INDOOR AIR POLLUTION AND HEALTH FORUM NEPAL

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Workshop on Clean Indoor Air: The Right to a Healthy Life

Indoor Air Pollution and Health Forum Nepal (IAPHFN), Practical Action and World Health Organisation (WHO) jointly organised a two day workshop on Clean Indoor Air: The Right to a Healthy Life from 10 to 11 February 2008 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The main purpose of the workshop was to discuss on right based approach to health and environment focusing on access to clean energy and technologies to improve indoor air quality and ensure healthy living. More than 100 individuals participated in the workshop representing from government, non-government, private sector, academic institutions and various media houses.

Delivering her inaugural remarks chief guest of the inaugural session Honorable State Minister for Water Resources, Ms. Mahalaxmi Upadhyay mentioned that the government is aware about the IAP problem and has initiated work towards renewable energy technologies. Other speakers during the inaugural session were Hon. Kedar Nath Upadhaya, Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nepal; Hon. Dr. Jagdish Chandra Pokharel, Vice Chairman, National Planning Commission; Dr. Mahesh Maskey, Coordinator, High-level Health Policy Advisory Committee; Mr. Laxman Mainali, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MoEST); Mr. Nick Burn, International Director, Practical Action; Mr. Han Heijnen, Environment Health Advisor, Regional Office for South-East Asia, World Health Organisation (SEARO-WHO); and Mr. Achyut Luitel, Country Director, Practical Action Nepal office. The inaugural session was chaired by Dr. Mrigendra Raj Pandey, President, IAPHFN. The speakers highlighted the seriousness of the IAP problem and urgency to work towards minimising this in a coordinated way.

The workshop was divided in following four major sessions and papers were presented in these themes:

- Human rights based approach to health and environment
- Health impacts of indoor smoke
- Review of national policies and institutional framework with regard to IAP and
- Indoor air quality: ways to achieve them.

Session I

In this session three separate papers were presented focusing on human rights based approach to health and environment. The presenters were Mr. Narayan Belbase, IUCN Nepal, Mr. Jyoti Baniya, Consumer Rights Protection Forum and Mr. Shankar Adhikari, NHRC. Mr. Belbase presented a paper on 'Status of human rights based approach to environment and health'. Mr. Baniya presented a paper on 'The consumers' right for healthy life through alleviation of indoor air pollution'. Mr. Adhikari presented a paper entitled 'Rights-based approach to environmental health and the role of National Human Rights Commission, Nepal'. Mr. Samuli Seppanen, SEARO-WHO delivered a keynote speech on

human rights and IAP. The session was chaired by Honorable Kedar Nath Upadhyay, Chairperson, NHRC Nepal.

Session II

Two papers focusing health impacts of indoor smoke were presented in this session. Mr. Om Prakash Kurmi, University of Aberdeen, UK presented a paper on 'Relationship between exposure to biomass fuel smoke and the functioning of the lungs in adults'. Mr. Min Bikram Malla, Project Officer, Practical Action presented a paper based on the findings of the South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics (SANDEE) funded research 'Burden of IAP in Nepal and viability of its mitigation efforts'. The session was chaired by Dr. Mrigendra Raj Pandey, Chairperson IAPHFN.

Session III

The third session of the workshop was on the review of national policies and institutional framework with regards to IAP. Mr. Govind Das Shrestha, freelancing Law and Management Expert gave a keynote speech in this issue. Similarly, two separate papers were presented at this session. Mr. Sushil Sharma and Dr. Govind Pokharel from Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) presented a paper entitled 'Review of national policies and institutional framework in regards to IAP'. Mr. Sharma highlighted the activities of AEPC and current policies including subsidy policy of Government with respect to IAP alleviation. Dr. Indira Shakya, freelancing energy and gender expert presented her paper entitled "IAP and its hazards – a gender perspective. Dr. Shakya highlighted on the gender aspect of the IAP and the share of the burden with respect to their activity. Mr. Laxman Mainali, Joint Secretary of MoEST chaired the session.

Session IV

The fourth session was focused on indoor air quality standards and appropriate interventions to attain pollution free clean indoor environment. Three papers were presented in this session. Mr. Bhusan Tuladhar, Director, ENPHO, presented a paper on 'Indoor air quality management through standards and targets'. Mr. Prem Sagar Subedi, Micro-finance Specialist, Winrock International Nepal presented a paper on "Renewable energy technologies for reducing IAP and their carbon benefit". Ms. Jun Hada, Team Leader, Practical Action presented a paper on "Indoor smoke alleviating technologies: ways to achieve standards," a study commissioned by IAPHFN and Practical Action in 2006. The session was chaired by Dr. Sita Ram Joshi, Chief, Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology.

