



SUSTAINABLE
ENERGY FOR ALL

Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) announces that the first two years of the SE4ALL Decade will focus on women, energy and health.

Wednesday, 5 February 2014, New Delhi – Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella, Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All and Chief Executive of the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative, urged countries across Asia to commit to achieving sustainable energy for all by the year 2030 by increasing access to energy, improving energy efficiency and increasing the use of renewables. He was speaking at the Asia regional launch of the **UN Decade for Sustainable Energy for All (2014-2024)**, hosted by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) on the occasion of its annual flagship event Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS). Also present on the occasion were Dr Shashi Tharoor, Hon'ble Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Dr R K Pachauri, Director General, TERI and Mr Dev Sanyal, Executive Vice President and Group Chief of Staff, BP p.l.c.

Dr Yumkella, who also chairs UN- Energy, the coordinating arm of UN agencies dealing with energy related issues, stated that “The first two years of the SE4ALL Decade will focus on the theme of women, energy and health,” and positioned the initiative as an incentive for “those who care about women and the MDG (Millenium Development Goal) of health.”

Reports suggest that women and children die more from air pollution than HIV and malaria combined. In some countries when women cook using coal or fire wood, they carry babies on their back as they inhale the smoke thus causing premature deaths. In health care settings, the effects of energy poverty can be devastating especially in childbirth, where darkness can mean death, and where light can mean life. Women face grave risks when they have to rely on a clinic that has no electricity.

“Access to modern energy services, lighting, refrigeration, and clean water is essential for social and economic development in nearly every sector; in health care, it is more than that – it can mean the difference between life and death,” Dr Yumkella underscored. “For countries in Africa and South Asia where millions live in abject poverty,” Dr Yumkella emphasized that “women and children are the most affected and lack of energy is the

number two killer of women around the world.” He exhorted policymakers and the business sector to join hands, emphasizing that “we cannot win the battle to eliminate poverty without placing sustainable energy at the center”.

Dr Shashi Tharoor highlighted that “India is deeply committed to all the three focus areas of the SE4ALL initiative. We have energy access as our domestic goal already. The government aims to double the country’s energy capacity and it’s a challenge, not just for the government alone, but the civil society and the private sector. We all have a role to play in SE4ALL.”

Dr Yumkella also noted that nations around the world must come together to accelerate the pace of innovations in the energy sectors to meet both the demands of higher populations, higher rates of urbanization and the desire of developing countries and emerging economies to industrialize and create wealth for their own citizens.

Dr R.K. Pachauri expressed his solidarity with the initiative, pointing out that, “We, at TERI, are delighted that the UN has taken this step,” and stressed that “we need sustainable energy to be the engine and driver for making a sustainable difference.” He referred to TERI’s long-term work in the area of sustainable energy and its involvement in implementing programs in the area for several years, particularly in Africa.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously declared 2014-2024 as the Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, underscoring the importance of energy issues for sustainable development and for the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

In recognition of women and children, the initiative – Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) is dedicating the first year of the decade to the **Energy-Women-Children-Health** Nexus to raise awareness about the potential benefits modern energy services can bring to women and children.

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