

ACCESS TO ENERGY IS BOTH A DEVELOPMENT ISSUE AND A GENDER ISSUE BECAUSE IT IMPACTS MEN AND WOMWNE IN DIFFERENT WAYS

REGIONAL POLICY MEETING

Executive Director of Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC) Dr. Govind Raj Pokharel and National Programme Manger of Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP) Mr. Kiran Man Singh have participated in the "High Level Regional Policy Meeting on Networking towards Gender and Poverty Sensitive Energy Policies" that took place at United Nations Conference Centre at Bangkok. from 3 - 4 November 2008. The main propose of the workshop was to discuss and develop the framework and initial action plan of regional Policy Innovation Forum (PIF) on Gender and Poverty that was formally launched as the outcome of the workshop. The participants got opportunities to learn and share about the "best practice" experiences in this event organized by the ENERGIA-International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy and the ESCAP-United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The Centre for Rural Technology, Nepal (CRTN) is the Asia Regional Secretariat of ENERGIA.



TEN YEARS GLORIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS



It is our great pleasure to state that the Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP) has made a history of its own by supporting the communities for generating more than four (4) Megawatt of electricity through the installation of decentralized community owned micro hydro systems in 25 hilly districts of the country. These schemes, which are commissioned by the villagers in the ten years of REDP operation, have made possible to access modern energy services by more than 200,000 people, both men and women, from these areas that are not likely to be connected to the national grid at least next five years. Numerous studies have testified that the REDP activities have helped community people to enhance their livelihoods by bringing positive changes in their social, economic and environmental conditions.

PROMOTING RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

REDP has shown a way for promoting energy entrepreneurship in Nepal by supporting micro-hydro, solar and biogas as entry points for the development of rural energy systems to reduce income inequalities and improve rural livelihoods. The programme focuses on integrated and decentralized management of energy services with emphasis on CBOs or private entrepreneurs to manage rural energy development. At the community level, the CBOs – like the MHFG – encourage their members to explore potential end uses appropriate to available skills and resources. Thus, the focus has been on promoting diversified end-use enterprises, including agro-processing mills such as rice hullers, grinders and oil expellers.

To take forward the benefits of REDP, the Government will need to consider a support package for rural-energy-based entrepreneurs, encompassing capacity building, information sharing and R&D. For this purpose, coordinated efforts of the Small and Cottage Industries Department (SCID), the Industrial Enterprise Development Institute (IEDI), the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), and commercial institutions and MFIs are recommended. The support package for energy SMEs could include the following elements.

- Promotion of information management and dissemination.
- Creation of a platform for sharing international knowledge and experience through the UNDP, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and bilateral agreements to provide quality training to rural entrepreneurs.
- Effective coordination between programmes related to SMEs and national-level training organizations.
- Promotion of the Government – SME partnerships that enhance the development impacts of energy projects. *(Source: Energy and Poverty in Nepal Challenges and the Way Forward, 2007)*