As a main outcome of the workshop the IAP and Health Forum Nepal have put forward the following key steps, (called as the Kathmandu Declaration from here on):

KATHMANDU DECLARATION, 11 FEBRUARY 2008

- Recognise IAP as one of the health priorities requiring immediate attention from the state and include IAP into National Health, Environment and Energy Policies and Plans
- Formulate national policies encompassing all the concerned sectors in an integrated way
- Fully adopt and promote the Right Based Approach to health and environment through national plans and programmes
- Ensure participation of women, children, disadvantaged and socially excluded group while designing energy policies and programme at various levels
- Draft legislation on the rights and duties relating to IAP, and public interest legislation to ensure that government takes necessary action with regards to indoor air quality standard
- Formulate and implement Equitable Energy Policy targeting financing and subsidy mechanisms that ensures access of the poorest communities to microcredit facilities
- Mainstream cleaner fuels, such as biogas, ethanol and other sustainable biofuels, LPG, and kerosene, and establish mechanisms to prioritise access of the poorest to these fuels
- Scaling up of the successful technologies through networking and knowledge sharing
- Facilitate cooperation and networking among specialist groups particularly on housing, health, gender, energy and environment in government and inter-government organisations so that they better assume their responsibilities
- Formulate national standards and monitoring guidelines for improved air quality management focusing on improved ventilation and other technologies that reduce exposure risks and improve overall indoor air quality with adequate provision for space heating
- Include IAP into the Living Standard Survey as one of the key indicators and monitor it accordingly
- Promote low-cost technologies, and take opportunities from clean development mechanisms and voluntary emission reduction funds for financing these technologies
- Promote partnerships among public, private and civil society organisations to combat with negative effect of IAP
- Conduct massive and continuous awareness campaigns and educational activities involving all relevant sectors
- In cooperation with the government, integrate the IAP and energy management into formal educational curricula.

Biomass Energy Technology Promotion in Nepal – Biomass Energy Component, AEPC/ESAP

Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC)/Energy Sector Assistance Programme (ESAP)[1] has launched the Biomass Energy Component in ESAP phase II programme. This five year (2007 – 2011) programme is an extension of the ESAP first phase which was focused on promotion of Improved Cook Stove (ICS) in Nepal. The Phase II programme has planned to promote various biomass energy technologies such as ICS, biomass briquette, bio-fuel and gasification.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this component are:

- Improve capacity of local organisations to offer affordable biomass energy (BE) solutions to the rural communities with quality assurance
- Address the gender, health, environment and socio-economic issues, including reduction of women and children's drudgery through the implementation of biomass energy solutions, and
- Adoption of biomass energy solutions is popularized in rural communities

TARGETS

- Installed 4,34,000 ICS in mid hills
- Disseminated gasifiers to 10,000 households through commercial marketing in Terai
- Disseminated 1,000 institutional gasifiers
- Installed 5,000 institutional ICS as demonstration and
- Installed 50,000 metal stoves in high hills.

ICS Dissemination Policy Environment

Providing a complete range of biomass energy technology solutions to cater to various needs of households, industries and commercial enterprises in the rural areas to ensure efficient and optimal use of biomass resources is a felt need in Nepal. Realising this fact the Government of Nepal has developed subsidy policies on biomass for promotion and dissemination of biomass energy, mainly improved cook stoves. The dissemination policy stated as follows:

- No subsidy will be provided to household for mud ICS in hills and mid hills
- 50 per cent subsidy (not exceeding NRs. 2500/stove) to ICS in high mountains for cooking and space heating, and
- Establish close relationship or contact with NGOs and donors to make their support to ICS promotion more effective.

PAST EXPERIENCE

The National ICS/Biomass Programme supported by ESAP started ICS dissemination from 2000 mainly in the mid hill districts of Nepal. The programme was primarily focused on building the capacity of rural women at local level. The approaches taken by the programme for dissemination was flexible so that the programme could collaborate with other related organisations. In the last six years the programme achieved following results:

- Installed more than 213,000 ICS in 35 districts of the country
- More than 95 per cent of the installed ICS are in operation and 90 per cent of the present users are satisfied
- More than 3000 individuals are trained as ICS promoters (50 per cent are women) among which 1500 promoters are certified as quality stove builders by the programme
- Supported information material on National ICS/Biomass programme
- Developed monitoring system to ensure quality of installed ICS. Five per cent ICS installed by the promoters, technically tested, and
- A study "Assessment of effectiveness of ICS in reducing IAP and Improving Health" (ongoing)

(For more information please visit http://www.aepcnepal.org/biomass/)

Nepalese awarded by the BBC World Challenge 2007

Mr. Sanu Kaji Shrestha, founder of Foundation for Sustainable Technologies (FoST) has been awarded by the BBC World Challenge 2007. Mr. Shrestha won third prize worth NRs. 630,000 for developing briquette making technology using waste materials. The technology that Mr. Shrestha has developed uses waste materials from kitchen and kitchen garden to make briquette. These briquettes can be used for cooking by reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels.

