

Introduction 31st October 2019, Addis Ababa

Ladies and Gentlemen, Excellencies,

My name is Unnur Orradottir Ramette and I am the Icelandic ambassador to Ethiopia. I am based in Kampala, Uganda. On this occasion I want - on behalf of the Nordic embassies – to congratulate the Ethiopian Prime Minister HE Abiy Ahmed with the nomination of the Nobel Peace Prize 2019.

Globally, 1,4 billion persons do not have access to modern energy. Energy access is a key enabler for economic growth, lowered greenhouse gas emissions, improved health and better opportunities (education/employment/participation) for women and children. Only 35 percent of residents in Africa have access to everyday electricity and the prospect of expanding the established electricity network is challenging.

The Paris Agreement and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) stresses the importance of increasing the already impressive growth in renewable energy deployment to exceed the 2-degree target. Nordic countries have promised to deliver on the UN Goal number 7 of realising “Affordable and Clean Energy for All” both in the Nordics and globally.

It is my firm belief that the goal of affordable and clean energy for all is interlinked with most - if not all – of the other UN Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030. Energy is a key enabler: *Ending energy poverty and increased the deployment of renewables will secure clean air, new jobs, warm schools, light up hospitals, clean buses, pumped water and better yields of nutritious food. Improving these conditions is also a means of securing and promoting peace.*

Nordic Energy Solutions is an integrated part of Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges - an initiative by the Nordic prime ministers. The Nordic Region promotes sustainability and progress toward the UN Sustainability Goals, sharing knowledge of three themes: Nordic Green, the Nordic Gender Effect and Nordic Food & Welfare.

The purpose is to promote Nordic solutions and innovations, that address some of the most pressing global issues. The Prime Ministers want to share knowledge of six flagship projects on the themes Nordic Green, the Nordic Gender Effect and Nordic Food & Welfare.

By mobilizing policy experts, researchers, private-sector players as well as Nordic embassies, export councils and international stakeholders, the flagship projects respond to the increased global interest in Nordic sustainability policies and products.

Nordic Energy Solutions seeks to share Nordic energy models and know-how with regional energy markets in different parts of the world and assist in the design of renewable energy systems and attractive markets.

The ambition is to disseminate Nordic solutions, improve access to renewable energy and at the same time boost export opportunities and competitiveness of Nordic companies within the renewable energy sector. It is our firm belief that the Nordic energy system with its substantial share of renewables in the electricity system could inspire other countries through capacity building, meeting local needs and finally, to promote Nordic companies offering renewable energy systems and services.

The Nordic countries offer a thriving cluster of energy system producers (solar, wind, hydro, geothermal and biomass) with an ambition to increase their activities in developing countries. Finally, the Nordic countries have extensive experience in project finance, strong institutional investors (e.g. Pension funds) dedicated to renewable energy investments. We also have a family of Nordic finance institutions Nordic Development Fund, Nordic Environmental Facility Corporation and Nordic Investment Bank extending their geographical scope and portfolio.

Nordic companies are pursuing to export their technology and competence. Political and financial risk can pose major hurdles for the exporting companies. Robust governance structures and market access for new energy companies are essential.

The Nordic electricity system did not happen overnight. 100 years of experience in cooperation on an extensive cross-border grid system strengthening energy security and a world-class electricity market design and regulatory frameworks.

This cooperation is based on mutual trust and valuing interdependence rather than insisting on energy independence. Similarly, the emerging transnational energy market – East African Power Pool – will only succeed if infrastructure and peaceful relations between nations can be developed.

Ethiopia is well endowed with renewable energy resources and can become a regional powerhouse in trading and exchanging clean energy. Incidentally, the Nordic energy mix overlaps nicely with that of Ethiopia. Abundant hydropower resources, excellent conditions for wind and solar energy, access to biomass and on top of all, geothermal energy. Coming from Iceland, it gives me pride

Today we will be presented with several examples of successful projects and approaches both from Nordic and Ethiopian companies as well as Nordic government entities. Nevertheless, many Nordic companies are held back due to financial and/or political uncertainties. It is our hope that this seminar will pave the way for additional investments that can secure affordable and clean energy for the people of Ethiopia.