

# Alternative energy for small, medium industries

Himalayan News Service

Kathmandu, December 23

Alternative Energy Promotion Centre has brought a plan to promote small and medium scale industries in rural areas with the alternative energy plan.

The Centre signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries (FNCSI) today to promote and develop renewable energy

technologies and small, medium scale industries.

Executive Director of the Centre Govind Raj Pokharel said they have made a policy decision to increase access to power and bring it into use for people in remote parts of the country.

"The Centre will promote alternative energy along with micro-hydro projects not exceeding 1 MW in remote areas as such projects will not be implemented by Nepal Electricity

Authority in the next five years or NEA has no plan to connect them to the national grid.

The Centre has already supported communities in the construction of more than 700 micro hydro projects (total 25 MW) ranging from 100 KW to 500 KW. Three lakh biogas plants, solar panels in 3.5 lakh households and 6.5 lakh smokeless improved stoves were installed in the country with support from the Centre.

The country has already

earned 2.1 million US dollar in the last 3 years selling carbon by saving trees after installation of biogas plants. Among other supports are solar, biogas and other sources of energy to promote small and medium scale industries.

Pokharel said they will formulate an action plan to implement projects. "A solar drier for apples in Helambu, which is not transported to the market, is an example of a new support programme, and our

support for small industries can improve rural economy, promote self-employment and increase export," he added.

FNCSI President Suresh Pradhan said the Centre provides technical support for installation on the basis of demand.

Minister for Environment, Science and Technology Keshav Man Bhattarai called the agreement a meaningful beginning. The minister chairs the board of the Centre, a semi

autonomous government institution mandated for promotion and development of renewable energy technology.

Cottage and small industries has an 80 per cent share in national export, and contribution to the GDP is 6.3 per cent, but it is decreasing due to power crisis. "Currently, several industries are running at 40 to 60 per cent capacity due to power shortage. The new support will enhance their capacity," said Pradhan.