It was his past struggles for cooking fuel in 1995, which had motivated Mr. Shrestha to involve in this activity. Demand was so great Mr. Shrestha had to take three days off work to queue up for more fuel. Seeing such a dire crisis of fuel in the country, Mr. Shrestha conducted a research to find sustainable energy solutions for the domestic market. After his retirement from the World Bank in 2001, Mr. Shrestha has devoted his life to develop low cost and energy efficient technologies to rural and urban poor. In 2002, he established an NGO named Foundation for Sustainable Technologies (FoST) to perform in depth research and dissemination of successful technologies. With his continuous effort Mr. Shrestha has been able to introduce simple solar cookers and briquette presses to make briquettes from waste materials.
(For further information: http://www.fost-nepal.org/)

[1] *AEPC is a government umbrella body to coordinate Renewable Energy related activities in Nepal. ESAP is supported by Government of Denmark and Norway.*

Forthcoming Events

National

Practical Action is organising a district level awareness workshop on "Household energy, IAP and health" in five districts namely Dhading, Gorkha, Tanahu, Nawalparasi and Rupendehi from 6 to 13 March 2008.

International

Better Air Quality (BAQ) 2008 workshop on "Air quality and climate change: scaling up win-win solutions in Asia" will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from 12 to14 November 2008. Please visit www.baq2008.org for more information.

Engineers for Technical and Humanitarian Opportunities for Service (ETHOS) is organising its annual conference in Washington from 25 to 27 January 2008. For more details please visit the PCIA website.

International Association for Energy Economics (IAEE) is organising the 31st IAEE international conference on "*Bridging energy supply and demand: logistics, competition and environment" from 18 to 20 June 2008 at the Sheraton Istanbul Maslak Hotel, Turkey.* For more information visit http://www.iaee08ist.org.

The Global Health Council is organising its 35th annual international conference on "Community health: delivering, serving, engaging, leading" from 27 to 31 May, 2008 in Washington, DC. For more information visit http://www.globalhealth.org/conference/.

news & events

- The Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS) of Government of Nepal (GoN) organised a workshop on "National level issues finalisation for Energy Resource Strategy formulation" on 10 December 2007 at Hotel Shanker, Kathmandu, Nepal.

- Nepal Federation of Small and Cottage Industries organised a national exhibition on "Rural tourism and energy" from 6 to 10 December 2007 at Bhrikuti Mandap, Kathmandu. Members of IAP and Health Forum – Practical Action and Centre for Rural Energy, displayed their technology models during the exhibition. A smokehood manufacturer from Rasuwa also demonstrated products in the exhibition. During the exhibition a two day workshop on "Rural tourism and appropriate rural technology" was also organised together with the exhibition.

- A study to identify cooking requirements of varying geographic location, fuels, and cooking systems in Nepal was recently completed with the financial support of AEPC/GoN. The study was conducted by Technology and Rural Upliftment Service Team (TRUST) Pvt. Ltd. This study will help in the development and promotion of other biomass energy technologies on the basis of technical specifications in Nepal.

- ESAP – Biomass Energy Component is conducting a research on "Effectiveness of ICS in reducing indoor air and improving health". Three districts namely Dolakha, Dang and Ilam are selected as representing districts of central, eastern and western Nepal having different socio-cultural background. The research will be primarily focused on comparing IAP level before and after ICS installation. Similarly, ESAP – Biomass Energy Component has also prepared a set of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on biomass energy technologies for policy makers, service providers and stakeholders. The IEC package includes fact sheets, posters, brochure, and story led posters on biomass energy technologies including ICS.

- WHO's Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development has recently published two publications on IAP. These publications can be downloaded from http://www.who.int/indoorair/publications/en/index.html

- CleanAirSIG, the Special Interest Group (SIG) on Clean Indoor Air, HEDON started a new discussion from 18 February 2008 on "Sales, Subsidies and at no cost'. (for details and participate in the discussion visit http://www.hedon.info)

- The Bali climate change COP/MOP meeting in December 2007 decided to include a request to the CDM Executive Board (EB) to approve the simplified small scale methodologies for replacing non renewable biomass by renewable energy and improving efficiency in non renewable biomass enduse. This is a very positive decision as it opens opportunities for fuel efficient ICS and biogas among other household energies to receive carbon finance support. In the post Bali period, one of the encouraging aspects has been the first payment of US$514,786 from World Bank for Nepal's role in reducing emission of greenhouse gases. The AEPC received the amount for its role in reducing 93,901 tons of carbon emission with installation of 9708 biogas plants through its Biogas Support Programme. (Source: Himalayan Times, 8 January 2008.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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