PEG Attendance at the UN Commission for Sustainable Development
14th Session

SOPAC Miscellaneous Report 616

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INTRODUCTION

The Pacific Energy and Gender Network (PEG) received an invitation from ENERGIA International for a representative to attend the CSD 14 meeting in New York from 1 to 12 May 2006. ENERGIA is an organising partner in the Women’s Major Group in the CSD 14 process and as such a woman’s representative from PEG would have been preferred. But due to the non-availability of a woman representative, Anare Matakiviti’s participation was recommended to ENERGIA and this was accepted. As a representative of the PEG Network, the partial sponsorship from ENERGIA allowed participation in the CSD 14 meeting from 29 April to 8 May. A request was put to SOPAC for co-sponsorship and they met all the expenses from 9 to 12 May.

The Women, Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) provided the necessary accreditation. This is an important requirement to participate in the CSD 14 meeting. Without accreditation, one cannot participate in the meeting.

PREPARATORY MEETINGS

Major groups met on Sunday, 30 April to discuss the CSD 14 processes and strategies to be adopted in order to make their engagement effective and more so their individual and collective voices recognised in the CSD 14 proceedings.

A similar meeting was organised by ENERGIA for all its sponsored representatives following the Major Groups’ meeting on Sunday. This was an introductory meeting and apart from meeting representatives from different regions (Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Pacific) the ENERGIA Secretariat took the opportunity to brief representatives on the mechanics of the CSD 14 and how representatives could make productive contributions in order that energy and gender issues and especially energy issues that impact on women’s livelihoods are recognised in the CSD 14 processes.

The CSD 14 meeting officially opened on Monday 1 May 2006. As part of the strategy adopted by the Energy and Gender group, a briefing meeting was always organised at 0830 hours every morning before the discussion on the thematic cluster of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change commenced at 1000 hours. There were two major objectives of these meetings. First the meeting provided the opportunity to strategise on the approach to be taken by the group for that particular day. This would include the allocation of tasks for each member of the group and these tasks could be effectively accomplished using the CSD 14 processes. Central to the execution of the day’s tasks was the emphasis placed on ensuring that the key message of increasing women’s access to sustainable energy in order to meet their social and economic development needs and to promote their social and political empowerment was highlighted during the thematic cluster discussions. There were

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1 The invitation from ENERGIA was received late due to problems encountered by the SOPAC email system and identifying a woman representative within the short time given proved difficult.
2 Anare is an Energy Adviser based at the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) Secretariat in Fiji. He is a founding member of the PEG Network.
3 ENERGIA Secretariat was represented by its Coordinator, Ms Shiela Oparaccha.
two ways of passing this key message across – one was through direct intervention during the interactive discussions and two through incorporating the necessary statement into the countries’ statements and/or through other Major Groups interventions. The latter required lobbying and consultations with the countries’ and Major Groups’ representatives. Secondly, the meeting was also used as a debriefing forum for the previous day’s activities.

There were also other preparatory meetings that the group participated in, and these included, the Non-governmental Organisations meetings and the Women’s Caucus meetings, which were usually convened daily at 0900 hours and 1400 hours respectively.

**ENERGY AND GENDER/WOMEN**

From the energy and gender perspective, the group highlighted a “seven-step framework for integrating gender and energy” into the energy programmes and urged governments through the CSD 14 process to adopt. The seven key actions for a “new deal for women in the energy sector” included:

(i) Invest in affordable end-use technologies and fuels that directly meet poor women’s energy need; particularly for saving time and labour, reducing indoor air pollution, improving health, and ensuring food and personal security. High potential technologies and fuels include those for:

- Cooking, heating and food processing (e.g. liquefied petroleum gas, kerosene, improved cooking stoves, biomass briquettes, biogas and bio-ethanol);
- Mechanical power for water pumping and purification, grinding and transportation (e.g. windmills, water mills, solar pumps, electrical grid, motors run on liquid fuel such as gasoline, diesel or bio-fuel).
- Lighting for homes, streets and public toilets, communication, refrigeration, health education and social services (e.g. electrical grid, diesel generators, wind turbines, hydro-electric generations, solar photovoltaic panels, hybrid generating systems).

