

*PARLIAMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF FIJI*

REPORT ON THE
WORKSHOP ON
SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY
AND DEVELOPMENT

*18-21st January 2016
Hosted by CPA
UK/UNDP at the Taj
Mahal Hotel, New
Delhi, India*



Delegates and officials at the Asian Regional Workshop on Sustainability, Energy and Development

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**INTERNATIONAL
PROJECT ON
ENERGY &**

**PARLIAMEN
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SUSTAINABILITY,
DEVELOPMENT**

Background

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA UK), in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the British High Commission (New Delhi), hosted parliamentarians from the Asia-Pacific Region at a Regional Workshop on Sustainability, Energy and Development from 18-21 January 2016.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- (a) To empower parliamentarians to ensure the development and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, enhancing their status as key international stakeholders and provide them with a united, powerful voice at the national level;
- (b) To collaborate with leading global organisations and experts in the development of an international parliamentary project (including Regional Workshops and International Parliamentary Conference) on Sustainability, Energy and Development leading to the production of an international Parliamentarians' e-Handbook and establishment of an international community of best practice by March 2016.

The workshop provided an opportunity for parliamentarians to discuss energy and sustainable development challenges in an interactive and participative forum with other legislators and experts in the field of sustainability and energy. Parliamentarians were encouraged to share the challenges they faced in their respective countries and look for common solutions after discussions with experts and fellow parliamentarians from across South Asia and the Pacific Region.

Regional workshops and international parliamentary conferences on Sustainability, Energy and Development had also been held in Africa and the Caribbean. The outcome of these regional workshops will lead to the production of an e-handbook for parliamentarians and establish an international community of best practice by March 2016.

Workshop Venue and Participants

The South Asia and Pacific Region workshop on Sustainability, Energy and Development was held at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Delhi, India from 18th to 21st January 2016.

Participants at the workshop were Members of Parliament from Bangladesh, India (including Haryana and Uttar Pradesh), Pakistan, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom and the Fiji Islands.

The Fijian Delegation was lead by the Assistant Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, Hon. Joeli Cawaki in his capacity as Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee. He was accompanied by the Deputy Chair of the Natural Resources Committee, Hon. Ratu Kiniviliame Kiliraki and a senior staff from the Committees Unit.

A list of delegates is attached as **Annexure A**

Program and Summary of Daily Sessions

MONDAY 18 JANUARY 2016 – OPENING DAY

TIME	ACTIVITY
11.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.	Participant Registration
1200 – 1245 hours	Networking lunch
1245 – 1315 hours	Welcome, Housekeeping and Project Overview
1315 – 1345 hours	Keynote Speech: Sustainable Development Goals, Energy and the Role of Parliamentarians
1345 – 1500 hours	Session 1 : From MDGs towards SDGs – Energy, Sustainability and Development
1500 – 1530 hours	Coffee/Tea break
1530 – 1645 hours	Session 2 : Energy Sustainability, Resilience and Climate Change in Asia and the Pacific
1645 – 1800 hours	Session 3 : Delivering Sustainable Energy Targets – From National Actions Plans to Implementation
1830 – 2000 hours	Welcome reception hosted by Sandy Sheard; Counsellor, Energy, Climate and Growth, British High Commission

CPA UK's Asian Regional Workshop on Energy, Sustainability and Development (18-21 January) was officially opened by Nigel Evans MP (UK) and Dr Kirit Somaiya MP (India).

Nigel Evans MP described the important role played by parliamentarians in holding governments to account and raising the profile of climate change issues which will be explored in more detail throughout the week. As he stated, there is no 'Planet B' if we do not take action against climate change now.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr Kirit Somaiya MP detailed the need to approach energy and sustainability issues together with national responses to climate change challenges. The development of the least developed country is a joint responsibility for all. Financing for sustainable development should be treated as a priority to ensure successful implementation of national sustainable development plans. He stressed India's commitment to green energy and green climate and welcomed the workshop and the issues which will be debated throughout the week.

