

Intervention Lesha Witmer (Netherlands Women's Council) on behalf of Women Major group May 3 afternoon during thematic session "energy efficiency – barriers and constraints in transport, dissemination of knowledge and technologies".

Privatization and liberalization has shifted responsibility away from governments and led to cutbacks in quantity and quality of public transport – especially in rural areas in both developed and developing countries. At the same time shops disappear out of smaller communities and neighbourhoods, schools and hospitals are centralized and as a result especially women have to travel longer distances and more often. This increases the need for transportation by car as such and more pollution as a result. This calls for better (urban) planning – integrating urban - and transport planning and policies - , civil society including women's involvement in the decision-making, new investment in public transport and government legislation to ensure basic services.

Women are often the owners of and workers in smaller businesses. They are willing to use better, energy friendly equipment and appliances, provided they can get them, afford them and know how to use them. New technology though is often the most expensive. Bringing down import taxes, VAT etc. would encourage the use and stimulate economic growth. Technical training – necessary to use equipment efficiently - is often "gender-biased" (training boys and men, not women and girls) and/ or is lacking at all. Labels and guides are often "unreadable" for the user / consumer; access to information is essential for efficient (energy) use.

Last but not least: awareness of consumers – the majority being women again – is essential. To be able to do their "jobs" and disseminate information so that people can make informed choices, NGO's in the south and North need funding and access to information.