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

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Study Objectives

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Women are under-represented in policymaking, corporate leadership and governance, entrepreneurs and venture capitalist, the labour workforce, and as consumers (decision-makers).

The energy sector is missing out on the experiences, skills, and talents of much of half the human population, which severely constrains the green energy transition.

Understanding this major challenge, the following three organizations requested the UNECE to undertake this study:

- The National Agency of Natural Resources (AKBN) of Albania
- The Department for Energy Efficiency of the State Standardization Committee of the Republic of Belarus
- The State Agency on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving (SAEE) of Ukraine

Study Scope

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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 the 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, the economy and social wellbeing, and its impact on women
- identify the opportunities and challenges facing participation of women in the economy, specifically in the energy sector.
- promote women's participation to ensure a successful transition to a sustainable energy system and green economy post-COVID-19

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

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

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
- alternative fuels
- smart power grids
- efficient materials use
- sustainable land use

Trends in Energy Supply and End-use Technologies:

- Low-carbon energy supply technologies in industries and transport sector
- Built environment – energy efficiency across the sector (construction methods, materials, appliances, etc.)
- Technological innovation and development - increase of digitalization
- Behavioural change influencing consumption patterns – development of circular economy



Contextual Obstacles

- Women's own biases are holding themselves back from realizing their full potential to support society and the sustainable energy transition. The energy sector could make stronger efforts to eliminate these false perceptions and promote more gender diversity.

Economic Obstacles

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

Soft Obstacles

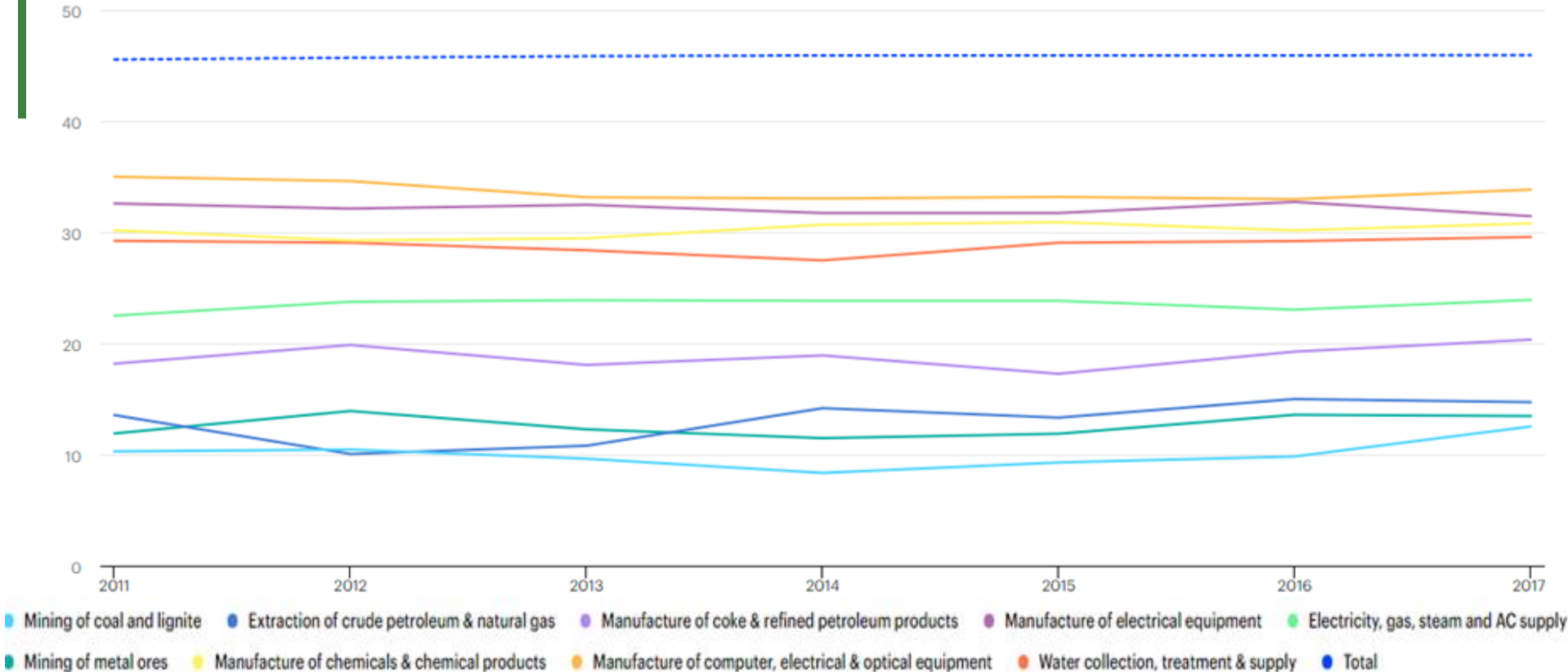
- Lack of information regarding employment opportunities acts as a barrier to women's employment in energy and other non-traditional sectors.
- Limited access to mentors and role models, and low representation of women in senior roles

Challenges

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Percentage of female employees in the energy sector in the European Union, 2011-2017



(Source, IEA)

Opportunities to Enhance Gender Diversity



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Energy Transition - trends and developments across technologies:

- Energy Generation and Storage
- Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage
- Carbon Circularity and Material Efficiency

Social Context

As part of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery, governments and businesses should incorporate an intentional focus on gender diversity.

