

Two billion people need modern energy services by 2015 to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs



Expanding access to modern energy services is an enormous challenge for developing countries, especially in the poorest countries. A recent UNDP/WHO report, *The Energy Access Situation in Developing Countries: A Review Focusing on the Least Developed Countries and Sub-Saharan Africa*, aims to draw attention to the energy access situation. The report presents a broad range of energy access data—data that are critical for developing policies and programmes to address energy poverty and to mobilise the necessary financing for expanding access to modern energy services.

Access to modern energy services is still low in developing countries and this lack of access disproportionately affects the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

- **Three billion people—almost half of humanity—still rely on solid fuels—traditional biomass and coal.** In LDCs and SSA, more than 80 percent of people primarily rely on solid fuels for cooking, compared to 56 percent of people in developing countries as a whole.
- **Two million deaths annually are associated with the indoor burning of solid fuels in unventilated kitchens.** Some 44 percent of these deaths are in children; and among adult deaths, 60 percent are women. In LDCs and SSA, more than 50 percent of all deaths from pneumonia in children under 5 years and chronic lung disease and lung cancer in adults over 30 years can be attributed to solid fuel use.
- **Access to improved cooking stoves is also very limited.** In LDCs and SSA, only 7 percent of people who rely on solid fuels use improved cooking stoves to help reduce indoor smoke, compared to 27 percent of people in developing countries as a whole.
- **One and half billion people are still living in darkness—**over 80 percent of them in South Asia or sub-Saharan Africa. More than 70 percent of people in the LDCs and SSA lack access to electricity, compared to 28 percent of those in developing countries as a whole.

Developing countries lag far behind in expanding access to modern energy services to accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

- Of 140 developing countries, 68 countries have established targets for access to electricity, but only 17 countries have targets for access to modern fuels and 5 countries for access to mechanical power.
- Almost 1.2 billion more people will need access to electricity and 1.9 billion more people will need access to modern fuels by 2015 to meet the goal of halving the proportion of people living in poverty (MDG 1).

To achieve universal energy access, the global development community must take specific and far-reaching measures to massively scale up initiatives to expand access to modern energy services for the poor and un-served.

- Continued efforts are required to improve the quantity and quality of statistical information related to energy access, as a basis for designing policies and programmes to address energy poverty challenges.
- Greater broad-based efforts are needed to expand access to modern energy services, especially cooking and heating services, as well as access to mechanical power in rural and remote areas.
- Setting targets is a necessary step to provide a framework for tracking progress and accountability. These targets must be part of viable energy access strategies, backed by appropriate priorities, policies and programmes, and financial resources, if they are to be realised.
- Unless massive efforts are made to expand the range, quality, and quantity of energy services available to the poor, countries are unlikely to achieve their development aspirations.

The UNDP/WHO 2009 report, *The Energy Access Situation in Developing Countries, A Review Focusing on the Least Developed Countries and Sub-Saharan Africa*, can be downloaded from <http://www.undp.org/energy>

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