

STATUS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN ENERGY ACCESS IN NIGERIA

**Regional Validation Workshop for ECOWAS Policy for
Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access**

THEME

Promoting Social inclusion for Sustainable Energy for All

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INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this exercise we shall be focusing on the Status of Gender Mainstreaming in the Federal Ministry of Power, the Ministry charged with the management of energy in Nigeria.

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GENDER EXPERTISE, COMPETENCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

GENDER EXPERTISE:

- **In the Federal Ministry of Power, Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Focal Point on Gender Issues is located within the Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Gender and Human Rights Unit.**

The unit, which works under the direct supervision of the Permanent Secretary, is headed by a Deputy Director, who is assisted by a Chief Executive Officer and a Gender Officer.

Out of 12 (twelve) departments and stand-alone units in the Ministry, 6 (six) are headed by female directorate level officers.

- **With regards to gender matters, the Unit's role is to advise and guide all departments within the Ministry and all other government agencies and stakeholders within the energy industry, on the need to comply with the National Gender Policy as well as the various National Policies on Energy.**

The unit is also charged with guiding management on the best methods of integrating the social dimensions of access to energy with the core technical issues of transmission, generation and distribution of power.

- **The Unit acts as an advocate for, and as a liaison office between the general public and government on matters related to gender and energy.**

- **Notwithstanding the foregoing, more than 25 female officers of the Ministry within the junior and senior cadre have been sent on training programmes within and outside the shores of Nigeria in order to enhance their skills and knowledge in areas relevant to their core duties.**

GENDER AND ENERGY PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS IN NIGERIA

One of the programmes specifically designed to uplift the access of women to energy in rural areas is:

‘Operation Light Up Rural Nigeria’ is a project specially dedicated to the provision of energy through solar power in rural areas.

A pilot programme was commissioned in some villages in the outskirts of the Federal Capital Territory.

It provides streetlights and about 1 KW of lighting per household (sufficient for 10 lighting points, 2 electric fans, and 1 refrigerator) in 1,000 households per village. Thus each village consumes a total of about 1MW.

The transformation in the lives of women living in these villages who traditionally bear the burden of caring for the home has been amazing. For example, children now can study with modern electricity instead of candles and lanterns, while medication and food can be preserved through refrigeration.

As funds become available, more rural settlements would have solar energy panels installed in their communities.

Recently, the Federal Executive Council, which is the highest decision making organ of the Federal Government, approved the procurement of 1 million eco-friendly clean cooking stoves for distribution to women in the rural areas.

This is to encourage the women to depend less on firewood, reduce the rate of desertification, reduce smoke related diseases among women and boost job creation.

The Vice President flagged off the distribution of these stoves on the 19th of May 2015.

CHALLENGES FACED BY FEMALE ENERGY ENTREPRENEUR

- **Difficulty in accessing funds to finance projects within the energy sector.**
- **Even where funds are available, women have to surmount traditional biases that regard the female as less competent to bid for and implement contracts in the energy sector which has long been dominated by men.**

- **Due to the lack of exposure to female role models in the technical field of engineering and other core professions within the energy sector, young female students are less likely to opt to study those subjects that would give them a better chance of embarking on successful careers in the energy sector.**
- **Religious and cultural stereotypes further inhibit women from pursuing entrepreneurial careers in the energy sector.**

**EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF MEN & WOMEN IN
THE ENERGY SECTOR AS EMPLOYEES**

- **The ratio of males to females in technical positions in Ministry of Power is 4:1.**
- **Factors responsible for this include lack of interest in technical subjects, societal influence, poor academic foundations, as well as religious and cultural backgrounds.**
- **Government has not mandated the recruitment of a fixed percentage of technical positions to be set-aside for qualified females through an affirmative action policy.**

The ongoing efforts to address these issues:

At the level of junior and senior secondary schools, efforts are underway by the Federal and State Governments to improve the quality of technical education beginning with the increased admission of student teachers at the tertiary level that would study technical and science subjects.

The Federal Government established a total of 46 Federal Universities apart from 40 state and 61 private universities in the country.

15 of them were established for the teaching of Science and Technology.

As more funds become available, women in the Ministry and other agencies of government within the energy sector would be given the opportunity to undergo training in their core competencies so as to improve their skill sets.

Government has also undertaken to recruit more trained teachers in the field of Guidance & Counseling at the junior and secondary school levels so as to guide young female students aright in their career decisions and to encourage those technically inclined towards professions in the energy sector.

POLICIES AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS

- **National Electric Power Policy (NEPP), 2001.**
- **National Energy Policy (NEP), 2003**
- **National Economic Empowerment & Development Strategy (NEEDS), 2004**
- **National Power Sector Reform Act (EPSRA), 2005**
- **Renewable Energy Master Plan, 2005**
- **Renewable Electricity Policy Guidelines (REPG), 2006**

- **Draft Rural Electrification Strategy and Implementation Plan (RESIP), 2014**
- **National Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy (NREEEP), 2015**

**MAIN CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO
GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN ENERGY
ACCESS IN NIGERIA**

- **Lack of Technical knowledge.**
- **Lack of access to affordable financing.**
- **Lack of exposure to role models.**
- **Cultural Inhibition.**
- **Non availability of affirmative action policy to encourage the recruitment of women in the energy sector**

**EXTERNAL SUPPORT NEEDED TO PUT THE
ECOWAS GENDER AND ENERGY POLICY
INTO ACTION IN NIGERIA**

- **Capacity building for women across all professions in the energy sector.**
- **ECREEE should organize a national workshop or seminar on the ECOWAS Gender and Energy Policy to be targeted at educationists, policy makers at the highest levels of national and state governments, captains of industry in the energy sector, CEO's of government agencies and other energy related stakeholders, gender specialists, etc.**
- **Awareness of the policy should be heightened through a targeted and persistent media blitz.**

THANK YOU