Job Creation and Diversity in Energy Entrepreneurship

A sustainable energy sector has the potential to support a green energy transition, and can create employment opportunities for people with a diverse array of backgrounds, skillsets, and interests.

Cross Sectoral Challenges

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The global energy transition is leading towards an innovative future, offering an opportunity to transcend the current economic structure, in favour of a green and sustainable economy.

An effective green and sustainable transition will require newer skillsets to support low-carbon and energy-efficient systems.

Engaging with women in the context of the energy sector can have multiple benefits - they can contribute as skilled labour, entrepreneurs, and investors in the development of energy efficiency across other sectors:

- Industrial
- Buildings
- Digitalisation

Proposed Recommendations

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For Policymakers:

- adoption of 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 low-carbon technologies in the energy mix, and supporting development of local supply chains in the energy sector to create green jobs
- financial tools and incentives – to promote entrepreneurial activities across the energy sector

For Industries:

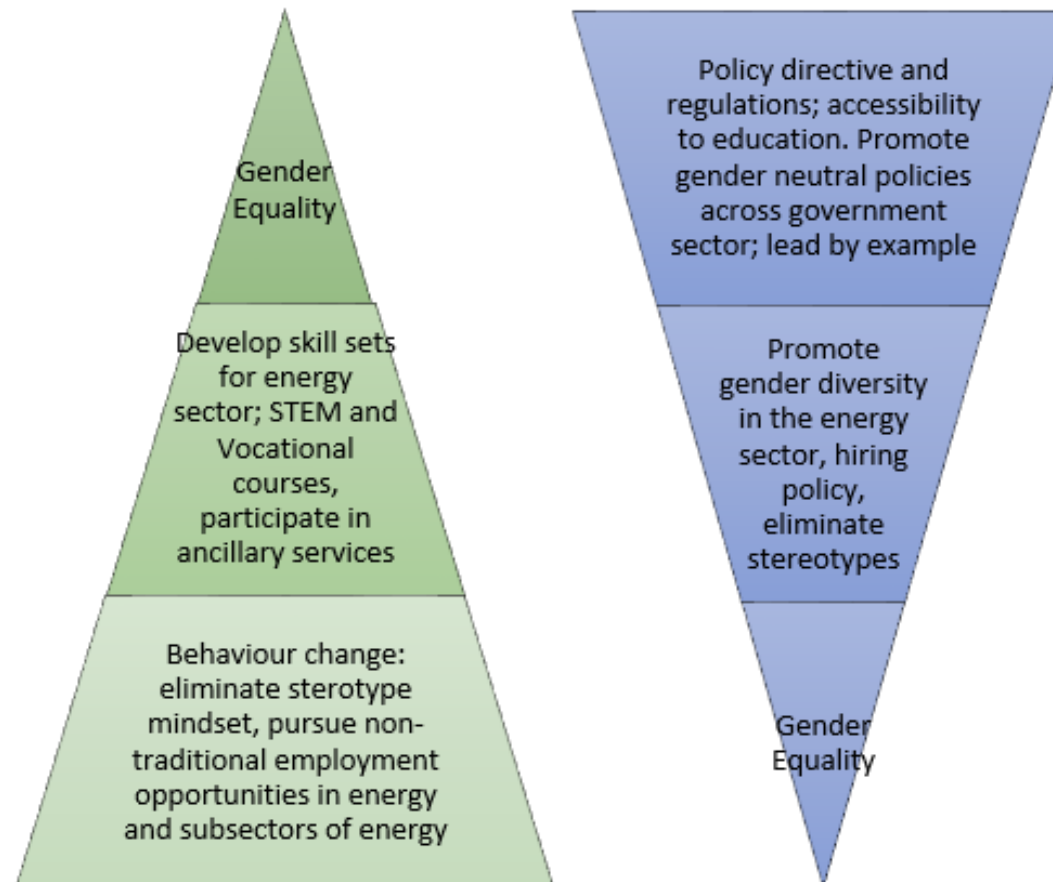
- capacity building through upskilling the current workforce
- review gender diversity gaps
- promote networking and mentoring

Conclusions

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





Thank you!