

Statements for Women as a Major Group at CSD 15

Energy for Sustainable Development - Wednesday, May 2

As discussed in yesterday's Multi-stakeholder Dialogue, we are concerned that the Chair's text does not strongly enough reflect the points regarding the need for gender mainstreaming approaches in energy policy formulation, planning, budgeting and decision-making processes which were raised by Women and other delegations at the IPM, and CSD 14, including Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Fiji.

What is needed goes beyond merely involving more women in energy programs. It requires both a recognition of the fact that women and men have different social and economic roles, and a commitment to ensure that women's concerns and contributions are represented and taken into account. To assist governments in understanding the linkages between gender and energy in developing countries, we have compiled recommendations from stakeholder consultations in 19 different countries in preparation for CSD 15 and presented them in a book entitled Where Energy is Women's Business, which we are happy to share with you.

In developing countries, particular attention is needed to promote access to electricity and modern fuels and equipment for domestic uses, agriculture, informal income-generating activities, and community-based enterprises. In many countries, women already play an important role in the energy sector, particularly with regard to collection and consumption of traditional biomass fuels, but they are not at the table when energy plans are made, and national energy decisions are not necessarily designed with their needs in mind. It is critical for sustainable development that investments in energy infrastructure and services promote women's social and economic development, as well as men's.

We mentioned yesterday some tools that could be used by governments in this regard, such as strategic investments in capacity building, technical and business training, and enterprise development for women, together with capacity building for government officials and development practitioners regarding gender and energy issues and institutional arrangements to ensure women's representation in designing and implementing energy policies, programmes and projects. In addition, gender budgets, audits and gender disaggregated data can be used to inform national energy and development policy and implementation strategies, and innovative financing measures are needed to enhance women's access to credit for energy-related equipment and enterprises. Above all, national energy policies should specifically address women's and men's energy poverty in rural and urban contexts.

Women as a Major Group strongly support governments that are working towards low carbon development paths and reject unsustainable energy policies such as those emphasizing increased nuclear generating capacity. We note that many countries in transition plan to base their energy sector development on nuclear power, and call instead for clear targets on renewables and improved energy efficiency as there is enormous potential for improvements in these areas. We also recommend strong action to prevent destruction of land and communities as a result of coal and uranium mining, large-scale hydropower and commercial ethanol production. We are eager to participate in fair and inclusive partnerships to promote access to clean, safe and affordable energy for the future, including modern cooking fuels, renewable wind and solar systems, small hydro-electric generators, modern biofuel systems and energy efficiency mechanisms.