

STAKEHOLDER ACTION TO ENHANCE WOMEN'S UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

INTRODUCTION

The Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network commissioned a Rapid Assessment on Gender and Energy in Zimbabwe in March 2017. This study was conducted under the project 'Advocating for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Access and Utilisation of Green and Inclusive Energy in Zimbabwe.' Key recommendations, emanating from the conclusions on gaps and opportunities that currently exist to enhance women's universal access to renewable energy, were drawn for different stakeholders. This fact sheet presents a summary of these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT

- **Conduct comprehensive research on Gender and Energy in Zimbabwe.** There exists little evidence on gender and energy in Zimbabwe to inform policy and programmes. The Ministry of Energy and Power Development (MoEPD) should conduct comprehensive research on gender and energy in Zimbabwe, in order to inform policy development and programmes.
- **Develop Gender Mainstreaming strategy for the Energy Sector.** There is currently no overarching policy framework to guide gender mainstreaming in energy programmes. It is critical for the Zimbabwean government, through a partnership between the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development and the MoEPD, to come up with a gender mainstreaming strategy for the energy sector.
- **Focus on smaller energy, off grid projects.** It has been demonstrated that most women cannot afford connection and sustaining the connection to current on-grid energy solutions. Secondly they are expensive and therefore rolled out slowly. Government needs to give adequate attention and capacitate communities for smaller off grid projects which are affordable and sustainable for women and vulnerable groups.
- **Learn from CSO Pilot projects and replicate renewable energy projects that worked.** Numerous micro-renewable energy projects have been undertaken by CSOs have potential for scaling up pro-poor energy solutions that will benefit a large proportion of women. The government should replicate successful renewable energy projects for the benefit of the general public.
- **Incentivize and subsidize gender and energy initiatives.** In as much as renewable Energy is sustainable, it comes with a huge cost. There is therefore need for the government and other stakeholders to consider subsidizing or developing financing mechanisms for RE products and services to make them affordable and accessible to the poor, including women.
- **There is need re-establish the Gender and Energy Network of Zimbabwe.** To give voice to women in the male dominated energy sector, there is need re-establish the Gender and Energy Network of Zimbabwe.

- **Gender should always be mainstreamed in all energy projects.** Institutions and organisations mandated to oversee and implement energy programmes do not have capacity to mainstream gender. It is therefore imperative that gender related organisations offer technical and advisory support on gender issues to energy focused organisations and institutions to make mainstreaming feasible.
- **Zimbabwe should also adopt the SADC Gender mainstreaming recommendations for the energy sector.** Adopting these recommendations will provide a firm footing for gender mainstreaming in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

- **Research and Documentation.** Advocacy work in renewable energy sector is not well supported by documented evidence. Advocacy initiatives lack evidence to prove their case of the benefits associated with decentralizing energy systems including renewable energy and specifically targeting women. CSOs need to prioritise evidence building on gender and energy.
- **Capacity Building of Energy CSOs in Gender mainstreaming.** CSOs in the energy sector lack skills to analyze policies, and energy plans from a gender perspective. Women organisations need to focus on building capacity of CSOs in the energy sector to improve gender mainstreaming.
- **Capacity Building of Women:** Civil society organisations in the energy and non-energy sector need to: 1) support capacity building of women in renewable energy technologies; and 2) assist women to organise themselves for other opportunities in renewable energy, for instance jobs, and entrepreneurial activities which will enhance their access to renewable energy.
- **Gender Budgeting and Tracking Public Financing to promote Women's Access to Renewable Energy.** As is already the mandate of civil society to hold the government accountable, Energy and Gender sector CSOs should build capacity to track public financing of renewable energy, and advocating for government to mainstream gender in energy financing.
- **CSOs can engage the private sector as financiers of renewable energy technologies** to ensure sustainability of RE projects, affordability and accessibility to women and marginalized groups.
- **Renewable Energy Awareness.** Women are generally unaware of the opportunities available in the energy sector value chain. CSOs have to raise awareness on the opportunities for different groups of women in the Renewable Energy sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRIVATE SECTOR

- **Establishing Renewable Energy plants is an expensive undertaking in the short term, but cheaper in the long term.** As part of fulfilling their corporate social responsibilities, private sector organizations can individually or collectively develop or set up renewable energy technologies for the benefit of communities.
- **Establish Partnerships with government,** CSOs and the private sector. It is clear that enhancing women's access to renewable energy requires a multisector approach. Private sector involvement is critical for sustainability community micro-renewable energy initiatives. CSOs would mobilize communities while government could offer incentives to private sector for investment in low income communities such as tax breaks, and removal of import duties.

