OPENING SPEECH BY HON. NAZIR MUSTAFA KARAMAGI (MP) MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND MINERALS AT THE WORKSHOP ON SOLAR OVEN TECHNOLOGIES FOR EDUCATORS, POLICY MAKERS & ENTREPRENEURS, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2007, AT MOROGORO HOTEL

Chairperson
Deputy Vice- Chancellor, SUA
Distinguished international collaborators and partners
Heads of Departments
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Workshop Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel greatly honored and privileged to have been given this opportunity to officiate this important workshop on “Solar oven technologies for educators, policy makers and entrepreneurs”. This is not only a topical theme but also very pertinent given the current thinking about the role of solar energy in economic development. This is an important workshop and indeed the first of its kind to be organized by Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA).

Chairperson and Workshop participants, I wish to welcome all of you to this workshop. I extend a special welcome to participants who have come from outside Morogoro and Tanzania and hope that they find our environment conducive for fruitful deliberations. I wish them a pleasant stay in Morogoro and Tanzania.

I also wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Shell Foundation for financial support, which has made the holding of this workshop possible. The contributions of the other partners – the Michigan State University and Solar Circle from the United States of America are highly appreciated.

Chairperson and Workshop participants, I am informed that participants of this workshop include stakeholders and partners working in Government institutions, international agencies, private sector and NGOs. Given the rich and diverse experiences in matters related to solar energy, it is my hope that the participants will affirmatively provide the necessary contribution required in addressing the new challenges in the energy sector both at household and industrial levels.

I am glad that you have been able to accommodate this workshop in your busy work schedules. This is an indication of the importance you attach to the objectives of this workshop; and your commitment to improving the energy sector in Tanzania, therefore increasing possibilities of better life for our citizens.

Chairperson and Workshop participants, This workshop has come at a time when the nation is going through energy crisis in which the fuel wood, which is the major source of energy in households and in some industries, is facing depletion. The prices of the conventional energy sources for cooking such as electricity, gas and paraffin are still higher than the majority of the low- and medium-level income citizens can afford. Power shading due to inadequate power generation in our hydro-power plants has increased the energy problem. Studies have shown that, the poorest families typically spend a quarter of their monthly income on cooking fuel be it paraffin, electricity or charcoal.

Chairperson and Workshop participants, Fire wood and charcoal remain the most reliable sources of energy for households and some industries. This in turn has accelerated the process of clearing forests for firewood, charcoal and other timber products. According to records, annual deforestation rate in Tanzania stands at 1.1%, implying that the country is losing 14.9% of its forest cover annually and for the past decade; Tanzania has lost 6.2 million hectares of forest. This deforestation practice has resulted into serious land degradation and loss of biodiversity. This in turn has negative impacts on the environment and people's livelihoods. Example: Women's workload has more than doubled because,
- they have to walk longer distances to look for firewood
- they have to use more of their day’s time to collect fuel wood
- they cook less frequently due to fuel scarcity, which in turn compromises the health of family members especially the young children who need to eat more frequently per day,
- they can no longer sterilize the family water for drinking due to scarcity of fuel wood, which leads to increased rates of water borne and water-washed diseases such as diarrhoea and typhoid.

Chairperson and Workshop participants, The social and health benefits of using solar energy are innumerable. It is universally available, sustainable inexpensive source of energy. I am informed that if solar ovens can widely be used for the normal cooking in families, consumption of fuel wood for domestic cooking can be reduced by more
than 50%. Furthermore, solar ovens are easy to use and environmentally friendly with big potential for conserving forests, biodiversity and the ecosystem. Use of solar ovens also helps to reduce upper respiratory infections and also reduces women’s workload availing them more time to care for their children, the families and participating in family economic activities.

**Chairperson and Workshop participants,** Given the prevailing scenario, it is evident that we need alternative source of energy for the households that can help in reducing the cost of the traditional sources of energy such as firewood, charcoal and paraffin. This in turn will reduce women’s workload; improve childcare, and sanitation of water and the environment and the nutritional status of children through increased frequency of cooking.

**Chairperson and Workshop participants,** The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania recognizes the energy problems facing her people. In her Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUKUTA) the Government has clearly set long, medium and short-term policies to address the energy problem among her people. The Government through her Ministry of Energy and Minerals is deliberately making efforts to promote production and use of solar energy. Example; the Government in collaboration with partner agencies and stakeholders have established pilot solar power projects in four regions of Iringa, Tanga, Morogoro and Coast. Moreover, 48 entrepreneurs and 47 technicians have been trained on solar energy technologies. The Government also in collaboration with the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) have installed solar power equipment in six health centers, six dispensaries and six secondary schools in Mwanza region. The Government, through her Ministry of Energy and Minerals is also supporting solar power projects in Mbeya, Ruvuma, and Mtwara regions. These solar power projects will be completed during the 2007/08 fiscal year. Based on the experience obtained from the solar project in Mwanza, the Government in collaboration with GEF will expand her solar power projects to public facilities in the rural areas of Mara, Kagera and Shinyanga regions.

**Chairperson and Workshop participants,** All these efforts by the Government are made in order to provide her people with inexpensive source of energy that is sustainable and environmentally friendly. These efforts are in line with the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUKUTA) in which the Government reiterates to improve her people’s lives by promoting and supporting the use of fuel efficient cooking stoves to reduce indoor air pollution and increasing the use of renewable energy sources especially solar energy. Deliberations of this workshop will complement the Government’s efforts by laying the foundation – the knowledge and skills through which solar oven technologies can be multiplied and disseminated in the wider community. The Government therefore commends the organizers of this workshop and regards the participants of this workshop as important partners in the efforts to improve the livelihood of our citizens.

**Chairperson and Workshop participants,** I am informed that the outputs from this workshop will contribute towards creation of a domestic industry focusing on the manufacture and use of solar cookers, ovens and other solar appliances from the locally available indigenous materials in Tanzania. This is a timely intervention to provide inexpensive alternative source of energy to poor Tanzanian families, especially in rural areas where the other sources of energy are scarce and unaffordable.

**Chairperson and workshop participants,** let me once again on behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania appreciate the financial support provided by Shell Foundation and recognize the intellectual contributions by Michigan State University and the Solar Circle, as our development partners, in organizing this workshop. I assure them that, my Government will take the suggestions and support the actions born out of this workshop to develop the energy sector and transforming our people’s lives.

**Chairperson and workshop participants,** with these few remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare that the workshop on “Solar Oven Technologies for Educators, Policy Makers and Entrepreneurs” is officially opened. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for listening.