



18:10 IST

Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Union Minister for New & Renewable Energy unveiled the guidelines of two schemes under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission at a function in New Delhi today. These are guidelines for (i) off-grid (photovoltaic & thermal) and decentralized solar applications and (ii) Rooftop & other small solar power plants.

Terming the event as a result of many months of consultation, toil and effort, the Minister said his Ministry, in its facilitative role, has created an enabling ecosystem for promoting newer business models, technical as well as market innovations as well as for promoting basic and applied research and it is for the entrepreneurs and stakeholders to rise to the challenge.

Dr. Abdullah recalled the words of Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh on the launch of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission in January this year when he termed it as one of the major priorities of the second term of his government and expressed his sincere hope that the Mission would establish India as a global leader in solar energy, not just in terms of solar power generation but also in solar manufacturing and generation of this technology. He said, "Today we are taking the first step towards the operationalisation of the Mission. Even as we speak we are on way to redeeming the many of the pledges and promises we made in January this year."

He said, "the guidelines that we have released today are meant to tap into the diverse and enormous potential of solar energy in all applications-rural, industrial as well as urban. The guidelines are flexible, simple and market friendly. Taken together, these guidelines seek to address four critical areas – access to rural households for lighting and daily power requirements; reduction in consumption of kerosene and diesel; energy demand management through solar thermal systems and improvement of efficient transmission by feeding power at consumption points." The Minister said, " We have attempted to make the process demand-driven, market-based and user-benefit oriented. We have tried to establish additional channels to facilitate direct contact between users and the supplier of solar energy products. Thus there is a broadening of the market and reach. These guidelines provide enough opportunities to manufacturers, system integrators, energy supply companies and also the financial institutions to create a sustained interest within the investor

community through viable business models. Flexibility is an integral feature of this scheme. I hope these guidelines will help us to reach a larger number of potential users.”

Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Shri Bharatsinh Solanki , Minister of State for Power, Shri Sachin Pilot, Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology, Shri Deepak Gupta, Secretary MNRE, Dr. R.K Pachauri, Director General, TERI , Shri Shyam Saran, former Special Envoy to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, as well as Shri R.S. Sharma, CMD NTPC were also present on the occasion.

Dr. Abdullah said that the Ministry had unveiled a migration policy under the National Solar Mission to give a head start to setting up grid-connected solar power plants. NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam (NVTN) had invited applications from project developers who were at an advanced stage of preparedness. The Minister said that NVTN, after a scrutiny of the applications, is now ready to announce the eligible developers and shall be formally issuing awards to them shortly. He said that his Ministry is working closely with stakeholders to facilitate the creation of an ecosystem that will encourage the growth of this nascent sector, reliably, quickly and at reasonable profit to developers.

Off-grid solar energy applications have a tremendous potential in reaching out to people in such rural and remote areas by providing basic energy services to them, Dr. Abdullah said .

The Minister pointed out that merely by distributing solar lanterns in remote areas and to nomadic populations, we can light up over a million homes. Similarly 1 million streetlights can illuminate streets in over one lakh villages. These efforts, he said, will also save the environment as 10 million lanterns can save 50 crore litres of kerosene in a year, which in turn can mitigate a potential subsidy bill of Rs. 1,000 to 1,500 crores in a year. Further, the huge entrepreneurial potentialities thrown up by the rapid adoption of these systems will create thousands of jobs as well as self-employment opportunities.

Dr. Abdullah shared with the audience the other initiatives of the Ministry. The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy has recently sanctioned a project to Rajasthan to provide solar power to every single *panchayat* in the State by installing 1.12 kW capacity solar systems at each of 9,168 *Bharat Nirman Rajeev Gandhi Sewa Kendras*. Yet another area of application could be telecom towers, which are currently using diesel to provide un-interrupted power services. The use of solar energy to power these systems can considerably mitigate the use of diesel especially

during the daytime.

Feeding power to LT or 11 KV grid is yet another important application, which can help villages and industry by providing additional power for rural applications such as irrigation pump sets or even meet the unmet power requirement in the daytime. There are substantial losses as electricity flows from points of generation to distribution. Feeding of power at consumption points would not only help reduce these losses but also help strengthen grid and its performance and supply electricity to the consumers. Therefore, under the Solar Mission, we have decided to encourage setting up of 100 MW capacity of rooftop and other small grid connected solar power plants in the first phase itself, the Minister said.

While the Ministry has now finalized the guidelines to effectively implement the schemes on 11 KV grid connected solar power plants, the States too need to come out with their own downstream policies to promote tail-end plants, Dr. Abdullah added.

Dr. Abdullah said, “flexibility on part of the Ministry entails and obligates greater responsibility on part of the other stakeholders including the state governments. Therefore, it is equally important that projects are prepared to meet the specific needs of the users, there is emphasis on innovation and cost-reduction and that quality and reliability of the products is maintained at all costs. Manufacturers must create additional channels to quickly reach out the people and provide them not only good quality reliable products but efficient after sales services also. This will require a large number of technicians to be trained in installation and servicing of solar energy systems. State agencies must start a process of capacity building and ensure that trained technicians are available so that solar energy systems can be easily maintained. My Ministry will help them wherever they run into any technical or financial constraints. The states too must play their part- for example in devising a facilitative regulatory regime.”

“We have made a modest beginning today. But we must not get carried away by the adulation of our own sounds,” the Minister said. “There are plenty of challenges still to be tackled. The present cost of solar energy systems is relatively high. Although capital subsidies and soft loans will make them affordable in the short run, yet only long term solution can be a declining cost curve. For that we need accelerated research, advanced manufacturing and economies of scale. These alone can build the virtuous spiral that will help us attain grid parity before the end of the mission,” he added.

In his address, Dr. Ahluwalia expressed the need for the PSUs to invest more on R&D so that new technologies can emerge to make

electricity affordable and easily accessible.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Solanki said that to ramp up capacity of grid-connected solar power generation to 1000 MW within three years – by 2013; an additional 3000 MW by 2017 through the mandatory use of the renewable purchase obligation by utilities backed with a preferential tariff are the programmes on the agenda. He said this capacity can be more than doubled – reaching 10,000 MW installed power by 2017 or more, depending upon the enhanced and enabled international finance and technology transfer. The ambitious target of the Mission for 2022 of 20,000 MW or more, will be dependent on the 'learning' of the first two phases, which if successful, could lead to conditions of grid-competitive solar power. The transition could be appropriately upscaled, based on availability of international finance and technology, the Minister added.

Dr. Pachauri, Shri Shyam Saran and Shri R.S. Sharma also spoken on the occasion.

The guidelines issued today are available at <http://mnre.gov.in>