GENERAL STRATEGY OF RENEWABLE ENERGY IN PALESTINE/THE INITIATIVE OF SOLAR ENERGY

The first notice on the strategy and the initiative is that it was articulated and designed apart from consultation with civil society organizations, associations, unions (including women’s organizations) on both local or national levels. In the second phase of the initiative Palestinian Energy Authority consulted with a number of organizations and unions. However, none of the those participated raised the issue of gender. Therefore, neither the Strategy nor the Initiative were designed to address or respond to gender issues. But since the Initiative is aimed to households it can benefit women on the level of consumption and maybe the level of ownership. The Palestinian Energy Authority has no ex-ante or ex-post data that may help us to assess the degree to which women in benefited households participated in the project in any manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The activation and raising effectiveness of Gender Unit in Palestinian Energy and natural resources Authority through close coordination with Ministry of Women Affairs in order to push for reviewing the regulations and policies of renewable energy that may serve to incorporate gender-sensitive policies;

2. To establish a coordination mechanism between Palestinian Environment Network and Ministry of Women Affairs that take well organized steps to apply pressure to introduce changes of government regulation in favor of gender oriented policies;

3. There is a lack of knowledge and promotion of the necessity to include gender-sensitive regulations and policies in the field of renewable energy, therefore we recommend to launch a series of advocacy programs and lobbying activities to raise public awareness and apply pressure to realize changes;

4. Working on a crisscrossing network and activities on local and national levels to include women’s organization, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, and unions led and initiated by Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network (PENGON-FoE Palestine) in order to change the Palestinian Solar Energy Initiative to give priority to empowering women.
Executive Summary

This consulting short enquiry is meant to be an introductory research to assess the extent to which Palestinian Law, regulations, and strategies of renewable energy takes gender into account; if at all. The approach of the enquiry draws upon and is driven by contemporary conceptualization of sustainable development as articulated by the UN, especially in the field of renewable energy. Therefore, we ask: whether or not Palestinian renewable energy law and regulations incorporates any gender-sensitive articles or policies?

To answer this question, this consultation analyzes: Law No (14) of 2015 on Renewable Energy and Energy Effectiveness (REE); the regulations of the law; and the Palestinian Renewable Energy Strategy. In doing so we first lay the ground to establish a better understanding of Palestinian women's role in economy to show the vulnerable status of women in economic activities, which stands anathema to international orientation to gender content of sustainable and comprehensive development. Within this new approach to development the UNEP provides a very useful pinch mark that enables us to examine Palestinian women's status in the field of generating, possessing, and benefiting from renewable energy from a developmental perspective. The methodology we employ included: a) analyses of REE Law articles; b) analyses of Palestinian Government resolution # (11/79/17/m,o,r,h) of 2015 and its annexes; c) General Palestinian Renewable Energy Strategy/ the Palestinian Initiative on Solar Energy; c) reviewing UNEP conclusions on women's role in ownership and applying renewable energy in “Third-World” countries; d) applying structured open-ended interviews with Palestinian Energy Authority, and Palestinian Woman Ministry.

Law No (14) of 2015 on Renewable Energy and Energy Effectiveness (REE)

The law does not include any articles that indicate any preferential status to women or to gender-driven considerations. The most striking feature of the law that it is market oriented. As such it is designed to attract private investments and tailored to encourage frames and companies to invest in this promising sector. Therefore, the law offers private investors tax deductions and preferential treatment in terms of ownership, marketing, licensing, and competition. However, the law includes concepts and articles that address goals of sustainable and comprehensive development: in articles (2) paragraphs 1 and 3 the law cites the importance of renewable energy in local development. In article (9) the law states that “the state encourages the establishment of associations, committees, organizations and unions specialized in the production and services of renewable energy. These articles might represent a point of entry to include regulations that respond to gender issues and the role of women. Articles (4, 5, 9) stresses the need to offer preferential regulations to entities that seek to develop the sector. But it fails to name those entities, and includes no indications to gender. Finally, article (11) states that “the Palestinian Initiative on Solar Energy” is the mechanism through which renewable energy projects dedicated to households will be executed”. This considered to be the most encouraging aspect of the law since it takes into account local levels that may include women as necessaries but not as stakeholders.

Government Regulations and Policies

The absence of gender-sensitive articles in the REE travels through government regulations include in Government resolution abovementioned. A close look to these regulations show that it is focused of the private sector and private investments. The regulations and the annexes attached to them do not dedicate and space to women’s role in establishing or “qualifying producers”, and gives all attention to large scale projects within direct and competitive bids. The regulations fail to mention any policies that take into account vulnerable social groups including women. However, these regulations do state that small scale projects dedicated to households would be connected to renewable energy with a preferential low price. This reflects article (11) of the Law abovementioned. It is important to notice that The Ministry of Women’s Affairs has had nor role in developing or reviewing neither the Law or the regulations.