

**Report to TPW Energy Collaborative
on the World Renewable Energy Congress – IX
Marta X Rivera as participant**

*Towards sustainable environment
Green Buildings and Renewable Energy Options*

Armed Forces Officers Club and Hotel

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates

25 – 30 September 2010

Marta X Rivera participated in this Congress with the paper: ***Survival Energy for the Poor, a Proposal for a Regional Legal framework for Efficient Cook Stoves***. The paper was reviewed and qualified with excellent for originality, novelty and significance of results, the technical quality of work, and overall impression. Participation was mainly in the Energy and Gender – Equitable Development Sessions, providing the opportunity to attend several of the plenary and technical sessions.

On the day before the official opening ceremony, the group on Energy and Gender met for a workshop for one complete day, where exchange of experiences and advances relating to gender and energy were made, including informal networking and work plan for the week. On Saturday 25th, the Congress was inaugurated by H.E. Mohammed Al Bowardi, Secretary General of Abu Dhabi Executive Council & Managing Director Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, as well as the exhibition hall.

As an active participant, MXR collaborated in two Technical Sessions: One presenting the paper ***Survival Energy for the Poor, a Proposal for a Regional Legal framework for Efficient Cook Stoves*** and a second one as Chair in the technical Session E: Expanding the Role of Women in Science, Technology and Engineering in the UAE (Noor Grazal Aswad from UAE), Promoting Women's access to renewable energy in the Context of Oil Discovery in Ghana, (Rose Mensah-Kutin from Ghana) and Energy as Women Business – The AIWE experience (L. Balakrishnan from India).

Comments and Reactions to the presentation

- a) The support for the use of efficient cook stoves is general, and all presentations coincided on the same benefits and support for the compliance of the MDG.
- b) The idea of policy was well received, for the exception of one participant that felt it could complicate and/or limit the implementation of projects.
- c) Gender must be incorporated: men and women in all projects, because in most cases, men make the decision on where to spend their limited money, and must understand the negative effects of indoor air pollution.

- d) The issue of technical standards provoked a very interesting discussion: **Aprovecho** methodology and standards are acceptable and applicable for firewood and certain type of efficient cook stoves (ECS) such as ethanol stoves, but cannot be generalized. For example, in Africa, there are stoves that don't comply with the 5 liters water boiling standard, but are excellent for slow cooking. When approving standards, wording has to be incorporated to reflect that different types of stoves have different standards. Solar stoves cannot be included in these technical requirements, because they work on different –fuel- technology.
- e) When the –good- side effects of open fires were presented, there was a consensus that all ECS have to include the socio-cultural component, as well as in depth communication with future users, to try to determine which changes will result when evolving from the traditional three stone fires to ECS. Measures to mitigate the good side effects, such as illumination or pest control have to be taken into consideration.
- f) The experiences with political actions and ECS programs without a regulatory framework were shared by all participants. The lack of a comprehensive approach to stove programs can result in failed projects, even if they have excellent ECS models. In most cases, stoves are given away without training and education highlighting the importance of taking the smoke out of the living areas, effects on health, environment etc. A change in everyday life, a new way of cooking different from traditional practices without understanding why, results in rejection to the technology. Policy is a way to stay away from politics, even if they come with good intentions.
- g) Interesting presentations on biogas production were made. In some parts of the world, because gas is made from dung and latrine residues, it is used for water pumping. Cooking with gas from dung is not acceptable to many cultures. ARTI's biogas production is from organic vegetable waste, which makes 100% acceptable.
- h) Stoves that have been developed for all fuels, wood, dung, waste etc., are not as efficient, but are very fuel flexible and poor people can burn what is available, sometimes tied to agricultural cycles. Fuel specific stoves limit the users and are ties them to providers (pellets, for example), but have higher efficiencies.

Other Results

- a) Dr. Priyadarshini Karve from the ARTI (Appropriate Rural Technology Institute) in India presented a very interesting and efficient low cost biogas system, which could be used in projects in Guatemala and Central America. It is a floating drum type biogas system made of plastic that can be very low cost and easy to implement.
- b) Also, a Sarai stove (2002 International award winner), that burns charcoal which is another possibility for Guatemala and Central America. Hopefully, we can bring a model to the Zamorano Center for testing, and see if we can replicate it in our countries.
- c) In the workshop for women and gender, recommendations were prepared for perspectives on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. A draft with a set of

recommendations was prepared to be included in the Conference of the Parties in Cancun in December 2010. The Women's Environment and Development organization (WEDO) and ENERGIA, the International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, have been co-coordinators of the UNFCCC advocacy team on behalf of the Global Gender and Climate Alliance, and will take forward suggestions from participants at WREC.

- d) Request for the reactivation of the GENES network, which was coordinated by Fundacion Solar for two years. When the representation of GENES was transferred to another Central American country, it stopped operating. Ms. Shiela Oparaocha, who heads ENERGIA, requested Fundacion Solar to re coordinate the gender Central American network, and we are already working on it.
- e) The presentation of the book –Biofuels for Rural Development and Empowerment of Women by Nadine McCormick (IUCN) and Shiela Oparaocha (ENERGIA) provides interesting experiences easily compared with programs in CA, and future possibilities in new projects.

The opportunity to participate in World Renewable Energy Congress can be summarized as very fruitful. The main points are listed as follows:

- a) Presenting a policy issue, a new subject in the ECS arena, and opening to discussion a new addition to related work on ECS.
- b) Learning on other technical standards for different fueled stoves, to incorporate into our proposal.
- c) South –south coordination opportunities and technology transfers,
- d) Networking with a group of women and men from Asia and Africa, whose concerns are parallel to ours, creates and reinforces a set of contacts to further pursue common interests.
- e) Multiple opportunities to learn from what Asia and Africa are working on currently, and sharing our experiences from Latin America were excellent.
- f) The appropriate technology that is being developed and used in India is very applicable to Central American countries.
- g) It is mind boggling to see where technology is heading. All work that is being carried out with nano technology is just amazing. Having the opportunity to learn about the most ambitious advances and the most appropriate technologies all in one forum is enriching, and opens the possibility of geniuses to see problems in the poor and real world, and maybe something can click and new solutions and proposals made.
- h) Coordinating with ENERGIA, and opening the opportunity to reestablish the GENES Central American gender network-
- i) Making contacts for possible support for lobbying in Central America the protocol for ECS with international funders.

As Fundacion Solar, and personally, I want to thank TPW Energy Collaborative for providing the opportunity to attend this Congress, and create the base for opportunities of south - south collaboration in the future. Also, continue spreading the word and the dream of having a protocol for improved cook stoves in the near future, protecting the poor, improving the environment, improving health of women and children, and overall, making this a better world for all.