

## **Draft Speaking Points - Anne F. Stenhammer**

### **WORKSHOP ON 'WOMEN, ENERGY AND ENTERPRISE BUILDING'**

Venue: Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India,

Dates: April 4-7, 2011

Distinguished Participants, Friends and Colleagues: A very good afternoon to you.

- I take this opportunity to thank Dr Nandita Mongia, the Principal Technical Advisor, USAID/ SARI Energy program who recognized and appreciated UN Women's determination and commitment to maximize the productive potential of women by promoting gender equality and let us be the part of this extremely significant workshop.
- I feel both privileged and humbled.
- At this moment, I am also delighted to share with you about the transition of UNIFEM into UN Women. In July 2010, the UN General Assembly took a historic step to create UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact.
- UN Women became operational on 1 January 2011 and officially launched in New York on 24 February 2011 and in India on 4 March 2011.
- The fact that UN Women has come about is thanks to the untiring efforts of the many gender advocates, the world over, who wanted to have a global "champion" at the UN – a champion who can lead the efforts to translate their hopes of a gender equitable world into reality.
- As UN Women, we continue our partnership, association and support to governments, civil societies and inter governmental bodies in ensuring gender equitable policies, standards and norms including holding UN systems accountable for its own commitments on gender equality.
- We continue building our work on UN Women's five strategic and focus areas which I call pillars: They are:
  1. Violence Against Women
  2. Peace and Security
  3. Leadership and Participation
  4. Economic Empowerment
  5. National Planning and Budgeting

- Our research and programming experience over the past 10 years in South Asia has enabled us understand that closing the gender gap in women's entitlements and control over productive assets would produce significant gains for society by increasing productivity, reducing poverty and hunger, reducing violence against women and promoting economic growth.
- Although there is a growing realization about the importance of access of range of assets to women such as land, livestock, education , extension services, financial services and technology in creating opportunities for them, the significant role that energy plays in enhancing their productive capacities is seriously neglected.
- Women are only seen as the end users of energy and its potential in enabling them to become entrepreneurs, adopt non traditional work roles and provide opportunities to increase their income is yet to be recognized and acknowledged .
- Despite this disregard, there are interventions in many countries that have proved that access to energy services can help women increase the productivity of their micro enterprises and promote the diversification of economic activities within their communities.
- It is heartening to learn about such interventions at the grassroots. To list a few:
  - Rural women's groups in Uganda use solar dryers to process fruits and vegetables that increased their efficiency of processing dried fruit exports thereby leading to enhanced income;
  - Multifunctional platforms in Mali which uses diesel engines to power food processing, increased the productivity of women's domestic and income-generating activities;
  - In Gujarat, India women mason entrepreneurs make smokeless gas stoves called "Annapurna stove" and earn a living by constructing and selling these stoves to other households.
  - And there are many more such success stories...
- All this demonstrates that women's access to renewable energy and technology has potential to increase their productivity, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities and put them on a higher trajectory towards economic advancement.
- A gender analysis is therefore imperative in renewable energy policies and praxis efforts to ensure that the opportunities created by clean and new energy technologies benefit women in not only reducing drudgery but enhancing their productive potential and entrepreneurship skills.

- I am glad to share that together with organizations like Heinrich Boll Foundation, TIDE, (Technology Informatics Design Endeavour) Bangalore, TERI (The Energy Resource Institute), New Delhi and ENERGIA, UN Women has tried to explore major concerns in renewable energy sector particularly those related to improving gender analysis in renewable energy policies and women's engagement with not only use but management of energy infrastructure that strengthens their economic participation and opportunities.
- However, there is a continuing need of such analysis and interventions to overcome and address the barriers that women face in access and use of energy services and create an enabling environment for their social and economic advancement
- To me this workshop is a very constructive platform to learn from the experiences and reflect on the competencies of practitioners who have witnessed women excelling in diverse entrepreneurial ventures and new income- generating pursuits through their access and control over energy services with positive welfare outcomes for children, families, societies and economy.
- I congratulate the team in organizing this very important workshop and all the participants and practitioners who would be sharing their grassroots experiences and learning in the next few days.
- I also look forward to our continued association with all of you as we pursue this very important agenda.

Thank you!