

**Closing speech of the CHARGE Energy Branding conference 2017  
by Jón Atli Benediktsson, Rector of the University of Iceland**

Held in Silfurberg at Harpa, Tuesday 10 October 2017, 4:40-4:45  
p.m.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my honour and pleasure to say a few words here at the closing  
of this wonderful conference, CHARGE 2017.

Meeting the global demand for energy is one of the greatest  
challenges of our time; and solutions to this challenge will surely  
play an even more important role in the future. We are reaching a  
point where our energy needs can no longer primarily be met with  
fossil fuels. Yet, we do not know exactly what types of energy  
sources will replace them. At the same time, our awareness of the  
importance of sustainable energy has increased and we have  
become more responsible in our energy consumption. We are,  
therefore, standing at a crossroads, which requires us to seek new  
approaches and new solutions.

These challenges do not only concern individual countries, but all of humanity. An energy crisis that effects one nation, affects all of us. And a global energy crisis affects every single human being on Earth.

The CHARGE 2017 conference plays an important role in the current global energy discussion. It is very fitting to hold this international conference on energy branding here in Iceland. Our country is rich in natural and renewable energy sources. For this reason, our knowledge of sustainable energy processes and use is extensive.

Icelanders greatly benefit from these gifts of nature. But this means that we also carry a lot of responsibility. Not only do we need to take great care of our natural resources, but—as a well-educated nation—we also have the duty to learn more about sustainable energy and share our own knowledge with other countries. The dissemination of this knowledge goes far beyond scientific expertise. Other sectors, including marketing in the broadest sense of the word, play an important role as well. All these branches need to work together. Energy branding also involves energy research branding; spreading knowledge and advertising solutions in this vast field.

It takes creativity and innovation to harness energy and use it to create value. With innovation, creativity, and new approaches, it is possible to increase the value of energy without depleting our natural resources. A waterfall can be transformed into a power plant only once, but innovation and creativity are entirely renewable. They are in endless supply. The role of universities is to create knowledge through research and also to teach and spread knowledge, both within and outside of academia. I would like to mention here that I am particularly impressed to observe from the conference programme the various ways in which knowledge gained from research at universities in general and the University of Iceland in particular has contributed theoretical knowledge, consultancy, and software. To name just one example, the criteria for measuring brand value and brand equity are derived from consumer perception studies. These studies are now the basis for the Energy Branding Benchmarking Index, EBBI, the only global benchmarking tool available to energy brands today.

Ladies and gentlemen. CHARGE 2017 is coming to its end. I would like to take the opportunity to thank conference speakers and organisers for their excellent contributions. In particular, I would like to highlight Dr. Friðrik Larsen, CHARGE founder, Conference Chairman of CHARGE 2017 and CEO of LarsEn Energy Branding, for his invaluable work. As Rector and President of the University of Iceland, I am particularly proud, since Dr. Larsen is a faculty member at the School of Business at our institution. Through this conference, he has shown how important and successful the dissemination of knowledge through branding and marketing can be.

Ladies and gentlemen. I wish you an enjoyable time at the reception for speakers as well as the Charge Awards Ceremony and dinner tonight.

Thank you.