

**WELCOME SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF CLIMATTERS ON THE
WORKSHOP “THE VIABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF CLEAN
ENERGY SOLUTION TO MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES
(MSMES) IN NIGERIA”**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2018

Ladies and gentle men,

It's my privilege and pleasure on behalf of Climate Transformation and Energy Remediation Society (CLIMATTERS) to welcome you here today. I know today is Thursday and not weekend nor public holiday. So, I understand that leaving your work and busy schedules to honour our invitation today is a huge sacrifice and I thank you all for coming.

I can assure you that, by the end of this workshop, you'll realise that the sacrifices you made to be here is would not be in vain.

Before I tell you why we invited you, please let me first of all, tell you about us.

CLIMATTERS is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation that focuses on environmental sustainability. From our written vision and mission, you can see why we exist and what we want to do. However, Part of the ways we help solve environmental crises is by adopting innovative strategies.

This time, we see the need to intervene on the energy crises that have adversely affected the economy of Nigeria. As you all know, Nigeria's energy mix is predominantly fossil-powered.

On the other hand, businesses in Nigeria are not maximising their potential in terms of productivity and income generation. The worst hit of these situations are the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

According to SMEDAN and the National Bureau of Statistics, there are over 37million (Micro-36,994,578, Small- 68,168, and Medium-4,670) enterprises in Nigeria and they account for more than 84 per cent of jobs in the country.

It is also estimated that MSMEs also account for about 48.5 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and about 7.27 per cent of goods and services exported out of the country.

Regrettably, almost all these MSMEs power their businesses with generators in the face of erratic national power supply (NEPA). Not only do these SMES lose income generation, they are highly and constantly exposed to various health dangers associated with inhaling the fumes from the generators. I'm sure there are health experts here today that will elaborate on that.

It's unfortunate that these SMEs like most of you here who operate one business or the other, do not have reliable access to alternative energy, do not know about alternative energy, and those who know complain of high cost of divesting to cleaner energy, therefore, are compelled beyond grave circumstances to operate their businesses, using the traditional energy source that is dirty and poisonous.

This is not to mention how the carbon from this fossil fuel contributes to global warming and changing our climate.

With the support of the German Green Foundation; The Heinrich Boell Stiftung, we carried out a study on how small businesses in Nigeria could adopt a more cleaner energy to run their businesses in a more sustainable and healthier way to their livelihoods, businesses and the environment. At the end of the study, we arrived at a report titled 'Pushing Off-Grid Renewables for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Nigeria'. (I'm sure every one of you has got a copy).

Our primary objective with the survey is to evaluate how SMEs in Nigeria spend money on purchasing, fuelling and maintaining their generators in comparism with how much they spend on grid energy source. We aimed that, producing a report after the survey is to drive a perspective of getting to know the consequences of using fossil-powered generators to run their business and the benefits of switching to a cleaner energy.

By drawing our invited guests from diverse careers, we deliberately plan to show you our findings after the survey and how you can use it as a tool to make informed decisions for your energy consumption choices.

Therefore, SMEs in this hall will use our report to decide a way forward on energy choice for their businesses in order to save cost and save life and save the environment.

We have also brought the Renewable Energy Association here who will explain on the business of renewable, sustainability and affordability.

In this hall is also an SME operator, infact, a barber all the way from Lagos, who has been very successful since he adopted the use of solar energy for his barbing shops.

We also have bankers here, who will share with you the financing options for renewable energy for your businesses and how you can pay without tears, like most of us pay NEPA bills with tears.

As the Federal Government of Nigeria is focused on meeting her pledges to the Paris Climate Agreement, our report will also serve as a policy guide for Nigerian government, in their bid to meet her plans and strategies in the Nationally Determined contributions (NDC) and the Economic Recovery Growth Plan (ERGP), to which divesting to renewable energy is one of the strategies listed on those very important policy documents.

On a global level, our report also keys into meeting Goals 3, 7 and 13 of the Sustainable Development.

To our women, we are very deliberate in making sure that you benefit from the knowledge shared from these research findings, knowing your struggles to survive in a country replete with inequality and in most cases, your dependence on micro businesses for your economic survival. According to SMEDAN, female entrepreneurs accounted for 43.32% in the ownership structure of micro enterprises as against 22.75% in small and medium enterprises.

Therefore, putting women at the front burner of innovative technologies, such as solar energy, both for consumption and trading will increase their independence and restore confidence for survival.

In conclusion, we want all of you, our special guests and stakeholders to see the opportunities that this study and its further discussions will offer in opening your eyes, that yes! it is doable.

If renewable energy is succeeding in other smaller African countries like Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, why would it not also succeed in the country we claim to be “The Giant of Africa”.

We don't really mind if competition will drive Nigeria and these other smaller African countries to invest renewables.

It would be a shame if the Giant of Africa continues to suffer in energy poverty for her socio-economic activities while, those other smaller African countries will rather become ‘the mouse that roared!’

We are hoping that adopting renewable energy solutions for your Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria will be a win-win solution for you and the Nigerian enviro-economic sustainability.

I wish you all a fruitful deliberation.

Thank you!