



PRESS RELEASE

Government galvanises international support for women in energy

New York, 21 March 2024 - The Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO) in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (MNRE) convened an international discussion to mobilize support for Eswatini women in the energy sector. The official side event was held on the margins of the 68th Session on the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) in New York, USA, on 21 March 2024. It was themed: ***Accelerating gender equality and women's economic empowerment through clean energy investment.***

The side event also showcased best practices of initiatives implemented by the government in partnership with the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to improve the participation of women in the energy sector. It was attended by representatives of member states, civil society organizations, development partners, and donors who participated in the conference held between March 11 to 22.

UNDP supported the participation of the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini delegation under the [Powering Gender Equality initiative](#). Funded by the Republic of Korea and Luxembourg, through the UNDP Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Funding Window, this project aims to boost women's economic empowerment, enhance gender-responsive energy governance, and support energy policy frameworks that accelerate gender equality. In Eswatini, this two-year initiative is [building the capacity of rural women](#) to take advantage of renewable energy to not only power their homes but also run small businesses to enhance their livelihoods. The project also aims to support the government in creating an enabling environment for women's participation in the energy sector through policies.

The side event was honoured by His Excellency Ambassador Thamsanqa Dlamini and the Senior Advisor for Gender Equality in UNDP delivered remarks. At the same time, the Under Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ms. Lomakhosi Dlamini, welcomed the participants through an introductory tourism video.

Powering Gender Equality is building on a gender audit of the energy sector which found that there is poor participation of women either as entrepreneurs or professionals. MNRE conducted the audit with support from the World Bank. Under the same initiative, 20 schoolgirls received a job shadowing opportunity in six major energy companies in Eswatini to expose them to the workplace and stimulate their interest in pursuing careers in the sector. In addition, in its first year of implementation (2023), Powering Gender Equality trained 50 women entrepreneurs on renewable and sustainable energy, started the process



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of supporting the government in developing a gender mainstreaming guiding tool, and sensitized 150 women in politics on mainstreaming gender in energy policies.

Director of the Gender Coordination Unit at DPMO, Nomzamo Dlamini, Principal Energy Officer at MNRE, Candy Stromvig, and UNDP Eswatini Governance Associate, Zanele Thabede-Vilakati formed a panel that unpacked the energy context of the country, challenges of women face and the response of the government in collaboration with development partners.

Quotes

“In Eswatini and beyond, the gender-energy linkages are apparent, and women are playing critical roles across energy value chains. However, especially due to gender social norms, women face significant barriers (here and everywhere) in participating in and influencing the clean energy sector, and are inadequately represented in energy governance and policy discussions,” said **Cate Owren, UNDP Senior Advisor on Gender Equality**.

“The gender audit revealed that the energy sector has huge gender gaps and has given the government essential information to plan future programmes to enhance the participation of women in the sector,” said **Candy Stromvig, the Principal Energy Officer at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy**.

About the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

[The Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW\)](#) is a commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at the United Nations Headquarters in New York for two weeks to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards, and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment worldwide. NGOs accredited to and in good standing with ECOSOC can also participate. This year’s theme is: **“Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective”**

About UNDP

As the United Nations lead agency on international development, UNDP works in 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. We help countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnerships abilities, and institutional capabilities, and to build resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Our work is concentrated on three focus areas; sustainable development, democratic governance, peacebuilding, and climate and disaster resilience.

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