The first plenary session of the day considered the transition from the MDGs to SDGs, with Dr Jaco Cilliers, Country Director of UNDP India, summarising the main focal points as the 'main Ps' – Profit, People and Planet. Following a brief history of development work in recent years, he noted a clear and increasing shift towards a focus on people as well as a consideration of the planet and the environment. Dr Cilliers argued that the challenges for the next few years are going to be centred on how we all integrate and participate together – from public to private sector, to government and civil society. This will be of key importance to create 'sustainable solutions'.

The next speaker, Ms Namita Vikas (Group President and Country Head – Responsible Banking & Chief Sustainability Officer, YES Bank Ltd), elaborated on the positive role which can be played by the financial sector. As developing countries will struggle more to raise investments, Ms Vikas described how financial innovation can see returns not only in terms of financial capital, but also in the form of human and social capital. YES Bank's green bonds were an insightful example of this, whereby returns accumulated from these bonds go back into renewable energy solutions.

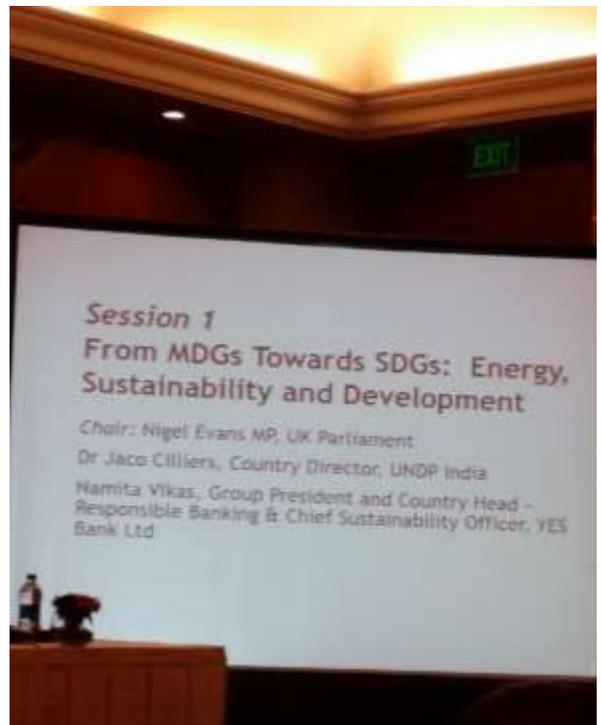
Nigel Evans MP concluded the session by noting the exact role of parliamentarians in ensuring the sustainable agenda is being pursued. This starts by raising awareness and collaborating with peers on a national and international level. He went on to argue that the media should not be avoided but rather be seen as an ally in creating the momentum necessary for delivering the sustainable development agenda.

The following session of the day focussed more on energy sustainability, resilience and climate change from the perspective of Asia and the Pacific. The work carried out by the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) was detailed by Mihir Bhatt (Director AIDMI, who showed how national or sub-national disaster management plans can be used to incorporate climate change risks. AIDMI's work focusses on supporting, capturing, processing and disseminating disaster related information, lessons and innovative ideas, whilst also ensuring that there is a participatory approach being pursued at all times.

Dr Vaibhav Chaturvedi (Research Fellow) from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water and (CEEW) then went on to compare the current trajectory of global emissions against that of what is required to mitigate against global warming, which highlighted the substantial amount of emissions which need to be eradicated. By showing how much capacity there was for alternative energy technologies, whilst also reinforcing the fact that climate change would not be eradicated without the required action being taken, Dr Chaturvedi argued that the way forward should focus on the adaption and mitigation of the negative impacts of climate change. Technological development must receive the adequate support. The importance of knowledge sharing of technological advances therefore became a recurring point made throughout the day as, despite significant technological advances being made, these are not necessarily always distributed amongst peers.

