

## ENERGY VOICES



HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON  
**ENERGY**  
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 2021

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### **What energy solutions is your organization working on?**

Our experience with informal women workers in India for over 47 years has shown that in order to make energy accessible and an enabler to end energy poverty, there is a need for an integrated and holistic approach. This enables poor rural women not only to access energy, but energy also becomes an enabler in fulfilling the SDGs, improving the women's lives in so many ways. Therefore, SEWA follows a multi-pronged integrated approach of energy inclusion to address the challenges faced by our members, including through:

- Setting up a solar park that is completely owned and managed by the women themselves.
- Creating an energy auditing and budgeting exercise with over 1000 rural workers to generate awareness about efficient green energy solutions.
- Promoting rural women workers as energy entrepreneurs for distribution of clean-energy solutions, such as through LPG dealerships. This not only enables quick, reliable and safe access to clean energy solutions in rural areas but also generates livelihood opportunities for the rural women workers.
- Building capacity and affordable access to modern agricultural technologies for small and marginal farmers.
- Affordable access to solar lanterns for small and marginal fisheries as well as farmers and micro-entrepreneurs.
- Roof-top energy farming to address the issue of home electrification, especially for artisan, small and marginal farmers and animal husbandry workers for whom their homes and farms are their place of work.
- Innovative financing solutions and linkages with government schemes for affordable access to clean energy solutions such as solar pumps, fans and LPG.
- Building women-owned and managed energy enterprises that work on energy and financial inclusion, such as the women salt-pan workers and small-holder farmers who now use solar pumps.

### **Why is the High-level Dialogue on Energy important at this time?**

An internal survey with our members indicated that informal women workers use 25% of their income and 40% of their time in accessing energy, thereby trapping them in a vicious cycle of indebtedness and poverty. Enabling energy and financial inclusion for these poor workers can generate better and newer livelihood options and help achieve a better future of work.



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This calls for deep discussions and deliberations on policies that promote innovative energy solutions –owned and managed by the informal workers themselves – thus making them not just consumers of energy but producers, users and managers of energy. The UN High-level Dialogue on Energy will provide a platform to enable this. Therefore, it is very important at this time.

**Can you give a preview of what commitments you might include in a potential Energy Compact by SEWA?**

Integrated solutions adopted and piloted by SEWA will not only solve energy access issues, but also lead to generating green livelihood opportunities, curb migration, mitigate poverty through asset creation, reduce the carbon footprint and above all provide income security to poor informal workers – this is what we call the future of work.

Through the potential Energy Compact, SEWA would work on setting up a new financing instrument which is a blended pool of capital -- an international fund which also has new financial products such as SDG enhancement loans and technical assistance for capacity building and handholding. This would also accelerate south-south cooperation and knowledge sharing.

Post-Covid recovery needs to look at focusing on green livelihoods, especially for women, youth and the informal sector. This will lead to building an economy of nurturance – an economy that does not consider workers as a commodity but values the relationship between work and workers as well as their family, community and environment, an economy that will equitably distribute profits and risks, thereby building a decent, just and secure future of work for all.