Energy as Women’s Business

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What does gender have to do with energy issues?

- Dealing with electricity, oil and gas is generally viewed as men’s work.
- Women are not included in discussions about energy plans and policies.
- ‘Gender-blind’ energy policies ignore women’s roles and hinder economic development.
Where energy comes from wood and biomass fuels, it is viewed as ‘women’s business’.

- For two billion people, biomass fuels are the primary source of energy.

- Cultural traditions in developing countries make women responsible for gathering fuel.

- Many women spend long hours in unpaid work gathering firewood and providing food.
Policies should reflect linkages between energy, women’s work and national economics.

- Greater attention to gender differences in energy investments and initiatives.
- Women involved more in decisions so they can manage their lives more productively.
ENERGIA sponsored national consultations in countries with strong gender and energy linkages.

- Opportunity for women not present at CSD 15 to give input to governments and delegations.
- Country-specific recommendations for national and international energy actions.

- BANGLADESH • BOTSWANA • GHANA
- INDIA • INDONESIA • LAO PDR • LESOTHO •
- MALI • NEPAL • NIGERIA • PAKISTAN • SENEGAL •
- SOUTH AFRICA • SRI LANKA • SWAZILAND •
- UGANDA • VIETNAM • ZAMBIA • ZIMBABWE •
Some of the common themes from the national papers:

Dependence on biomass fuels is an obstacle to economic prosperity.
Women should be engaged in more productive activity than gathering biomass.
Investments are needed in improved fuels and equipment, as well as electricity.
Women play an important energy role and need to be more involved in decisions.
A **new gender-balanced paradigm.**

- Shift from a ‘subsidy mindset’ to enterprise development for women in the energy sector.
- New financial investments in energy infrastructure and services that promote economic and social development for both women and men.