

Rep. Joseph Emilio A. Abaya, *Co-chair, COMSTE*

A pleasant morning to everyone.

Distinguished guests, it is an honor for me to welcome you back to the second day of the Renewable Energy and Agriculture Conference by COMSTE, or REACCT 2009.

Nowadays, talk of the energy problem is inseparable from the problem of climate change.

Everyone here is probably familiar with previous conferences extolling on the benefits of going the alternative route to fossil fuels, and how this made good business sense. The sheer number of renewable energy, or RE, players currently present, and in the entire country today, shows our willingness and our commitment to utilize our indigenous renewable resources in order to achieve energy self-sufficiency and do our part in mitigating the effects of greenhouse gases on the planet.

When COMSTE was created in 2007, it immediately identified a panel that would address energy research and development fully aware of the responsibility to forward environmentally sound technologies.

COMSTE is now planning how to best establish a n RE Research and Development Institute that will not just serve as a hub of R&D activity in the Philippines, but also an entity that will embody private-public partnerships within the local, and perhaps regional, RE industry. The recently-enacted renewable energy law, as you very well know, provides industry with tax and procurement incentives that can help create the necessary demand and market for energy and environment goods and services.

Rep. Joseph Emilio A. Abaya, *Co-chair, COMSTE*

Currently, the Philippines is at 57% energy self-sufficiency, of which 88% is supplied by renewable energy – mainly from geothermal and hydroelectric sources. It is interesting to note too, that we have taken advantage of these indigenous sources even before the need to curb oil dependence arose.

As a matter of fact, the Philippines is second only to the United States in terms of geothermal power production, where it provides 27% of the total power consumption, mostly in the Visayas regions. In 2007, we produced almost 11,000 gigawatt-hours of power from geothermal sources, while the US produced around 15,000 gigawatt-hours in the same year. Considering the difference in land mass, this is quite a statement on the resources we have in our country!

We are a *leader* in geothermal energy, and we can leverage our technical expertise in this field, together with the incentives of the RE Law, and create new business in other renewable energy areas. We have one of the biggest producers of solar photovoltaics manufacturing their products here, and using our engineers to do it. We have the indigenous renewable resources – wind, sun, heat from the earth, and water – all waiting to be harnessed. And if we identify the other energy sources that we can invest wisely in, and provide the necessary environment for it to flourish, then I fervently believe that we can emerge as a leader in renewable energy, and at the same time, achieve the dream of self-sufficiency.

Because of this, the Energy Panel of COMSTE is firm in pushing for R&D activities in other areas under the RE institute which will bring about sustainable business to our SMEs in the energy sector. High priority activities where SMEs can venture into are:

1. 2nd generation biofuels feedstock;
2. Energy Efficiency;
3. Vehicle Technology Development; and
4. Ocean Technologies

Rep. Joseph Emilio A. Abaya, *Co-chair, COMSTE*

And should we need other technologies to complement these priorities, then COMSTE is also working on our other S&T sectors, such as electronics for energy efficiency, and information and communications technologies for decision support systems. We are working to provide the RE sector with the necessary products and services for its success.

Now, you might be wondering, why is a Commission dedicated to research and development sponsoring a business-matching forum?

Let me answer it this way:

Government's role is to identify, out of all the possible RE options out there, the winners for the country – given our indigenous and financial resources, possibilities for mutually beneficial collaborations, and our human capital – and COMSTE has definitely done this. We are also tasked with providing for an environment where renewable energy business can take off and prosper – we have begun to build on this through the incentives featured in the Renewable Energy Act.

*Your* role here today is to participate, in the sessions, yes, but more importantly, in the sharing of information – whether best practices, business models, even contact information! – so that we can achieve the goal we have set for ourselves with this conference, the reason why REACCT 2009 is a business-matching forum: To jumpstart the Philippine renewable energy sector.

In yesterday's opening program, Dr. Gregory Tangonan elaborated on COMSTE's S&T strategic plan, where the country can achieve increased R&D spending, leverage R&D investments of other countries through alliances, and improve lives of Filipinos through S&T by delivering on its promises with results for their use.

Rep. Joseph Emilio A. Abaya, *Co-chair, COMSTE*

The promise of a strategic S&T plan is the selfsame promise the Commission would like to deliver: That we can make science and technology work for our people by solving their problems, create new industries and new jobs, and propel the country into a new culture of innovative solutions-making that will make us a global competitor in science and technology, and in this case, in renewable energy.

This is exactly what we hope to achieve in this conference: To provide an opportunity for global and regional experts in RE to share and hopefully transfer their technologies here, and open the country up to a whole new playing field in renewable energy.

The RE players in this room, the financial and even research institutions that are here today, you have already begun to do work on this with, perhaps, minimal support from the government. Today, I am telling you, we are willing to help you, and we have your back. To our international guests who are here to share their expertise, we are ready to partner and collaborate with you.

The work of ensuring science and technology delivers on its promises is difficult and demanding. Today, I welcome you to the second day of REACCT 2009, and let me tell you, we have already begun.

Thank you very much.