



G8 ENERGY

SESSION III

Programme of Action to Address Energy Poverty: Focus on Africa

OPENING SPEECH

Rome, Monday, 25 May 2009: 13:30 – 16:30

Dear fellow Ministers,
European Commissioner,
Representatives of international organisations,

I should like to thank you all for your participation in this session; I should especially like to welcome and offer my thanks to the **Egyptian Minister Hassan Younes and Jamal Saghir, a Director of the World Bank**, who will act as co-chairmen of this session.

I should also like to thank the international organisations here today – the **World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Secretariat of the Energy Charter Treaty, the IEF and the IEA.**

Their valuable contribution has provided us with a fully up-to-date picture of the issues we shall be dealing with in this session, which is dedicated to the **programme of action to address energy poverty with particular focus on Africa.**

The Italian presidency of the G8 has placed the subject of Africa among its priority objectives – in line with other summits held in recent years – in order to consolidate dialogue between the most industrialised countries and African nations. **This process of dialogue was initiated** precisely under the Italian presidency of the G8 during the Genoa summit in 2001.

The issue we are facing today bears implications that directly involve both our **responsibilities as G8 member countries** and those of the friendly nations who have honoured us by their presence here.

We must **share a common vision** for a **fairer future**, we must decide on concrete action in favour of the poorest nations, promote initiatives which foster access to energy for all those to whom such access is currently denied: **1.6 billion people**.

Without energy it is not possible to have water, education, food and health, In other words: a future and well-being.

In Africa this problem has assumed **particularly significant proportions**, with **dramatic social and economic consequences**. And this despite the fact that the African continent has at its disposal **enormous energy resources** – both traditional and renewable – **and vast territories** that are ideal for agricultural production capable of meeting local food needs and, to a significant extent, the demand for energy.

There are several directions in which our interventions should move and on which our efforts should focus: **supporting the development** of stable and efficient government institutions; **encouraging** collaboration between the public and private sectors; **providing concrete solutions** to problems of energy supply at a local level, **developing** inter-regional energy networks and major infrastructure.

We are aware that this is **no easy task**, not least because of the additional difficulties and challenges posed by the international economic crisis.

But we are equally aware that our generation has the possibility of **bringing about an epoch-making turning-point in the history of Africa** by helping make the continent once again a land of peace and prosperity.

We must all be profoundly heedful of the importance of this task and should be honoured to take up the challenge.

I thank you in advance for the ideas and proposals which you will put forward and now I shall hand over to the representative of the World Bank.