

Universal Energy Access Towards 2030: Role of Multilateral Agencies

(7 March 2011) Today, there are about 3 billion people – more than half of the people in developing countries – still without electricity or clean cooking facilities. In response, the UN General Assembly recently adopted a resolution to designate 2012 as the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All which requests the Secretary General, relevant UN agencies and UN Energy to coordinate activities for the year. To support this, the Environment and Energy Group (EEG), Bureau for Development Policy hosted a presentation to explore opportunities for the international community to scale up efforts to achieve universal access to modern energy services by 2030 and highlight preparatory actions already underway.

The Director of EEG, Ms. Veerle Vandeweerd opened the brown bag by saying: “Thanks to UN-Energy and advocacy work in relation to MDGs and other processes, energy is now very high on the political agenda and the timing is right to present bold ideas.” She introduced panelists from the World Bank Group, UN Foundation and the GRATIS Foundation in Ghana to share their perspectives on the role of multilateral agencies to achieve universal access to modern energy services by 2030.



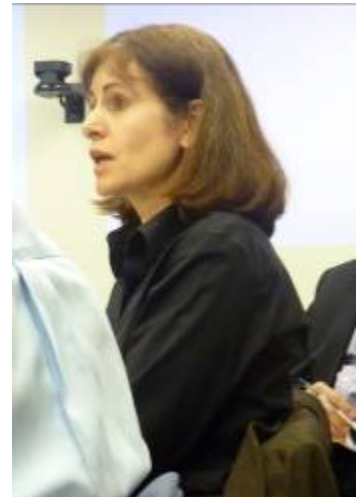
Dr. Sabina Mensah, Food Scientist Gender and Development Coordinator of the GRATIS Foundation in Ghana (left) with Ms. Veerle Vandeweerd, Director of EEG, UNDP (right).



Professor Daniel Kammen, the World Bank Group’s Chief Technical Specialist for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

Professor Daniel Kammen, the World Bank Group’s Chief Technical Specialist for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency noted it is possible to rapidly, affordably and sustainably provide energy services to the poor through efficient technology and renewable fuels. He pointed to Marginal Abatement Cost studies of an off grid community in Nicaragua’s Atlantic Coast to illustrate it is possible to deliver low-carbon rural energy services at cost savings. Prof. Kammen also suggested further exploration of the synergy between energy access and energy efficient initiatives since the poor spends a greater percentage of their income on energy, but also use some of the most inefficient technologies. “If you build more efficiency in from the beginning of the process of electrification, you can dramatically increase the effective supply available, and decrease the cost to the most affected individuals,” said Prof. Kammen.

Ms. Richenda Van Leeuwen, Senior Director of Energy and Climate at the United Nations Foundation noted that designation of 2012 as the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All is a “High-level goal for the world to coalesce around.” She discussed elements of Global Energy Access Campaign which recognizes UNDP’s strength at the national level and will look at adopting a broad based set of solutions, “It will be an opportunity to mobilize the global community around efficiency and energy access.”



Ms. Richenda Van Leeuwen, Senior Director of Energy and Climate, UNF

Dr. Sabina Mensah, a food scientist and Gender and Development Coordinator of the GRATIS Foundation in Ghana shared her perspectives on the need to mainstream gender into expanding

energy access to modern services. “Access to modern energy affects women and men differently,” said Dr. Mensah. “Women are the most affected as they bear most of the physical, time and health burden of traditional biomass collection.” It is important to take men and women different needs into consideration when designing energy policies and projects to significantly enhance economic development and sustainability of projects, says Dr. Mensah.

Following the presentations, an interactive discussion elaborated on various dimensions of sustainable energy for all. Attendees included colleagues from UNDP practice areas and bureaux, UNCDF, academia and civil society members.

About the Speakers

Prof. Daniel M. Kammen is the World Bank Group’s Chief Technical Specialist for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. He provides strategic leadership on policy, technical, and operational fronts. Previously, Prof. Kammen was Class of 1935 Distinguished Professor of Energy at the University of California, Berkeley. Prof. Kammen will share his insight on the role of multi-lateral agencies to achieve universal energy access by 2030. His blog articles may be found at: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/climatechange/team/daniel-kammen>
<http://www.greatenergychallengeblog.com/blog/author/dankammen/>

Ms. Richenda Van Leeuwen is Senior Director of the Energy and Climate team overseeing the UN Foundation’s work on energy access. She joined the UN Foundation in 2010 from Good Energies, a global renewable energy investment company. She currently serves on the board of SELCO India, a leading renewable energy social enterprise focusing on energy solutions for poor families in India.

Dr. Sabina Mensah is a food scientist and Gender and Development Coordinator of the GRATIS Foundation in Ghana. Her work includes mainstreaming gender as a sustainable approach to development and increasing the involvement of females in technical and non-traditional fields to better serve the needs of urban and rural communities.