

# **Overview and A Policy Agenda**

**THOMAS B. JOHANSSON AND JOSÉ GOLDEMBERG**

Modern forms of energy empower human beings in countless ways: by reducing drudgery, increasing productivity, transforming food, providing illumination, transporting water, fuelling transportation, powering industrial and agricultural processes, cooling or heating rooms, and facilitating electronic communications and computer operations, to name just some of them. Given that they can so dramatically increase human capabilities and opportunities, adequate energy services are integral to poverty alleviation and environmentally sound social and economic development.

For such development to be sustainable, in the well-accepted definition put forth 15 years ago by the World Commission on Environment and Development, it must not compromise the prospects of future generations. Conventional sources of and approaches to providing and using energy are not sustainable by this definition. They are linked to significant environmental, social, and health problems for people alive today and, in many cases, pose even greater threats to future generations.

While it is imperative to find ways to greatly expand energy services, especially to the two billion people who currently rely on traditional forms of energy as well as for generations to come, this expansion must be achieved in ways that are environmentally sound, as well as safe, affordable, convenient, reliable, and equitable.

*Tm b*

## **ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT A POLICY AGENDA**

*2002*

---

Edited by: Thomas B. Johansson and José Goldemberg

---