



Positive contribution through National Energy Policy

By Don Asoka Wijewardena

The Power and Energy Ministry following the mandate given by President Mahinda Rajapaksa on December 8 2005 has formulated the National Energy Policy. The Policy has incorporated subjects and functions such as implementation of policies, plans and programmes in respect of power and energy, investigation, planning, implementation and coordination of energy matter, investigation, planning and development of electricity facilities through the island, including hydropower, thermal power, mini hydro and coal power.

The National Energy Policy has prioritized provision of electricity to rural people through Rural Electrification Schemes, renewable energy development, development of a sound adequate electricity policy for the control, regulation and utilization of national power resources, the Power and Energy Ministry said.

Power and Energy Minister W.D.J.Seneviratne told The Island Financial Review that the National Energy Policy was being reviewed in 2009 to ensure fuel diversity in electricity generation (diversifying into non-oil resources), fuel diversification in transport sector based on off-peak electricity, regional cooperation, viable cross border energy transfer, expansion of refining capacity to meet the total demand for petroleum, maintenance of a strategic fuel reserve and development of bio-fuel for transport.

He pointed out that as the oil crisis had caused grave problems globally, the National Energy Policy had focused on promoting indigenous energy resources. The use of economically viable, environmentally-friendly, non-conventional renewable energy sources would be promoted. Concessionary financing for viable hydroelectric projects and incentives to develop other renewable non-conventional energy sources would also be promoted.

The Minister added that a facilitation agency dedicated to the systematic planning and promotion of non-conventional renewable energy sources would be set up and oil and natural gas resources would be explored and commercially exploited

with the development of biomass-based energy projects. Initiatives of other institutions to convert biomass and other waste to energy would be encouraged and supported.

He said that the National Energy Policy had laid a special emphasis on promotion and conservation of energy efficiency by the enforcement of end-use mandatory measures and



encouragement of supply sites and end-use energy efficiency. Private sector participation would be sought to provide expert services and financial requirements would be fulfilled to continuously improve efficiency in energy conversion, transmission and utilization with the amendment of the Energy Conservation Act.

Referring to the process of incurring losses, Minister Seneviratne explained that the Policy would maximize the use of existing petroleum infrastructure and power generation and network losses would be reduced to lowest possible levels. A programme to electrify viable sectors of the railway and model shifts towards larger capacity of vehicular transport modes would be implemented.

Minister Seneviratne said that that in major towns, especially in the Colombo city street lights in some areas were not being put off during the day time due to administrative lapses and a new legislation would come into force to penalize the law breakers. A strategic plan for street lighting protection of energy facilities from adverse environmental impacts would also be introduced shortly.

