

## **WORLD ENERGY OUTLOOK 2006: FACT SHEET- ENERGY FOR COOKING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

### **CAN 2.5 BILLION PEOPLE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SWITCH TO MODERN ENERGY FOR COOKING?**

*Bringing modern energy to the world's poor is an urgent necessity. Although steady progress is made in expanding the use of modern household energy services in developing countries, in both scenarios many people still depend on traditional biomass in 2030. Action to encourage more efficient and sustainable use of traditional biomass and help people switch to modern cooking fuels and technologies is therefore urgent.*

- In developing countries, especially in rural areas, **2.5 billion people rely on biomass**, such as fuelwood, charcoal, agricultural waste and animal dung, to meet their energy needs for cooking.
- Without strong new policies, **the number of people depending on biomass will increase** to over 2.6 billion by 2015 and 2.7 billion by 2030 because of population growth. One-third of the world's population will still be relying on these fuels. There is evidence that, in areas where local prices have adjusted to recent high international energy prices, the shift to cleaner, more efficient use of energy for cooking has actually slowed and even reversed.
- Use of biomass is not in itself a cause for concern. However, when resources are harvested unsustainably and energy conversion technologies are inefficient, there are **serious adverse consequences** for health, the environment and economic development.
- **About 1.3 million people – mostly women and children – die prematurely every year** because of exposure to indoor air pollution from biomass. That is more deaths than are caused by malaria. Valuable time and effort is devoted to fuel collection instead of education or income generation. Environmental damage can also result, such as land degradation and regional air pollution.
- Two complementary approaches can improve this situation: **promoting more efficient and sustainable use of traditional biomass; and encouraging people to switch to modern cooking fuels and technologies**. The appropriate mix depends on local circumstances such as per-capita incomes and the availability of a sustainable biomass supply.
- Halving the number of households using traditional biomass for cooking by 2015 – a recommendation of the United Nations Millennium Project – would involve 1.3 billion people switching to other fuels. **Alternative**

**fuels and technologies are already available at reasonable cost.** Providing LPG stoves and cylinders, for example, would cost at most \$1.5 billion per year to 2015. Switching to oil-based fuels would not have a significant impact on world oil demand. Even when fuel costs and emissions are considered, the household energy choices of developing countries need not be limited by economic, climate-change or energy-security concerns.

- **Vigorous government action is needed to achieve this target, together with increased funding** from both public and private sources. Policies to promote cleaner, more efficient fuels and technologies for cooking need to address barriers to access, affordability and supply, and to form a central component of broader development strategies.