

**“Sustainable Bioenergy – Challenges and Opportunities”  
Bonn, Germany  
October 12-13, 2006**

**Closing Remarks by  
Hermann Hatzfeldt, Chairman**

This has been a wonderful Conference! The two organizers -- the United Nations Foundation and the German NGO Forum -- are to be applauded:

- the topic is right on target:  
Bioenergy is in the limelight and on the center stage globally - it's a hot topic - and sustainability is the great challenge of our time.
- the timing is perfect:  
We are right at the beginning of a great transformation of the energy system or, more generally, of the way we produce and consume. There is a unique chance to shape this transformation and to make it sustainable. And there is also, of course, an urgent need to do so.

But, most of all, we should applaud our two organizers for the invitation. Never before has there been a conference on bioenergy that brought together such a diverse group of stakeholders from all over the world and from all walks of life: business, government, finance, science, NGOs, UN agencies, EU organizations, WTO, World Bank, etc.. Two hundred experts, actors, officials -- all deeply involved and engaged.

Mr. Assane-Mayaki pointed out this morning that “involving all actors” is perhaps the foremost principle of attaining a sustainable energy future. Based on this criterion, the conference has passed the test with flying colors. Indeed, to have assembled this conference is a great accomplishment.

In my opening remarks yesterday morning, I had expressed the hope that we would come together in the spirit of sharing knowledge and understanding, of finding common grounds, and of moving together the debate on sustainable bioenergy onto a new and higher level. Two days after, these hopes have not been disappointed.

We have covered a lot of ground:

- analysing the Which, Where and How of producing, processing and using bioenergy;
- assessing the different potentials in North and South;
- addressing the implications for trade and finance;
- discussing environmental and social risks and repercussions;
- and finally, at the three roundtables this afternoon, defining sustainability criteria for responsible production and use.

It is impossible, at least for me, to summarize in ten minutes what has been voiced and shown over the last two days. I would rather highlight and share with you a few conclusions which appear to me to have been particularly interesting and important.

To begin with, the potential of bioenergy to make a critical contribution to a sustainable energy future is great. But that depends on a number of preconditions to be met. Much of our time has been spent on defining what those preconditions might and should be.

This morning I mentioned already the unresolved question of small versus big – the supposed conflict of global versus local. There are two patterns of development here: the one going in the direction of rural development, i.e. import substitution, rural employment and income creation; the other is directed toward exports. But these pathways really are complimentary rather than mutually exclusive. For instance, as most of us agreed, before serving international markets it makes good sense to start first with developing domestic markets and to see to it that small producers and rural communities are not disadvantaged. Yet big global producers have also a useful and important role to play. The central question rather is: “Who benefits? Who is in control?” For fair and equal benefit sharing safeguards are needed.

We realized, in addition, that the debate on the risks of bioenergy is part of a bigger picture. In defining safeguards an integrated view on land-use as a whole is needed, including forests and biodiversity, agriculture and food security. Such an integrated approach requires a better understanding of the conflicting site-specific inter-linkages between land-use changes than we have today. This needs local knowledge and national strategies.

Next to land use and biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions and social issues were major considerations. I, personally, was impressed by the fundamental social implications of increasing bioenergy production - the question of unresolved land rights, for instance. From a practical point-of-view, however, there was a sense (I don't want to say “consensus” because I am sure there are a few of you who would not agree) that the relative contribution to greenhouse gas reduction is a good starting point in comparing and evaluating the sustainability content of different options. The reason to start with greenhouse gases (GHG) is that GHG-reductions do not only mitigate climate disturbances, they also solve a good portion of other problems as well. Yet the GHG-abatement is not a catch-all; more is involved. We have to look at the full spectrum mentioned before – land use, social issues, food security, biodiversity and so forth.

This afternoon, in the workshop on climate, gaps in knowledge were discussed at some length. They are most serious in developing countries. It is still very difficult to compare the different energy options in terms of their GHG balance - especially when they are assessed on a life-cycle basis. There is an urgent need to fill existing data gaps and to arrive at a common methodology. This is absolutely essential for assigning priorities to different options.

In sum, sustainability standards are necessary. A key conclusion was: They need to be made coherent and to apply across the board. And: all actors must be involved in finding and designing them. If the stakeholders are not involved from the very beginning, there is no chance to reach the level of acceptance necessary to assure sustainable production and use.

Suitable standards or safeguards are not only to be formulated, they must also be translated into actual performance. For this, some form of certification is needed. In the workshops this afternoon quite a bit of concern has been voiced, especially from the South, that certification

might perhaps become a hindrance to trade and that certification might not comply with WTO. Yes, indeed, they might if these schemes are not well developed – especially if they are not credible. But if they are, then certification serves rather than hinders trade by creating trust and assurance. Moreover, this morning we learned from Mr. Singh that WTO rules do not preclude certification, if it is non-discriminatory and transparent.

I am heartened to have learned today, that already there are many initiatives of setting standards for bioenergy production and use – nearly all of them are, in one way or another, stakeholder based. A number of these initiatives in governments, industry and NGOs are actually represented here in this room today. At this moment, the worldwide search for safeguards is really on – it's a very fluid issue and things develop very fast. I think that is a wonderful development which needs support. But we should see to it that there is an integrated framework to all these endeavours so that we don't end up with different standard schemes – that wouldn't be productive.

Now, sustainability certification is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. We need more than that – we need action. We need action from all parties – from the government, from the private sector, from donors, from banks, from agencies. Everybody is in this game! Apart from regulations of governments, like prohibitions or incentives, everybody is called upon to support and demonstrate good practice – to behave responsibly in optimizing the potentials of bioenergy and in minimizing the risks.

This conference is itself one milestone along this road to learning, understanding, and setting an example of good practice. Thank you for making it possible – Melinda, Janet, and Juergen – we give you all our thanks. (clapping). Invite us again in a year or two!