(ii) Promote sustainable livelihoods through the provision of energy services that permit poor women to increase their productivity and add value to their
labour. High-impact strategies include involving women in producing, managing and marketing new energy services within micro-enterprises.

(iii) Collect and utilise gender-disaggregated data and conduct gender analysis at each step of policy, programme and project planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

(iv) Support individual capabilities of poor women who need technical training, information and skills to operate energy technologies and businesses.

(v) Build institutional capacity to develop a critical mass of women and men to engage in gender issues within the energy and development sectors.

(vi) Adapt and apply specific, proven “best practice” development sector approaches to overcome institutional constraints such as women’s lack of access to financing, extension services, training and employment in the energy sector.

(vii) Ensure equal institutional representation of women in decision-making in organisations and fora that affect women’s vital energy interests such as at CSD 14 and 15.

The above statements were also incorporated into the Women’s Major Group Statement during the CSD 14 Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue 2. A copy of this statement is attached as Annex I.

SIDE EVENTS

The Energy and Gender Group also participated in the CSD 14 Side Events. The side events the group participated in were carefully selected giving due consideration to maximising participation of members and at the same time ensuring that the key messages related to energy and gender in particular those impacting the livelihood of women were articulated.

In addition to participating in the side events, the group also participated in the UNDP sponsored “Knowledge Expo.” This was a three-day event where the group organised a “booth-display” of materials highlighting energy and gender issues from different regions of the world – including Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Pacific.

CSD 14 CHAIRMAN’S SUMMARY

The draft summary of the Chairman’s report part 1 was distributed on the afternoon of Wednesday, 10 May. The Chair’s summary report highlighted that the thematic clusters of issues – energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change are intricately linked and of great importance in our quest to achieve sustainable development.
The report highlighted the achievements that have been made but also recognised the need to increase effort in some key areas e.g. access to modern energy services, energy security, renewable energy technologies, emission limitation and adaptation to climate change, cleaner production methods and modern industrial development.

With reference to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) the report highlighted the need to allocate more financial resources, the transfer of appropriate technology and the building of capacity in SIDS to enhance their capacity to implement programmes and provide them with the opportunity to meet their commitment under international agreements, specifically the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI) and the UN Millennium Declaration.

In terms of Pacific SIDS, the report recognised the special challenges facing the island nations and the need to find unique solutions to these challenges. The report recognised the step taken by Pacific SIDS in their regional approach to addressing these challenges through the Pacific Plan.

Issues impacting the livelihood of women were also given prominence in the Chair’s report. The report highlighted that addressing poverty issues would necessitate addressing women’s energy needs. Issues such as access to energy services, ownership, affordable and clean technologies for reducing air pollution, improving health and ensuring food and personal security and the need to invest women’s time into more productive activities and supporting women’s effort to be more involved in energy planning and technical education and training were articulated.

The report also highlighted that a major challenge in addressing the thematic clusters was in the area of integration with the national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) and poverty reduction strategies. Further, the report highlighted the need to break down general and long-term targets and goals into specific and short-term components.

**CONCLUSION**

Attending the meeting provided the opportunity to experience not only the CSD process but also the opportunity to meet and work with a number of Major Groups stakeholders, including the energy and gender group. The Energy and Gender Group in itself comprised of a number of representatives from a diverse geographical and cultural background and interacting on a common theme “energy and gender/women” during the CSD 14 meeting was a treasured experience. Sharing experiences with a group of dedicated and enthusiastic women working in the field of energy and gender from the African continent, Asia, Europe, US and the Caribbean proved very rewarding to me personally. Although separated by vast continental and geographical land mass and ocean, with diverse socio-economic status, there is a general consensus that women’s energy issues in these different regions converge with respect to raising women’s social and economic status in society.

While the intervention from the group during the thematic discussions was remarkable, there was room for improvement. For example, in requesting countries
to make statements on certain issues of interest, the information ought to be provided to country delegates well in advance (a day earlier) to allow time for countries to incorporate them into their prepared statements. These statements preferably are to be typed.