The third and final session of the day looked at the specific role of parliamentarians in delivering sustainable energy targets. Mukul Sharma, South Asia Regional Director at Climate Parliament, detailed the role of parliamentarians in the sustainable development agenda. Examples of previous parliamentary intervention leading to government action were noted by Mr Sharma, such as some of the MDGs themselves, which served to reinforce the importance of parliamentary involvement. By starting an effective committee or by developing effective budget oversight mechanisms, Mr Sharma outlined the large scope in which parliamentarians can work within to ensure the successful delivery of sustainable energy targets. Mr Sharma also reiterated Nigel Evans MP's point on ensuring that the media is seen as an ally instead of an enemy.

Dawn Butler MP (UK), as moderator of the session, then invited the workshop delegates to share experiences from their own countries. Sri Lankan delegates stated the need for sharing experiences amongst each other so that countries do not have to repeat previous countries' hardships. The UK delegation reiterated this point, noting the importance of international cooperation. Representatives from India highlighted how hard it can be to move away from fossil fuels given the current reliance on these whilst being unable to rely on the infrastructure of renewable energy as it stands right now. Fiji detailed the devastating impact a reliance on fossil fuels can have, as they are so costly to smaller island in the Pacific yet so vital to keep peoples generators going. This dependency almost resulted in a few islands going bankrupt just because of the cost of fuel.



TUESDAY 19TH JANUARY 2016 – DAY 2

TIME	ACTIVITY
0900 – 1100 hours	Session 4 : Renewable Energy in Asia and the Pacific – Ensuring Energy Access and Security
1100 – 1130 hours	Coffee/Tea break
1130 – 1300 hours	Session 5 : Fostering Inclusiveness and Community Ownership
1400 – 1600 hours	Session 6 : Financing Sustainable Energy for All
1600 – 1630 hours	Coffee/Tea break
1630 – 1700 hours	Session 7 : Briefing Session on the Field Visit Activity and Mock Committee Hearing

Day Two of the Asian Regional Workshop opened with a session on energy access and security across Asia and the Pacific. Jiwan Acharya from the Asian Development Bank contextualised the regional issues in terms of the deficiencies faced by many countries. The various national and international partnerships which exist were shown to be essential for renewable energy to become a reliable source of energy supply. Allocated budgets for renewables, alongside support from the banking sector, were shown to contribute to this becoming a reality. Financial investment is too often cited as the main barrier to renewables being championed, noted Mr Acharya. However he argued that this should no longer be used as an excuse and so we must instead delve deeper into the additional obstacles which exist to find solutions to overcome these constraints.

Dr Simon Lucas complemented Mr Acharya's arguments with an examination of the political context of Asia and the Pacific in his capacity as Team Leader on Climate and Development in the Energy, Climate and Growth Unit at the British High Commission in New Delhi, India. He described the common constraint faced by parliamentarians in weighing up short-term political gains against pursuing long-term renewable solutions. He noted another common misconception that, by investing in renewables, there would be less capacity for economic growth. Instead, Dr Lucas put forward the argument that pursuing renewable energy is not only the best way of ensuring energy access across the region but also critical for increasing productivity. He argued that as renewables become more efficient they will be more attractive. The example of Delhi's recent 'odd-even' car policy was used to show that people tend to be less concerned with the 'bigger picture' of climate change mitigation and more interested in the immediate impact upon their day to day life.

Participants then took part in an interactive workshop session, whereby a fictional case study was used to allow a sharing of good practice in parliamentary scrutiny committees on renewable energy policy. Both the UK and Bangladesh participants noted how the use of experts in such committees was critical, as was the ability to call upon senior parliamentarians or Ministers to ensure that governments were being held to account. Sri Lankan delegates, however, noted constraints in their ability to challenge government as a member of a minority party and valued the positive support and role models provided by international colleagues.

It was then agreed by workshop participants how important it is for parliamentary committees to be independent, to ensure effective policy scrutiny. It was also suggested that the media plays a positive role in that public awareness of issues and allows for greater scrutiny. A similar role can be played by civil society organisations (CSOs.) Indian delegates detailed how parliamentary committees could have an indirect impact upon government policy in that committee reports are often utilised by CSOs as a source of submitting evidence with which policy can be scrutinized and be held to account.

