

CSW67 side event



Sustainable energy innovation: Powering gender equity

Friday March 17, 2023

08:15 - 09:30 EST

Room CR-8, UN HQ GA Building, New York

Live webcast: <https://media.un.org/en/webtv>



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Sustainable energy innovation - Powering gender equity

Date and time: Friday, 17 March 8:15 AM - 9:30 AM EST (2:15 - 3:30pm CET)

Format: Hybrid event (speakers in person)

Room: CR-8 (96 seats, webcast); online via UN Web TV,

<https://media.un.org/en/webtv>

Co-Organizers: SEforALL, Gender Energy Compact (UNIDO, ENERGI A, GWNET)

CSW Theme Priority: Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Science is clear: carbon emissions must be reduced if climate change is to be mitigated. Through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) and the Paris Agreement (2015), the global community has embarked on an ambitious program to slow warming and, if possible, to keep global temperature rises below 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels. With over 70% of greenhouse gas emissions stemming from the energy sector, **a clean energy transition is critical to addressing climate change.**

Nations and the private sector have joined in this effort by making their own unilateral “Net Zero” commitments to reduce emissions by around mid-century, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and - specific to energy - SDG7, which is to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

However, Net Zero targets and SDG7 can only be achieved with the meaningful and equitable inclusion of women as energy users, producers, innovators, and decision-makers. The transformation of the sector towards sustainable clean energy sources provides a unique opportunity for greater gender diversity across economies, in technology innovation, green manufacturing, digitalization and climate mitigation and adaptation.

Research increasingly demonstrates the benefits of integrating gender considerations into the energy value chain and throughout the power sector. When the barriers that prevent women from having equal access to energy and economic opportunities are removed, significant productivity gains are unlocked, thereby strengthening development and economic outcomes. Additionally, women are transforming the energy sector in their roles as energy entrepreneurs, innovators, and decision makers (USAID 2018).

Innovation is also a crucial driver to reduce costs and increase the competitiveness of clean energy technologies. Diversity has been shown to unlock innovation and is good for businesses (McKinsey&Company, 2015 & EY 2015).

While the barriers women face in the energy sector are systemic, the urgent need to deliver on Net Zero targets and SDG7 requires countries and organizations to prioritize attracting and retaining a diverse, gender-balanced workforce in the energy sector as well as a gender diverse entrepreneurial ecosystem. Panelists will highlight the leading role of women in energy technology innovation and will elaborate on the following questions:

- Challenges/ Barriers/ Problem: What are the current challenges that women and girls face in sustainable energy and what are some of the success stories we can learn from (e.g. Solar Sister)? What is the role of education?
- Opportunity: How can technological innovation empower women in the sustainable energy sector? What are the benefits of sustainable energy technology for gender equality and women's empowerment?
- Concrete Recommendations:
 - How can governments and the private sector support women cleantech innovators/entrepreneurs?
 - How do we further include women in the clean energy value chain?
 - How do we empower women and girls as cleantech innovators/entrepreneurs?

Expected Outcome:

- Awareness raised on the gender energy nexus and the role of women in energy, as well as the need for gender responsive technology innovation
- New signatories for the Gender Energy Compact
- Recommendations from the event collected and outcome article/ blog post/ press release/ communique drafted

Tentative Agenda

Moderator: Kanika Chawla, Chief of Staff, SEforALL

1. Welcome (5 minutes)

- Ralf Bredel, Director and UNIDO representative New York

2. Opening (setting the scene) (10 minutes)

- Anna Pála Sverrisdóttir, Counsellor, Iceland Mission to the UN
- Sweden (TBC)

3. Panel Discussion (40 minutes)

Speakers:

- Katherine Lucey, Founder and CEO, Solar Sister
- Jacob Thoppil, Lead Partnerships Officer, Climate Investment Funds
- Anita Otubu, Senior Director, Universal Energy Facility
- Representative from PPF/ Accelerator/ Incubator (TBC)
- Youth Representative (TBC)

4. Q&A (15 minutes)

5. Closing Remarks (5 minutes)

- Championing Country (TBC)