In preparation for the CSD15 next year, it would be imperative for the group members collectively and individually to identify key players from within their own countries and regions and commence dialogue and consultations on policy issues that will need to be taken up and addressed by the CSD 15 process. National and regional consultations targeting these key players will be a necessary component of a strategic drive to push the energy and gender agenda into the CSD 15 process.

Finally I take the opportunity to thank ENERGIA International for their sponsorship enabling me to participate in the CSD 14 meeting. I also thank my energy and gender colleagues from Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe and the US for their support and encouragement throughout the CSD 14 meeting. It was professionally and personally enlightening working with a group of talented and committed women. Sharing their personal experiences on energy and gender in the context of their individual countries and experiencing their resolve to raise awareness of the energy and gender issues at the UN level was inspiring.
ANNEX I

Women’s Major Group intervention
During CSD-14 Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue 2

Women’s groups from around the world have come to this session to join the UN, governments and institutions in understanding what has and has not worked in guaranteeing women’s access and empowerment in relation to energy and climate change decision-making. The CSD is a forum for intergovernmental dialogue, collaboration, and learning. However, many interventions have focused on micro-level activities and avoided discussions of international cooperation that are critical if any progress is to be made. Furthermore, business and industry have been given special status and market-based strategies have been incorrectly validated as a fix-all solution to energy poverty and access.

The Decision of CSD-9 called on all governments to undertake actions “supporting international endeavours to promote equal access and opportunities for women in relation to energy, including credit facilities, and involvement in energy policy decision-making processes” as well as to strengthen the role of women in decision-making. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation reaffirmed the commitment “to ensuring that women’s empowerment, emancipation and gender equality are integrated in all activities encompassed within Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals and the Plan of Implementation of this Summit.” These commitments were also reflected in the Beijing Platform for Action, Chapter E.

The Women’s Major Group has learnt that a critical means to tackling energy poverty and unsustainable energy use requires a commitment to a rights-based and gender sensitive approach, to energy policy planning and implementation. We urge governments to refocus their commitments during this review session on international cooperation toward meeting these goals, and setting targets and timetables during next year’s policy session to achieve them. We applaud governments who have taken leadership in this regard.

We would like to highlight eight key actions to achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The first action is to ensure women’s access to and ownership of clean and affordable energy sources, especially poor women in developing, transitional, and developed countries. Governments should invest in affordable end-use technologies and fuels that directly meet poor women’s energy needs; particularly for saving time and labour, income generation, reducing indoor air pollution, improving health, and ensuring food and personal security. Intellectual property rights should not limit women’s access to energy technologies.

The second action is to replace nuclear energy with readily available renewable energy sources (such as solar, wind, biofuels, etc). This is an unsustainable, polluting, and dangerous source of energy and is a concern for women from around the globe. Governments must phase out nuclear and shift subsidies to the research, production and dissemination of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency. We call for this to be reflected in the Chair’s summary and the same consideration to be given to fossil fuels.

The third action is to guarantee women’s effective participation, representation and decision-making at every level. We can start with gender balance in the panels, bureau, and delegations at CSD-15.
The fourth action is to develop the capacities of energy institutions to engage with gender issues. Governments should support professional education for women in energy, urban planning, engineering and vocational technical training, as well as gender training for energy professionals. This will facilitate a critical mass of women and men practitioners that can effectively integrate a gender perspective in the energy and development sectors.

The fifth action is to build the individual capabilities of women to facilitate their access to information, skills development, and management and ownership of energy technologies and businesses. Governments must actively support mentorship for young women and women’s involvement in producing, managing and marketing new energy services linked to employment creation and micro/meso-enterprises.

The sixth action is to ensure that conservation and environmentally friendly-approaches are central to the provision of energy services, with particular attention to women’s use of biomass and the possible impacts on biodiversity.

The seventh action is to engender energy policy-making, project implementation and financial mechanisms. Governments and energy institutions should collect and utilize gender-disaggregated data and conduct gender analysis at each step of policy, programme and project planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The eighth action is to ensure that all climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions incorporate the different needs and interests of women and men, particularly given the disproportionate impacts of natural disasters on women.

These actions are not only best practiced, they are also essential to addressing energy poverty, not only for women, but for all. The Women’s Major Group calls on governments to work together at CSD to create a “new era for women in the energy sector”.

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