The second session took a more holistic approach in examining the impact improved access to sustainable energy can have upon other areas of development. There was a significant focus on the positive effects on the lives of women in particular, with Rachita Mishra from SELCO noting the proven differences made in female health, productivity and economic returns when energy poverty is tackled. This then sees the additional benefits which are passed on to these women's children through improved education and health benefits. Access to energy is therefore closely connected with equal opportunities for all. SELCO has created an 'ecosystem approach': a holistic framework whereby assistance is being given at various levels. This might range from financial assistance to capacity building and awareness or policy and regulation support.

Summa Dutta then extrapolated this argument but from the perspective of engaging women and mitigating the negative effects of energy poverty which tend to impact women and children disproportionately. She considered the huge and largely untapped market potential of women, arguing that investing in women and their access to energy is ultimately an investment in the entire family given that women tend to reinvest back into the household.

Reema Nanavaty presented the work of Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA) and contextualised these issues by introducing the workshop delegates to one of the community grassroots leaders who was a direct beneficiary of small-scale energy access programmes. She substantiated the claims made previously in the session that energy access allows for greater health and economic benefits to be made.

The focus then shifted to how financing for sustainable solutions is currently carried out and how parliamentarians can effectively support this. Mohua Mukherjee, Senior Energy Specialist at the World Bank, explained that financial support provided must always be offered following the eradication of structural constraints in projects. The World Bank will therefore only supplement funds in order to water down pre-existing costs as opposed to providing the initial project capital. As Ms Mukherjee put it, the World Bank should be seen as a 'figurative workhouse pulling other projects ahead.' This once more highlights the importance of partnerships and mitigates against a problem Ms Mukherjee often found with parliamentarians: that financing was often requested before structures and mechanisms have been put in place.

Sujala Pant, Governance and Climate Change Specialist with UNDP Bangkok, provided an insight into the role parliamentarians can play in financing for sustainable energy. Governments might be crucial in terms of acquiring the funding but parliaments, as well as CSOs and the media, are essential in ensuring that governments are being held to account. She detailed four main areas through which this can be done – parliamentary oversight of expenditures and budget allocations; championing renewable energies and the mainstreaming of key issues; representation; and working on an international level to hold the government to account in terms of international commitments made.

The private sector aspect of financing for renewables was the concluding session of the day, considering the large-scale perspective of YES Bank Ltd. and its corporate finance work. Sandeep Arora reiterated the point that financing projects should only occur after structural issues have been overcome. Different incentives, which could be offered to development projects, such as green or tax-free bonds, have also proved successful. Nirmal Chandra Mohanty narrowed in on more small-scale projects by considering the micro financing of projects carried out by Onergy Solar.

There are huge transactions costs associated with renewable energy investments and so, unless there is a scaling-up, most projects are deemed too small-scale to receive financing. One of the hardest challenges is therefore the implementation stage as people are simply not convinced that solar will work effectively to scale-up in the first place. However, smaller projects are useful to have as an example and these can slowly increase public support and awareness, which must then be exploited to ensure scaling up takes place in order to attract investments



WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 2016 – DAY 3

TIME	ACTIVITY
0730 hours	Depart from hotel
1000 – 1430 hours	Session 8 : Field Visit Activity – Biogas as Renewable Energy Source in Indian Villages – Project by Humana People to People India (HPPI); Neemrana, Rajasthan
1630 – 1700 hours	Return to the hotel

Workshop Participants enjoyed a field visit to a sustainable energy project in order to contextualise some of the key issues which had been discussed throughout the week. The group of parliamentarians were able to see first-hand the impact renewable energy projects can have on improving the livelihoods of local communities.

