

Energy for the poor

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What we expect from political decision-makers

Statement prepared by the Project Group on Access to Energy for the Poor
April 2006

What we expect from political decision-makers

We expect from the Governments that they will make every effort, both through measures taken within their countries and in the framework of their overseas development cooperation, to help ensure that the global climate problem is not further exacerbated, and that access to clean energy for the poor, which is essential to poverty reduction, is substantially improved. Homework still to be done includes facilitating further reduction of CO₂ emissions by setting definite national targets for the increase to be achieved in the use of renewable energies as well as clear time frames, and ensuring appropriate monitoring. Development cooperation must not be instrumentalised in this process (e.g. by regarding developing countries as 'buffer' or 'balancing areas' for CO₂ emissions).

In detail, we call on the Governments of the industrial countries

- § to give access to energy for the poor a much higher priority in development cooperation;
- § to ensure that energy supply projects in development cooperation are designed to primarily improve the situation of the poor, and to facilitate small-scale commercial activities, i.e. to generate employment and income for the poor;
- § as biomass will remain the most important source of energy for the poor in rural areas, to make the management of forests and green spaces, soil conservation measures, reforestation and soil improvement through sustainable agriculture a central component of a strategy to promote renewable energy in development cooperation;
- § to regard the setting up of electricity supply systems in urban poor areas as well as rural areas, and the construction of long-distance power lines (especially in Africa) as particularly eligible for support;
- § in projects/programmes/activities supported, to pay special attention to the training of technicians and other personnel specialised in the field of energy supplies, and to professional and efficient business and financial management of utilities;
- § to ensure that the promotion of renewable energies in development cooperation is not primarily geared to commercial interests, but takes into account all existing potentials of environment-friendly energy supply and efficiency improvement;
- § regarding export credit guarantees and similar measures as well as public private partnerships in the energy sector, to support only those activities which are clearly designed to contribute to poverty eradication and correspond to the social and ecological criteria to be applied in development cooperation;
- § to pay particular attention to appropriate and adequate use of biomass and water energy in accordance with the resolution adopted by African Ministers of Energy at their Nairobi Meeting on 8 May 2004;
- § to discontinue promotion of energy projects which are not sustainable, e.g. in the fields of coal, oil and nuclear power, as it is also recommended by the final report of the Extractive Industries Review of the World Bank.

From the Governments of the developing countries we expect that

- § in their governmental policies, they give higher priority to measures aimed at improving access of the poor to clean energy;
- § they create a political and economic environment which is conducive to an expansion of renewable energies (e.g. abolition of import duties on photovoltaic components, and of local charges on solar home systems; prevention of abuse of market power of monopolies in the utilities sector; permission and ensuring market access of decentralised energy supply systems, etc.);
- § they actively involve civil society in the planning and implementation of measures, programmes and activities in the energy supply sector.