Closing Remarks

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Village Power '98 - an enormous success
- Over 500 participants
- A wealth of brain power
- Advertising new technologies and ideas
- Involvement of the private sector (Shell Renewables and their ESCOM project)
  A.
  B. Three core themes:
- The technologies: *What are the new possibilities? How is the cost-benefit ratio improving?*
- The financing: *How best can we finance rural energy access?*
- The organizational structures: *How best to put financing and technologies into practice?*
  C.
- The news on technologies has been good, but not good enough: the costs are still too high.
- The news on financing has also been heartening: the Bank's LILs, microfinance initiatives, Shell Renewables' card-based fee for service system.
- But the challenge of scale-up will be met most effectively on the institutional level: a great deal of encouragement here, from our 1998 Village Power Road Warrior to NRECA. Utilities do not look like the answer - working from the poor's own organizational arrangements will likely succeed best.
  D.
  E. Three central challenges:
  F.
1. To the industry: bring down the costs of the technologies.

2. To the financiers: defeat the institutional impediments to innovative financing.

3. To all of us: to realize that we are in a stiff competition for scarce resources, not just with

- Other strategies for RE (grid extension, distributed generation); and
- Other priorities for national energy policies (e.g. better urban electrification);

But also with

- Other potential receptacles of financing for economic and social development: from schools and hospitals, to roads and water.

This is the bottom line we must confront: we must work together to make renewables a competitive option for RE, and to make RE a competitive option for development and, even more importantly private sector financing.