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*M<sup>a</sup> del Mar Hidalgo García*

**EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY  
FOR ALL SUMMIT**

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*This document has been translated by a Translation and Interpreting Degree student doing work experience, NAIA HERNANDO, under the auspices of the Collaboration Agreement between the Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, and the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies.*

## EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL SUMMIT

### Abstract:

*The "European Summit on Sustainable Energy for All" was held in Brussels last week. The summit was framed within the activities to be performed this year and declared "International Year of Sustainable Energy for All". The main agreements were: the commitment made by President Barroso to provide 50 million Euros over the next two years to support access to energy in developing countries and the signing of a "Memorandum of Understanding" which establishes a new partnership between the EU and the UN Women's Institution to improve equality and the empowerment of women worldwide.*

### Keywords:

*International Year of Sustainable Energy for All, UN-Women, sustainable development.*

## THE UN INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL

In December, the General Assembly of the UN declared 2012 the "International Year of Sustainable Energy for All"<sup>1</sup> to recognize that the access to modern energy services of developing countries is essential to achieve the Millennium Goal, to eradicate poverty and to achieve sustainable development. The term "sustainable energy" refers to the use and production of energy to sustain human development in the long term in all its aspects: social, economic and environmental.



Last year, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon set up the "Sustainable Energy for all Initiative"<sup>2</sup> aiming to involve governments, the private sector and the society to highlight the importance of establishing less polluting and more efficient modern energy systems to reduce poverty and help to improve the living conditions of most of the world's population.

The initiative proposes three goals to be achieved by 2030:

- Ensure universal access to modern energy services.
- Double the rate of improvement of energy efficiency.
- Double the quota of renewable energies in the world energy mix.

For the achievement of these three objectives and to help create awareness of the problem, during 2012, the UN plans to carry out the following activities.

**Creating a High Level Group.** Composed of government representatives, the private sector, intergovernmental organizations, including the UN, and the general public to develop a global strategy and a specific agenda for the development of the three objectives. This road map will be presented in June 2012 in the course of the Rio + 20 Conference.

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/65/151

<sup>2</sup> For more details on the initiative see <http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org>

**National actions.** With the support of the UN Project for Development, national activities aimed at the formulation of commitments to achieve universal access to energy, energetic efficiency and the objectives of use of renewable energies will be promoted.

**Communications and Events.** The United Nations Foundation will support the campaigns to raise awareness to increase the visibility of the initiative, spread the need to access energy and achieve the 30-30-30<sup>3</sup> objectives.

**Professional Network.** The United Nations Foundation has formed a public-private association of professionals of the energetic sector to identify and spread the best policies and practices and promote the development of new technologies, as well as new financial and business models.

## THE EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL SUMMIT

The "European Summit on Sustainable Energy for All" was held in Brussels on April 16. This meeting was part of the activities planned for the International Year of Sustainable Energy



and shows the commitment of the EU to reach the objectives proposed in the UN Initiative for "Sustainable Energy for all."

The Secretary General of the UN, the President of the European Commission, the European Development Commissioner, the UN Woman's Executive Director, as well as Energy and Development Ministers from all over the world and UN executives from the energy

sector took part in the meeting.

Ban Ki-moon underlined the importance of access to energy through a personal testimony: *"Access to modern energy helped to transform my world and my country. Access to electricity can seem so easy that it can be taken for granted. However, in 1963 I studied under a very dim kerosene lamplight."*

During the summit, the Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso, announced the launch of the "Energizing Development" Initiative, through which the European Union will spend 50

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<sup>3</sup> 30% renewable energy, 30% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 30% increase in efficiency and saving. Now, the European Union establishes 20-20-20 as an objective for 2020.

million Euros during the next two years to *"help provide access to sustainable energy services to 500 million people by 2030."*

This initiative along with the investment of 1000 million Euros in the last five years, will make Europe the main donor in support of development and shows its commitment to the fulfillment of the Millennium Goals for 2015.

Another important part of the agenda of the meeting was raising the matter of gender and the access of women to sustainable energy. A new "Memorandum of Understanding", which established a new Alliance between the EU and the UN Women's Institution to improve equality and the empowerment of women around the world, was passed during the summit.

Europe plays an important role in establishing programs and policies to boost the development of women and girls. It is the second world donor in this field.



In her speech, Michelle Bachelet highlighted that women must take part in every decision making process in the fields of energy and in other related processes. She also mentioned the fact that in 2012, women fill fewer than 6% of all ministerial positions in the fields of environment, natural resources and energy. She said: *"Full and equal participation and leadership is not an option any more; it is an urgent need if we want to achieve the necessary changes at every level and in every sphere of society in order to achieve a sustainable development."*

#### WHAT EUROPEANS THINK

Some days before the holding of the Summit, appeared the results of the Flash survey nº 348 of the Eurobarometer *"Energy for all: support of the EU to the developing countries"*<sup>4</sup>. The main conclusions drawn from the study were that:

- 90% of the interviewees consider the EU should support the developing countries in their efforts to improving their access to energy.
- 77% Europeans think renewable energy sources must be the main source of energy in the future for developing countries. 7% consider the main source should be fossil energy (oil, coal and gas), 6% thinks it should be nuclear energy and 4% biomass.
- 82% of the interviewees consider the EU should increase the present 2% that goes to the improvement in the access to energy in developing countries.
- 83% believes the EU itself profits from the support they give to developing countries to improve their access to energy.
- The majority of those polled think the main problems linked to the lack of access to energy have an influence on the difficulty with cooking and preserving food (58%), with healthcare (52%) and with education (26%).
- Europeans consider that having drinking water and flushing toilets are the most important factors to break out of poverty (90%) in developing countries, followed by living in a peaceful and secure environment (87%), having access to healthcare (83%) and access to food (79%). Lastly comes access to energy (61%).

M<sup>a</sup> del Mar Hidalgo García  
IEE Analyst

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<sup>4</sup> The on-site work was carried out between 19th and 21st March. Interviews were carried out by phone to 13.528 citizens over 15 years old, which corresponds to around 500 polled for each of the 27 countries. Results can be looked up at: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_348\\_present.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_348_present.pdf)