

EUROPEAN BIOMASS INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENERGY SECTOR AND ITS MARKET

Laudatio to the 2004 Prize Winner Boris E. Utria, B.A., M.Sc.

P. Helm,
vice president of EUBIA

Boris E. Utria, Program Manager at the World Bank, is the awarded personality of the European Biomass Industry Association. He receives this Award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the development of the Biomass Energy Sector and its market on the African continent.

Boris E. Utria is a cosmopolitan personality. Born in Colombia, he obtained his academic qualifications in Brazil and Canada. He has a double Master of Sciences in the fields of Agricultural Economics, and Rural Planning and Development.

In 1978, he joined the Technology Centre, PROMON, in Rio de Janeiro and worked on the Brazilian Combustible Alcohol Program, PROALCOOL, as well as on a special Cassava Alcohol Production Research Project for rural development.

From 1982 to 1988, Boris E. Utria was a member of the Organization of American States, where he was engaged in the Food and Energy Production Program in Central America, in the Inter-American Centre for Regional Development and in the Natural Hazards Preparedness and Mitigation Program.

Boris has now been with the World Bank since 1988, always working in the energy, rural development and environment fields. In 1993, he became the Manager of the Regional Program for the Traditional Energy Sector in Africa (RPTES). Within RPTES, he has been responsible for the overall Program management and has worked extensively on institutional development, capacity building, preparation of investment projects and programs and on implementation supervision. He has worked tirelessly to promote the sustainable management of traditional biomass energy and, through that, to bring tangible poverty alleviation to sub-Saharan Africa. Boris is also the promoter of the "Millennium Gelfuel Initiative" and other innovative initiatives on modern Biomass applications in Africa.

Boris Utria is not necessarily a man of the office. He is a personality whose work ranges from administrative needs to the real rural environment. He has worked in

almost all countries of Southern and Central America, as well as being active in America, Canada and in 24 countries of East, West and Southern Africa. He has a truly global presence.

Boris looks for dialogue and common approaches, for communication and the bringing together of the working forces of change. He is a dynamic person, who never misses the opportunity to listen to others' arguments and to engage in discussion on new ideas and solutions.

Boris joined the World Conference on Biomass here in Rome with a group of 40 senior African government officials. The RPTES Program is celebrating its closing workshop on the occasion of this Conference. The RPTES Program has grown to a point where it has now been transferred to be fully internalized at a regional African organization. The main RPTES actions are:

- ÷ The sustainable management of bioenergy supply chains in sub-Saharan Africa
- + The promotion of modern biomass energy development for poverty alleviation
- + International cooperation to accelerate the deployment of bioenergy in developing countries

When you meet Boris, you meet a man that is down-to-earth and deeply rooted in reality. He is not a man parachuting his ideas into unknown territory. He is part of the world that he is working on projects for. He is the pilot of a program that deserves our respect and admiration. Seeing Boris Utria at the RPTES evening reception two days ago with his African partners, transmitted a deep understanding of how much he has transferred to his African partners, and the appreciation they show for his work.

The promotion of bioenergy worldwide is one of the central targets of the European Biomass Industry Association. You, Boris, have shown a remarkable example of leadership in bringing bioenergy services to the roots of rural populations. You truly deserve this award. We applaud you for your powerful and down-to-earth drive, and your remarkable success.

HONORARY SPEECH BY THE EUBIA AWARD WINNER

Boris E. Utria

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Panel Members, Members of the Board of Directors of EUBIA, Esteemed Colleagues in the international "Biomass Community",

I would like to start by thanking the Board of Directors of the European Union Biomass Industry Association for this great honor and professional recognition.

I accept the prestigious "EUBIA Award 2004", not in my name, but on behalf of the Regional Program for the Traditional Energy Sector (RPTES) of the Africa Energy Unit of the World Bank and, specially so, on behalf of the National African Teams of the RPTES Program, which have done the work "on the ground" to achieve the advancement of the biomass energy sector in Africa that is being recognized here today.

