



Honorable Minister of Power and Energy, Distinguished guests, participants, friends, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for inviting me to the closing ceremony of the LED Lighting Seminar for Manufacturers in South Asia. It is indeed a pleasure to be here.

I was serving in Washington in the year 2000 when USAID initiated the very ambitious South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy (SARI/Energy) program. The overall objective of this program is to increase trade, investment and access to clean sources of power and fuel within the region. This is important because access to energy and economic growth are closely linked, so the work of the SARI/Energy program is relevant if we are to uplift the under-developed rural areas in Sri Lanka as well as other countries in the region.

So what is SARI/Energy striving to accomplish through its activities?

There are 4 main goals

- First, more efficient use of regional energy resources;
- Second, making energy practices more transparent and profitable;
- Third, Reducing the environmental impact of energy production;
- And fourth, increasing access to energy resources in the region.

As the Director of the USAID program in Sri Lanka, I am pleased to see the SARI Energy program making important contributions to Sri Lanka—and also I am proud to see Sri Lanka through the Regional Center for Lighting, serving as a center of excellence for other countries in South Asia.

We must remember that about 4 million people in Sri Lanka and one billion people in South Asia do not have access to electricity. In order to reduce poverty, un-served and underserved communities need access to electricity to provide jobs, improve education, and increase the local standard of living.

For the benefit of the Hon. Minister of Power and Energy—who in a short time, is demonstrating his commitment to making more efficient use of Sri Lanka's energy resources and striving to make Sri Lanka's energy operations more profitable, I will briefly talk about what SARI/Energy has accomplished in Sri Lanka.

SARI/Energy has funded a stability study of the Sri Lanka power transmission grid as part of the initiative to link Sri Lanka and India via an underwater cable. This submarine cable will allow electricity to flow between Sri Lanka and India, benefiting both economies.

Since India's power transmission system is huge when compared to Sri-Lanka, Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) had requested SARI/Energy technical assistance with evaluating the effects of system reliability when interconnected. The results indicate that with proper operation, and adequate power flow safeguards, the Sri-Lanka transmission should function reliably when interconnected with India.

SARI/Energy has also evaluated the Sri-Lanka transmission system reliability with wind energy, and validated the limits of wind energy connection to the transmission grid. CEB now has a fully functional computer based model for which to perform future transmission simulation studies, and SARI/Energy continues to support CEB capacity building via simulation training programs.

SARI/Energy, through the United States Energy Association (USEA), has conducted a workshop on clean energy applications in Sri Lanka and has organized executive exchange programs for government officials in the energy sector in the US, Spain, South Africa and Botswana.

The capstone of SARI/Energy's achievements in Sri Lanka is the establishment of the Regional Center for Lighting that organized this seminar. Its overall objective is to serve as a regional center of excellence to research, develop, and disseminate new lighting technologies. USAID has committed up to \$800,000 for start-up costs of the Center, with a focus on creative initiatives to design, test, and manufacture high quality lighting products that benefit underserved communities and increase access to new technologies.

With USAID support, the Lighting Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, a leading energy research university, is providing technical knowledge, training and guidance to RCL.

In January 2010, the first five-day training program on energy efficient lighting was successfully conducted for a target audience of engineers, architects, designers and planners. Participants from all SAARC countries and from some South East Asian countries had attended this program.

This week, I'm happy to say that RCL has once again demonstrated the importance of Sri Lanka's role as a Center for Excellence for Energy Efficient Lighting by hosting this Lighting Seminar for Manufacturers in the South Asia region. I have no doubt that all participants have tremendously benefitted from participating in this program.

I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all of you who have successfully participated in this seminar and wish you all great success in your future endeavors.

Thank you