

Intervention Marieke van der Werf, Womens's Representative in the delegation of The Netherlands at the Regional Discussion on Africa.

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The importance of access to energy for domestic use and industrial development we all agree upon. The Dutch Government aims at realizing energy access for 10 million people in 2015. In yesterday's meeting it was suggested by the chairman that, since women benefit greatly from energy for household purposes, the 10 million 'people' might be replaced by 10 million 'women'. An interesting thought, but the Dutch Government focusses on 'people', both men and women.

Achieving this goal presents a dilemma. The use of traditional, be it as clean as possible, energy would certainly speed up the process and make energy affordable. UNDP-figures show that connecting 10 million more people, would lead to 1% increase of CO2 emissions in the total annual amount.

But from a sustainable point of view, maybe we should strive to accomplish the goal with a as much as possible clean and renewable alternatives. This process might however take more time and be more expensive.

This dilemma raises a question of principle: Where should we have our priority, our focus and our commitment? Quick and affordable with maybe less clean energy of a bit longer en more expensive, but nevertheless more in line with sustainable development? The delegation of The Netherlands is very interested in the opinion of the distinguished delegates on this matter.