Chairperson, Distinguished Invited Guests, Workshop Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good afternoon all of you and welcome to Morogoro, a town with many beauties, including the beautiful mountains you see the moment you get out of this conference room. It is a pity that you haven’t had opportunity to visit an important tourist attraction center in Mikumi. This is particularly so for our outside partners who are visiting Tanzania for the first time. I trust this will not be their last visit and if it happens that they visit us again, they can include it in their working schedule.

I was told that you have been here since Sunday 16th 2007, and you have had two busy days hearing and deliberating on SOLAR OVEN TECHNOLOGIES. From the little knowledge I have on solar technologies, I am also happy to be involved in this workshop because I have worked a lot on biomass fuels especially charcoal stoves and have made a number of publications in international and local journals on biomass energy, fuel wood utilization and their environmental impact.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I take this opportunity to congratulate the person who first came up with this idea that finally made all of us assemble here. I would like also to congratulate the organizing committee which put everything together to a successful workshop of its kind. Let me also congratulate our external partners who availed their precious time to participate and facilitate this august meeting and for providing financial support for this workshop. We thank the sponsors of this workshop for seeing the need to conduct this workshop to enable discussion of the new and emerging solar oven technologies among educators, policy makers, entrepreneurs and users who are the major players and stakeholders in this energy sub-sector. Our sponsors have enabled participants from almost all the regions of the country to travel and participate in this important workshop.

Energy from biomass especially fuel wood is and will still be an important energy source for many households in Tanzania, given the fact that over 82% of Tanzanians live in the rural areas. This implies that the energy crisis caused by demand for fuel wood or charcoal will be perpetuated from one generation to another, and in fact is worsening day after day. If left to continue unchecked, the nation will be in a serious trouble of supplying energy to its population. I talk of energy supply issues because of the consequences of overexploitation of forests, destruction of the environment and the whole ecosystem. I have gathered from the list of papers presented that energy crisis has serious consequences on health, environment and agriculture. Agriculture is the backbone of our country’s economy. It is vivid that in the absence of a backbone a cow will cease to be a cow and so will be the case for the human race.

Electricity and gas use could protect the forests and cause less interference with deteriorating climatic conditions. However, these energy sources are too expensive for majority to afford. Solar energy is another very potential solution to reduce over-dependence on fuel wood and charcoal. The solar energy has been there even before we were born and is there to remain. It has not been fully exploited for the benefit of mankind for reasons clearly known – lack of appropriate, affordable, environmentally friendly technologies to harvest and utilize the solar energy. Technology has been the biggest stumbling block for full utilization of this unlimited source of energy. It is now opportune time to access all possible technologies, try them, identify the workable solutions and finally maximize their uses.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have made a number of deliberations as is always the case with most workshops. As you now travel back to your respective workplaces, I urge you to turn these deliberations into actions that can make impact in reducing the energy crisis in the country. Any one deliberation you implement will take us one step forward towards transforming the lives of the poor citizens especially women and children whose health is adversely affected by the cooking smoke from the burning biomass.

I once again extend many thanks to Shell Foundation (UK) for the financial support to conduct this workshop. I also recognize the intellectual contribution by Michigan State University and the Solar Circle, as our development partners, in organizing this workshop. Last but not least, I congratulate the Workshop Organizing Committee for ensuring that the workshop schedule was adhered to, which made this workshop a success. I therefore declare “The Workshop on Solar Oven Technologies for Educators, Policy Makers and Entrepreneurs” officially closed.