



UN-HABITAT

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ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Madam Chair,

On behalf of UN-Habitat, I would like to make the following statement with respect to the issue of energy for sustainable development

Distinguished delegates,

2007 marks the year in history whereby half of the world population will be living in cities and towns. As I address this CDS 15, over 1 billion people are currently living in slums throughout the developing world with intolerable living conditions in terms of water and sanitation service provision and lack of access to reliable energy services. This trend makes it patently clear that if we fail to achieve the MDGs in towns and cities, we will simply fail to achieve them at all. Affordable and reliable energy supply to the urban poor will be critical to attaining these goals.

The energy needs of the urban poor have not received the same attention from development efforts as rural areas. It is important to note that even if there is availability of electricity in urban areas, it does not translate into accessibility by the urban poor.

Madam Chair,

Today, billions of people still rely on traditional biomass as their primary source of energy, a huge percentage of them are located in cities and towns. WHO estimates that 1.6 million deaths per year, of which 60 % are women and children, are associated with indoor air pollution from the use of biomass. UN-Habitat recent studies show that the urban poor and especially slum-dwellers are particularly hard hit by lack of access to modern energy. They pay more for their cooking, water and electricity than wealthier people connected to the service networks. They pay this penalty therefore because they are poor.

For example, it is no secret to any one of us here that 80 % of people living in sub-Saharan Africa have no access to electricity and this leads to the vicious cycle of energy-related poverty. People depend on biomass to meet their energy needs resulting in massive degradation of the environment.

The quest for electrification for the urban poor must consider also non-conventional and clean energy options. It is incumbent upon Governments to adopt policies that enable the widespread use of solar energy, mini-hydro power, wind energy, biogas and bio-fuels.

Governments should empower people and their communities, including the private sector, to generate and sell energy to the grid given the insufficient supply. The widespread dissemination and application of these systems and options could yield significant benefits for both the urban and rural poor.

We also need to create more effective partnerships between the developed and developing countries to promote energy related technology transfer.

Capacity building and appropriate financing mechanism are critically needed to expand access to modern energy services. It is imperative that we strengthen South-South cooperation to accelerate the sharing and replication of workable solutions in the energy sector. And Governments have a key role and responsibility for putting into place policies that favor public-private partnership in this regard.

In conclusion Madam Chair,

UN-Habitat would like to recommend four keys actions aiming at narrowing the energy gap of the urban poor:

First: Promotion of wide-spread slum electrification programme;

Second: Promotion of new and renewable energy applications for providing better access to basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and cooking fuel;

Third: Development and application of energy efficiency standards and measures for proper management and saving; and finally

Documentation and dissemination of urban poor energy related best practices.

I thank you for your attention.