



**United
Nations**



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

Ministerial Thematic Forums

21 – 25 June 2021

Event name:

Transforming lives through energy inclusion: Experiences from grass-root women entrepreneurs

Event date and time:

Tuesday June 22, 2021 | 06:00 – 07:00 EST

Organizers:

- ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy
- Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA)

Number of participants: 98

Main speakers and brief summary [max 300 words]:

Progress towards achieving SDG 7 has been too slow to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for everyone by 2030. However, achieving SDG7 is essential for achieving other SDGs, including those related to gender equality, health, poverty reduction, climate and environment. Gender equality and women’s empowerment are fundamental to development.

Women and female-headed households lag far behind in accessing energy, which negatively affects their health, wellbeing and economic welfare. Moreover, women are alarmingly underrepresented in the energy sector at large. At the same time, women are critical in providing and scaling energy access, as entrepreneurs in the supply chain and as leaders in their communities. They are driving positive changes in the lives of their families and communities, contributing to sustainable economies and playing a critical role in achieving the SDGs.

To make the Ministerial Forums of the UN High Level Dialogues on Energy a truly inclusive platform to press for accelerated action towards the achievement of the SDG7 2030 targets, there is an important need to incorporate the voices of the sector grassroot women entrepreneurs - who form a large portion of the global workforce. The session *‘Transforming lives through energy inclusion: Experiences from grass-root women entrepreneurs’* brought in real-time experiences of four women entrepreneurs,

who have transformed their lives and their communities thanks to access to renewable energy. The speakers were:

- **Lilian Saliu**
Solar energy entrepreneur, Nigeria
- **Usha Solanki**
Organizer, grassroot initiative salt farm workers group, using solar salt-water pump, India
- **Marie Ka**
Producer of fruit juices, solar pasteurizer and solar freezer operator and president of a local women's association, Senegal
- **Saroj Rohit**
Clean cookstove entrepreneur, India

Key outcomes [max 100 words]:

- Access to finance is critical for women entrepreneurs to be able to start, consolidate and grow their business.
- Being organized (as a formal individual entrepreneur or as a women's group) has a dramatic impact on women's access to resources and services.
- There is a need for inclusive government policies, including subsidy policies and to facilitate documentation and registration.
- Dedicated mentoring, South-South coalitions and peer-to-peer exchanges are powerful game changers for women entrepreneurs, boosting their enterprises.
- Renewable energy can dramatically change women's livelihoods: both for RE entrepreneurs and for women who adopt it for productive uses.

Links to livestream recording/website/social media:

Event recording: <https://youtu.be/0x3IzJKIdCE>

Website: www.energia.org

Twitter: @energia_org

[LinkedIn](#): energia-gender-energy-network

www.sewa.org

Contacts:

tmuller@hivos.org

mansishah@sewa.org