

BUSINESS ACTION FOR ENERGY

Working for Sustainable Solutions

AIR POLLUTION



The Issue

More than half of the world's population depends on traditional biomass or other energy sources that result in unhealthy indoor air pollution and the International Energy Agency expects this trend to continue to rise. The World Health Organization states that 1.6 million people die every year from indoor air pollution, touching vulnerable groups like women and children, the elderly, and those with impaired respiratory and immune systems. This area should be given a high priority in the overall cluster of energy and other issues for this CSD cycle, in light of its health, environmental and social impacts.

The use of traditional biomass fuels for cooking and heating arises from a complicated set of factors, ranging from cultural tradition and behavior to the burdens and limits of poverty. In this context, a particularly important factor is lack of access to safer, reliable and more affordable energy services. Currently, approximately 2.4 billion people do not have access to modern energy services and rely on traditional energy sources. Lack of access to energy hinders development (including the Millennium Development Goals), undermines economic growth and strains the environment.

Outdoor air pollution also needs to be reduced, taking into account its relation to transportation, industry, urban development and energy production and consumption.

Key Policy Recommendations

1. The provision of improved energy services requires enabling conditions that also set the stage for other societal benefits. These framework conditions will support energy and other infrastructure investments and capacity building, contributing to better options to traditional biomass.
2. Integrated energy, transport and environmental policies and their concerted implementation by governments in partnership with other stakeholders are important.
3. Business is investing resources in technology advancement and the deployment of less polluting, lower carbon, and renewable and more efficient technologies. Developing and using both existing and new energy technologies are critical to improving access to energy, promoting energy efficiency and reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
4. Recognizing that ongoing technological innovation may provide solutions to current challenges, all energy sources should be considered as options to meet increasing energy demand.
5. Significant investment is required to maintain, grow and deliver the energy supplies required to meet future demand in a sustainable manner, and to address climate change mitigation and adaptation while also improving air quality. Business (as a major investor), other investors and governments need to collaborate and work in partnership in this endeavor.

BAE is an ad-hoc, temporary business initiative bringing together a comprehensive network of global businesses. It brings together international, regional and sector organizations and major energy producers and consumers.



6. Governments can promote and enable investments in improved, less polluting technologies by leveraging official development assistance, promoting technological cooperation and exploring innovative financing arrangements.

Successful Case Studies and Partnerships

1. WLPGA/UNDP LP Gas Rural Energy Challenge South Africa – Creating commercially sustainable gas markets for low-income households and reducing health and environmental impacts.

Improved health as a result of reduced indoor air pollution is one of the key benefits of using liquefied petroleum (LP) gas, rather than traditional household fuels such as firewood or coal, in a domestic environment. This public-private partnership initiative is designed to create viable and sustainable markets for LP gas delivery and consumption as a means to provide a wide range of productive services, thereby contributing to sustainable energy solutions to improve people's lives in selected developing countries.



2. The Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles – Phasing out leaded gasoline and improving air quality in developing countries.

Launched at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the global Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) assists developing countries in phasing out leaded gasoline and taking other measures to improve air quality. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) hosts the partnership, and the partners comprise governments, industry, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. The partnership provides advice and support to countries by holding regional, sub-regional and in-country planning and technical workshops, produces guidance documents and engages with government decision-makers. *Source: IPIECA oil & gas industry partnership publication, 2006.*



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