BioSpectrum
the business of Bi
24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.co

Sustainable bioenergy key to future says govt

18 September 2013 | News | By Rahul Koul Koul

Sustainable bioenergy key to future says govt



"Bioenergy especially biomass has a strong potential in rural areas and growth in the sector will lead to economic growth in rural areas. It is also a key offgrid solution and solar and biomass hybrids can be deployed. There is a need for a policy push for biomass as has been done for solar and wind and support mechanisms like incentives/subsidies/tax holidays need to be put in place."This was stated by Mr Alok Srivastava, joint secretary, ministry of new and renewable energy, while addressing inaugural Session at the Bioenergy Summit 2013, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) recently at New Delhi.

Suggesting some solutions across the different bioenergy segments, the senior official said, "Companies need to be present across the feedstock value chain and mechanisation in collection and storage is critical. To distribute improved cook stoves, MNRE is rolling out the National Biomass Cook Stoves Programme in the 12th Plan whereby 3.5 million cook stoves will be distributed."

Giving his perspective, Dr S C Sharma, OSD (Petroleum), Planning Commission said, "The conversion of bio-energy to liquid and gaseous fuels has a strong potential to reduce the impact on the current account deficit and replacement of 5 per cent of the liquid fuels by biofuels would result in savings of $5-6 billion annually. This assumes significance as last year, the oil and energy import bill was the highest at $120 billion. The 5 per cent ethanol blending which has been mandated by the government is a step in the right direction and efforts have to be made to ensure that ethanol blending is remunerative.To make biodiesel competitive, states need to provide VAT exemption on biodiesel."

In the course of his welcome remarks, Mr Pramod Chaudhari, chairman, CII National Committee on Bio-Energy and executive chairman, Praj Industries, said, "Bio-based economy will not only help in reducing dependency on the rising fuel imports but biomass based power production also has the potential to provide distributed power at the rural level. However, bio-energy programmes have not been at par with traditional energy sources and there are challenges related to commercial sustainability, feedstock availability, availability of appropriate technologies, appropriate financing and market linkages." Emphasisng on the need for a strong policy push, he said, "While the Government has put in place policy levers for the development of this sector, more remains to be done. The growth of the bioenergy sector in India will benefit from the formation of a Task Force in this area."

Mr K Krishan, co-chairman, CII national committee on Bio-Energy and chairman, MPPPL Renewable Energy Pvt Ltd concluded by saying, "There is a need to efficiently utilise the 140 million tonnes of biomass which is being used for cooking in the country. Also biofuels and biomethane can be used to mitigate petrol imports and the current account deficit given that the country incurred an oil import bill $15 billion recently. Bioenergy can also address the issue of energy access and is a clean source of energy. Reiterating the importance of policy imperatives in this segment, he said, "Clearly, given all these benefits, there is a need to focus on bioenergy and as a step in this direction a separate Task Force on bioenergy is critical."