The GMSC is happy to present its first issue of the gender newsletter that is publicly available online!

Women’s leadership on energy justice in productive sectors

A Gender and Energy side event, entitled “Women’s Leadership on Energy Justice in Productive Sectors” took place during the Vienna Energy Forum at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna, Austria, in late May. Organized by UNIDO’s Gender Mainstreaming Steering Committee and Energy Branch, with the support of the SEED Initiative, the side event brought together a dynamic panel of practitioners, experts and advocates who continued the debate on women’s leadership and economic empowerment in energy. Among those in attendance were UNIDO’s Director General, Kandeh Yumkella, and the former President of Ireland and founder of the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice, Mary Robinson.

Participating as panelists were Elizabeth Cecelski, energy economist, and Senior Technical Adviser for ENERGIA (the international network on gender and sustainable energy); Susan Kinne, SEED Award Winner and founder of the women’s cooperative, Mujeres Solares de Totogalpa; Lakshman Guruswamy, professor of international environmental law and director of Energy Environmental Security Initiative; and Georgina Kessel, the former energy minister of Mexico.

Discussions explored potential ways to ensure women’s leadership at the policy level, as well as means to promote women’s economic empowerment in the energy sector. There was a general consensus that in order to make a sustained impact on reducing poverty, energy strategies, policies and practices must empower women in both promoting their leadership and addressing the obstacles that currently deter their full and active participation. It should be noted that gender issues are expected to be incorporated into the forthcoming Final Declaration of the Vienna Energy Forum. Moreover, women’s economic empowerment in entrepreneurship is scheduled to be a plenary session at UNIDO’s upcoming General Conference in Lima, Peru at the end of the year. For more information please visit http://www.unido.org/gender.html for the final summary of the side event.

Energy and gender: an opportunity to make a difference!

A summary report of the Vienna Energy Forum (VEF) is now available on the Forum web page. The VEF discussions highlighted opportunities to make a difference and, as the summary report indicates, the energy/gender nexus is certainly an area of untapped possibilities! Forum participants concluded that gender ‘should be considered as one of the key variables in energy policy that can support the transformation to the sustainable future we want’ . Take at look at the report here.
The SEED Award of 2013

The SEED Award for Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Development, or SEED Award, is an annual awards scheme designed to identify and support the most promising and innovative social and environmental start-up enterprises in countries with developing and emerging economies. This year, UNIDO, together with UN Women and the international law firm Hogan Lovells, is sponsoring two SEED Awards for Gender Equality.

“Our sponsorship of the SEED Gender Equality Award offers a chance to integrate gender considerations more clearly into UNIDO’s Green Industry Initiative to promote industrial production and development that does not come at the expense of the health of natural systems or lead to adverse human health outcomes.”

-Heinz Leuenberger, Director of UNIDO’s Environmental Management Branch

The closing date for applications passed on 12th June, and the winners, selected by an international jury of external experts in sustainable development, will be announced in September. Keep up to date with the current status of the award here: www.seedinit.org/

Susan Kinne

The VEF gender and energy side event featured not only gender experts and high-level gender advocates, but also included practitioners from the field. For example, the inspiring Susan Kinne, SEED award winner in 2008, shared the success and innovations of her community-based initiatives in Latin America. A Californian native, Kinne moved to the rural countryside of Nicaragua in 1989 to help build what is now known as the solar community of Totogalpa. Through innovative and productive uses of modern energy technologies, Kinne has expanded economic opportunities for the community, particularly those of women.

With solar panels generating 1.2 KW of electricity, the Mujeres Solares de Totogalpa, a women’s cooperative, has established a solar restaurant that uses solar ovens to produce roasted coffee beans, cookies, cakes and jelly, generating income and promoting growth within the community. Moreover, Kinne introduced the concept of ‘edutourism’ – a collaboration with several universities that offers students courses in solar technologies on the Mujeres Solares de Totogalpa premises. Due to the marked success of such initiatives, similar projects have since been duplicated in neighbouring countries including Peru, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Haiti, Costa Rica, and Honduras.
Did you know?

- In the US, women are underrepresented in the green economy, holding just 29.5% of green jobs compared to 48% of the total US workforce (Source: Institute for Women’s Policy Research)
- Nearly 40% of the world’s population relies on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste to cook their food. (Source: Sustainable Energy for All)
- It is estimated that four millions deaths annually in the developing world are attributable to biomass fuels for cooking. (Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves)
- Out of the adult deaths attributed to solid fuel use for cooking, it is estimated that 60% are women. (Source: Social Development Papers, Paper No. 125 / August 2011)
- “In many developing countries, especially in the poorest areas, most energy currently comes from traditional biomass fuels – and collecting and managing these fuels is strictly the business of women. It follows that the lack of recognition of the role of women in the energy sector, leads to ‘gender-blind’ energy policies that fail to address some of the most pressing factors affecting the capacity of developing countries to adapt and mitigate climate change”. (Source: WomenWatch)
- The Gender Equality Index (GEI), developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality, recently released a video about the GEI. The index shows how far each country is from achieving gender equality and consists of six core domains: knowledge, time, money, power, work and health and two satellite domains intersecting inequalities and violence. The domain work shows gender disparities in how women and men are getting in and getting on in the labour market. The domain money highlights that lower earnings and income among women lead to greater risk of poverty. The latest index finds that Sweden, Denmark and Finland score the highest on GEI.

Recommended links:

- Why Gender and Energy? – ENERGIA
- Energy, Gender and Development: What are the linkages?
  [http://elibrary.worldbank.org/content/workingpaper/10.1596/1813-9450-5800](http://elibrary.worldbank.org/content/workingpaper/10.1596/1813-9450-5800)
- Energy and Gender Issues in Rural Sustainable Development
  [http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/ai021e/ai021e00.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/ai021e/ai021e00.htm)
- Generating Opportunities: Case Studies on Women and Energy
- Bringing a Woman’s Voice to Clean Energy

For any comments, further information or contributions, please contact: gender@unido.org