I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Angela Grassi (ETA-Florence) and Dr. Peter Helm (WIP-Munich), Co-organizers of the "2nd World Conference and Technology Exhibition on Biomass for Energy, Industry and Climate Protection", and their excellent teams, for everything they did to enable us to hold the "Official Closing Workshop" of the RPTES Program as a parallel event to the Biomass Conference here in Rome.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which generously funded the RPTES Program for ten years, thus enabling us to undertake all the work that has been done.

The World Bank and the African Governments -- represented here by the various National RPTES Delegations - are interested in the advancement of the biomass energy sector as a potential instrument for POVERTY ALLEVIATION and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. The sustainable management of Traditional Biomass Energy supply systems in Africa has proven to promote deforestation reduction, ecosystem conservation, significant and quantifiable rural development benefits and stability in the rapidly growing urban household energy markets. Modern Biomass Energy -- including "green" power, biofuels, gaseous and improved solid fuels - can be locally and sustainably produced within

integrated food-energy production systems in Africa and other parts of the developing world; can have significant environmental benefits -- such as local land and ecosystem conservation and reclamation, reduction of CO2 emissions, reduction of outdoor and indoor pollution at the end-use stage, and Climate Change mitigation; can serve to generate much needed RURAL EMPLOYMENT and INCOMES; could have important balance of payment benefits through the partial substitution of petroleum fuels; and could even become a key export opportunity down the line with additional economic benefits. In sum, if done correctly, the comprehensive development of the biomass energy sector in Africa could become a mayor POVERTY ALLEVIATION strategy.

If we are to reach the 2 billion people which presently lack any access to modern energy services in the developing world, we will need to: considerably scale-up conventional energy infrastructure investments; and, develop and actively promote alternative energy resources, technologies and ways to increase energy service delivery to the poor. While renewable biomass energy solutions can help the post-industrialized countries meet their environmental interests and commitments and to reduce their external energy dependencies, they have an immense potential to provide socially equitable, economically viable and environmentally sustainable energy solutions for poverty alleviation in the developing world.

In order to fully materialize that potential however, much work remains to be done. Allow me to issue three key challenges:

The first, to the Private Sector and Research community: there is a need to increase R&D work on more efficient and economic biomass energy production and conversion systems, and in doing so, to specifically come up with solutions which can be readily transferred and widely deployed in the developing world.

The second, to Governments in the developing countries, and particularly to my counterpart colleagues in Africa: there is a need to better understand the opportunities and risks of biomass energy alternatives, so that the appropriate national policy frameworks -- specially related to land-use, labor, effluent control, foreign investment

and pricing -- can be put in place, thus creating an enabling sectorial investment environment.

The third, to the International Development Community: there is an urgent need to develop comprehensive economic evaluation models which can adequately account for the multi-dimensional costs and benefits of biomass energy production systems; and, to come up with more accessible funding instruments -- under the Clean Development Mechanisms framework or other -- to support the pilot testing and demonstration of new biomass energy technologies in the developing world.

Let me now make two important announcements:

The first is that we are pleased to announce the launching of the regional "Biomass Energy Program - BEP" at the West-African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), which will take-up the relay from the RPTES Program in West Africa. I encourage you all to establish direct

contact with the BEP/UEMOA to continue to support the advancement of the biomass energy sector in Africa.

The second, that the African Delegations assembled here in Rome have agreed to organize an "African Conference and Exhibition on Biomass Energy for Social and Environmentally Sustainable Development". The date and location of the event will be announced at a later date, once the necessary regional consultations and arrangements have been made. A key objective will be to showcase the latest biomass energy technology solutions which are readily transferable to Africa to a wider African public and private sector audience. We therefore hope that you will all be able to attend that event when it takes place.

Finally, on behalf of the World Bank and the African delegations we would like to commend the Co-organizers of this international event for the fantastic job that they have done, and would like to thank the Italian authorities for their warm welcome and hospitality in this wonderful city.