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Energy Transition and Post-Covid-19 Socio-economic Recovery: Role of Women and Impact on Them

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Scope of the study

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To assess the impact of the energy transition and post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery on women and their role in these processes. The scope of study includes:

- assess gender equality and women's empowerment in the energy transition
- analyse the developments in the energy sector: trends, developments, and innovation
- assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the energy sector, economy and social wellbeing, and its impact on women
- identify the opportunities and challenges facing women's participation in the economy, and specifically in the energy sector.
- promote women's participation to ensure successful transition to sustainable energy and green economy post-Covid-19 economic recovery

The study is supported by case studies from five countries of the UNECE region: Albania, Belarus, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and Uzbekistan.

The report culminates in a set of recommendations that will be useful for the UNECE member States in their decision-making.

**The report is currently in the final stages of completion.*

Developments in the Energy sector

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Transitioning to a low-carbon economy requires transformation at multiple levels

- Energy supply – renewable and non-renewable sources of energy generation, transmission and distribution systems, short-term and long-term energy storage
- Energy demand – energy consumption patterns, buildings, transport and infrastructure

Technological Pathways to Decarbonization

- zero-carbon electricity generation
- electrification of end-use
- synthetic fuels
- smart power grids
- materials efficiency
- sustainable land use

Trends in Energy Supply and End-use Technologies

- Low-carbon energy (LCE) supply technologies in Industries and Transport sector
- Built environment – energy efficiency across the sector (construction methods, materials, appliances etc.)
- Technological innovation and development – increased adoption of digitalization technologies
- Behavioural change influencing consumption patterns – development of circular economies

Opportunities and Challenges

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Challenges

Contextual Obstacles

- Women's own biases are holding themselves back from realizing their full potential to support society and the sustainable energy transition

Economic Obstacles

- access to finance and training to enter the formal labour market

Soft Obstacles

- Lack of information regarding employment opportunities acts as a barrier to women's employment in energy and other non-traditional sectors.
- access to mentors and role models
- low representation of women in senior roles

Opportunities

Energy Transition Trends and Developments across Technologies

- energy generation and storage
- carbon capture, utilization, and storage
- carbon circularity and material efficiency

Social Context

- During recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, governments and businesses should incorporate an intentional focus on gender equality

Job Creation and Diversity in Energy Entrepreneurship

- The energy transition has the potential to create employment opportunities for people from a diverse array of backgrounds, skillsets, and interests

Proposed Recommendations towards Gender Equality in the Energy Transition

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For Policymakers

- Adopt low-carbon energy pathways.
- Invest in technological development.
- Challenge social and cultural issues through awareness building.
- Ensure national energy security by promoting the adoption of LCE technologies in the energy mix and supporting the development of local supply chains in the energy sector to create green jobs.
- Employ financial tools and incentives to promote entrepreneurial activities across the energy sector.

For Industries

- capacity building through upskilling the current workforce
- review gender equality gaps
- promote networking and mentoring

Broad Recommendations from the study

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Labour Market Flexibility: Ensure that labour policy frameworks support flexible working approaches for women entrepreneurs and their businesses.

Challenge Social and Cultural Stigma: Empower women by helping them develop skills to build confidence to address cultural norms that may discourage women to explore opportunities in non-traditional economic sectors.

Networking and Mentoring: Find ways to support connections among female and male entrepreneurs, and among female members of the energy sector workforce; one option may be entrepreneurial networking including through small business initiatives and connecting large and small business.

Affordable Childcare and Healthcare: Access to quality affordable childcare and healthcare is critical for promoting women participation in all sectors of economy, including natural resources management and energy.

Capacity development: Provide opportunities for women to access training and education programmes that improve entrepreneurship and technical skills, to increase chances for success for women in the choice of their career.

Conclusions

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The overall findings from the research and analysis of country case studies are;

- the role of women in the energy sector is consistent with their qualifications in STEM fields
- the five country case studies revealed the stark reality of gender inequality in the energy sector
- most countries have policies and initiatives to address the observed disparities, but implementation is mostly voluntary
- behavioural change within society is equally important, to eliminate stereotype mind-sets and to pursue non-traditional opportunities in energy and subsectors of energy

Conclusions

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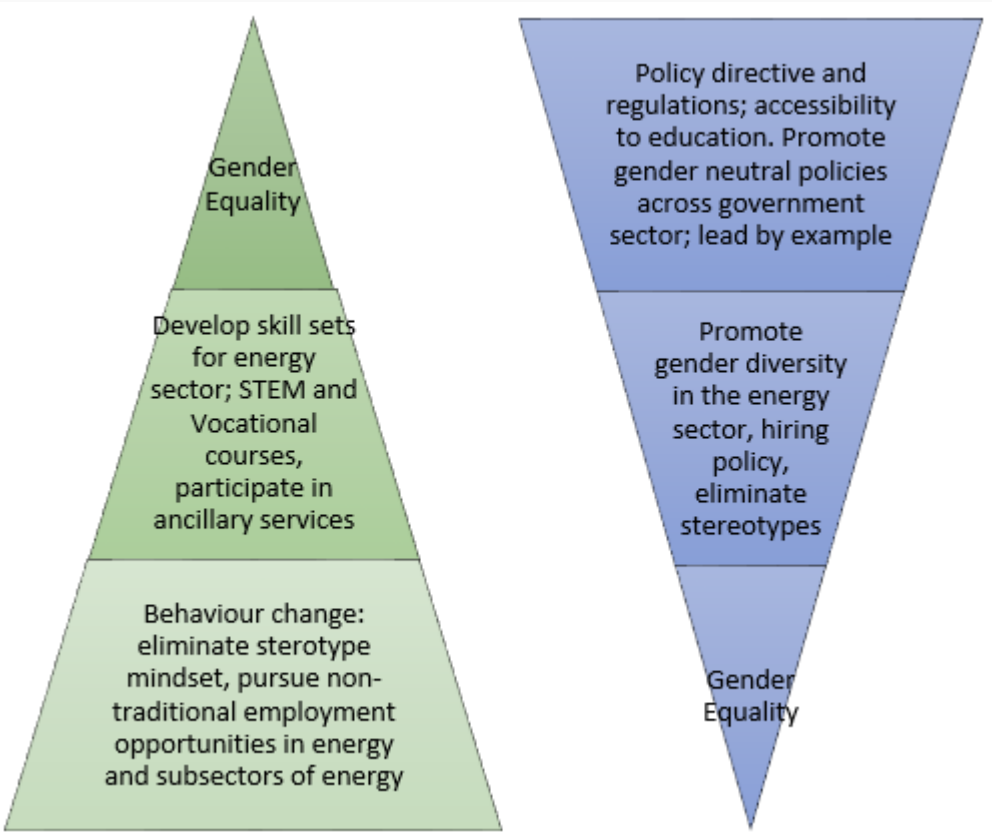
There are two ways to tackle the challenge of gender inequality: by adopting a top-down and a bottom-up complementary approach



Thank you.