



United Nations Office in Belarus
Прадстаўніцтва ААН у Рэспубліцы Беларусь
Представительство ООН в Республике Беларусь

**Opening Statement by Mr. Sanaka Samarasinha,
UN Resident Coordinator/ UNDP Resident Representative in Belarus**

**at the opening session of the IV International Conference
“Energy Saving and Improving Energy Efficiency. Energy Efficiency
in the Residential Sector:
Current Trends and Practical Experience”**

17 October 2013, Minsk

Dear Mr. Nazarenko, Chairman of the State Standardization Committee of the Republic of Belarus,

Dear Mr. Semashko, Vice-Chairman of the State Standardization Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Director of the Energy Efficiency Department,

Dear Mr. Semenkevitch, Vice-Minister of Architecture and Construction of the Republic of Belarus,

Dear Prof. Lechner, Deputy Managing Director of the Austrian Energy Agency,

Distinguished participants, press, ladies and gentlemen,

The international conference, at which opening I have an honor to be present, becomes traditional. It is already the fourth conference devoted to the major direction of the sustainable development policy of Belarus - enhancing energy efficiency in the national economy. It is a great pleasure to recognize that the Conference we together established

four years ago is a remarkable example of cooperation of the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the United Nations Development Programme in the most actual spheres of development of your state and society.

In his message on the World Environment Day, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has underscored that “society’s dependence on fossil fuels is jeopardizing social and economic progress and our future security. Fortunately, there are many policy and technological options available to avert the impending crisis, but we need increased political will to use them.”

It is highly encouraging to see that Belarus demonstrates such political will.

In the field of energy saving, the state policy of the Belarus could serve as an example for many countries of the former Soviet Union, and in this context deserves the closest attention and, perhaps, broader replication. At the beginning of transition process to the market economy Belarus inherited the most energy-intensive industry with specific consumption of fuel and energy resources of about 780 grams of oil equivalent per one dollar of GDP. At that time, this figure was nearly 150% higher in Belarus, than in Russia and Ukraine. Today the economy of the country is the most energy efficient among CIS-states with power consumption of gross domestic product about 230 grams of oil equivalent per dollar, having left both Russia and Ukraine far behind. After the post-Soviet economy recession, since 1996, the energy intensity reduction rate of Belarusian economy is one of the highest in the world. In 2008 the country was the world’s top country

with 8.5% annual reduction of energy and fuel consumption per unit of GDP.

There is also a growing understanding that the power generation sector is responsible for at least 60% of anthropogenic impacts to the global climate change. The climate change mitigation policy dominating the international agenda over the recent decades concerns gradually reducing scale of application of power generation technologies based on fossil fuel combustion. Instead, gradually growing scale of development and introduction of the renewable energy resources becomes the most important and feasible energy alternative for the global community. As a response to this challenge, Belarus has chosen renewable fuels as one of its top priority road to build sustainable, secure, diverse and efficient energy mix and low-carbon economy. Since the end of the said recession in early 1990th the country was actively pushing forward renewable energy infrastructure establishing the necessary national regulatory and institutional framework. Nowadays Belarus generates almost 8% of its energy and heat from renewable sources.

On this road, the international technical assistance projects, supported by the United Nations Development Programme in cooperation with other multilateral donors, provide Belarus with unique opportunities to bridge the gap between its somewhat outdated energy supply and consumption technologies and those of the countries with more advanced developments based on energy saving principals.

More than 6 million dollars were initiated and implemented within UNDP – Energy Efficiency Department international cooperation framework during the last 10 years. The current

UNDP/GEF project with its grant resources of 4.9 million dollars is focused on energy efficiency improvement in residential housing; more projects are coming with nearly up to 5 million dollars grant resources. In this regard, I believe that the project “Improving Energy Efficiency in Residential Buildings in the Republic of Belarus”, as well as other ongoing and planned initiatives by UN system agencies in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy will enable Belarus construction and building sectors to benefit from the enormous opportunities offered by advanced energy efficiency improvement technologies, while, at the same time, providing their contribution to the international efforts aimed at climate change mitigation.

The UNDP supports the given Conference and urges the participants to discuss the main important directions of realization of national energy saving policy in construction and operation of residential multi-storey buildings, to get acquainted and discuss ways of application of the best international practice in energy efficiency of housing.

It remains for me to wish you fruitful, productive and interesting work today for further creation of energy efficient economy of Belarus.

Thank you.