

**STATEMENT FROM WOMEN'S MAJOR GROUP
IN MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION**

9th May 2007

Good afternoon, my name is Dr. Jyoti Parikh and I am Executive Director of Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe) from India. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving Women's group this opportunity to present our view point. One of the imperatives for sustainable development is intra-generational equity. Thus one of first priorities should be to provide access to modern energy to 2.3 billion poor, especially women.

Even among poor, women have different role and responsibilities.

Women and girls struggle daily to gather biomass, transport them, process them and finally cook with them. This is back-breaking work which is unpaid, unrecognized and undervalued. To look at it differently, they are managing a large amount of energy e.g. biomass collected by women and girls provides 30% of energy in India, second only to coal.

Unfortunately there are hardly any inputs of technology, investment and management in the biomass sector. Whether it is coal, oil, gas or renewable energy, all energy sources need investment, management and technology. However, biomass which is an important energy source in developing countries is given very little state support.

Resources need to be committed to ensure sustainability. Policy and time-bound programmes are needed to ensure that each year some targets are achieved that free women from drudgery so that their time is freed for more fulfilling and income generating activities that lead to poverty reduction. (These statistics should be reflected in energy statistics on a regular basis).

However, we propose not to think of women as problems but as solutions. Current role of women as energy providers can be transformed into suitable micro entrepreneurs if they can manage fuel wood or oil-seed plantations, dispense kerosene and LPG, assemble solar panels, build improved cook stoves and help rural electrification process by helping read meters, collect bills and doing minor repairs.

I conclude by saying that we request gender specific policies, programmes, capacity building on a larger scale and with investments and targets to eliminate back breaking drudgery that a billion women go through everyday.

Thank you Chair, for this opportunity to address the floor on behalf of Women's Major Group.