives to greater scale.

This initiative is not about charity.

It is about doing the right thing, as a matter of global solidarity.

But it is also about doing the smart thing for the common good.

Inequality and poverty in one part of the world ultimately affect the well-being of all, including the European Union.

And with climate change a growing menace to all, it is clear that we must rethink conventional energy solutions.

We cannot burn our way to prosperity.

Providing sustainable energy to all offers benefits for developed and developing countries alike.

It can also enable developing countries to leapfrog over the energy systems of the past and build the resilient, competitive, clean energy economies of the future.

Ghana, one of the first countries to partner with the Sustainable Energy initiative, has just started developing national plans and programmes of action.

Many more are seeking to get involved.

Next week, at the Clean Energy Ministerial meeting in London, the High-Level Group that spearheads Sustainable Energy for All will announce its Action Agenda.

The Agenda identifies areas that are critical to achieving the three objectives, including unleashing a quantum jump in private sector capital flows.

The power of partnerships will be crucial as we move ahead. That is why I am creating a Partnership Facility to support such efforts as a matter of priority during my second term.

We must commit to the highest degree of coordination at the country level to mobilise all stakeholders. UN Resident Coordinators can play a crucial role in furthering this.

The upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development – we call it Rio+20 -- is an opportunity to mobilise support for sustainable energy investments.

It is an opportunity more generally to put the world on a truly sustainable path: economically, socially, and environmentally.

It is our chance to connect the dots among the climate change, energy, water and food crisis, healthy oceans, gender empowerment, poverty reduction and global health, and addressing inequality.

It is our chance to make growth inclusive while respecting planetary boundaries.

Rio is not the end, but the beginning of a multi-year mission on these issues and on sustainable energy for all.

Sustainable Energy for All is an idea whose time has come.

Turning ideas into action depends on us all.

The vision and leadership of the European Union will continue to help show us the way. I urge all of you to come forward with your own commitment to action.

Let us, together, make this a game-changer. Let us build this world better for all. Let us shape our future, we want.

I need your support, your strong leadership and your contribution.

I look forward to working with even more closely with you in this vitally important endeavour.

Thank you.