The 'Green Action' project in Neemrana, implemented by Humana People to People India (HPPI), has seen 50 biogas units created in 10 villages in Behror and Neemrana, Alwar District of Rajasthan. HPPI is promoting biogas as a clean energy source in rural households, and the 'Green Action' project is part of the organisation's larger biogas programme, which presently counts 700 biogas plants in villages of Rajasthan. The delegation received a briefing from Mr Bharat Dayal, Project Co-ordinator of HPPI's biogas project, on the programmes in Rajasthan. He noted that pollution and climate change is too often seen as being an urban concern whilst the risks posed for rural communities are largely ignored. He challenged this, citing the depletion of everyday resources in rural areas, as well as the reliance on firewood and use of fertilisers in farming, which all negatively impact upon rural health, education and livelihoods. Over 70% of households in Rajasthan have cattle and this had previously resulted in the waste of a viable energy source –manure. Biogas models therefore allow for the efficient removal of this waste whilst also creating a clean energy source which can connect straight into peoples' houses. It was otherwise dried out and burnt, which caused air pollution. The delegation was also welcomed by Savita Yadav, a local elected leader in the region who is also a supporter of the HPPI initiatives.

Upon arrival in Neemrana, workshop participants were shown several biogas models which had been built within the grounds of family homes. Each model, relying on the waste of about four cattle, can provide enough gas for three hours of energy a day directly to cooking stoves. At the end of the simple biogas production process bio slurry is produced which allows for reduced use of chemical fertilisers and helps to yield better results and retain precious moisture in the soil.

The arrival of biogas has had several impacts upon the family. For the women of the family, who had typically been responsible for collecting firewood for cooking, they now had an extra one to three hours per day as there was no longer the need to collect the wood. The health benefits associated with this cleaner form of cooking are also directly felt by women, one stating that she did not cry anymore when cooking from the fumes. For older children in the family, or daughters in law, they did not now have to wait in with the smaller children whilst the mother was out collecting firewood and so had there had also been improved school attendance rates as a result of this renewable energy source. The use of organic bio slurry had reduced the costs and impact of chemical fertiliser. They can also sell produce as 'organic', which gives a higher price. The impact of a sustainable energy supply to these individual households highlights what has been said throughout the workshop regarding the holistic impact the reduction of energy poverty and sustainable energy can make on peoples' lives. There was the chance to meet with members of the village's Farmers Club and share experiences and get advice.

Mr Dayal did note the initial problems HPPI faced when implementing these early biogas models however. There was a need for constant supervision and so, because communities were not initially supportive, only 7% of Rajasthan's biofuel potential was being realised. By 2010 these implementation problems had largely been overcome. There is also the common misconception that biogas units would smell bad, but by having a few local households champion the projects, other families saw the benefits of utilising such a system. Again, people had to be persuaded to make the initial investment of around INR250000 (around £250) but this would then be returned in one and a half to two years following the substantial energy savings made. India is now providing government subsidies for such projects and it is hoped that more and more households in rural communities will look to biogas as a sustainable energy source which will have far reaching implications.



More information about the Green Action, Neemrana Project is attached as Annexure B

THURSDAY 21 JANUARY 2016 – DAY 4

TIME	ACTIVITY
0930 – 1130 hours	Session 9 : Mock Committee Hearing
1130 – 1200 hours	Coffee/Tea break
1200 – 1300 hours	Session 9A : Debrief Session on Mock Committee Hearing
1300 – 1445 hours	Session 10 : World Cafe
1445 – 1500 hours	Session 11 : Feedback
1500 – 1530 hours	Session 12 : Closing Remarks and Next Steps
1530 hours	Close of workshop with tea and coffee

The final day of the Workshop saw participants take part in a Mock Committee hearing, chaired by Dawn Butler MP (UK). It provided parliamentarians an opportunity to explore the potential of small scale sustainable energy solutions to deliver universal energy access in the region. Delegates discussed the work of Humana People to People India (HPPI) and the biogas projects visited by the delegates the previous day as well as the Access to Clean Energy project, UNDP's flagship project on sustainable energy. During a two-hour session, Members of the Energy and Climate Change Mock Committee questioned two witnesses, Bharat Dayal from HPPI and S N Srinivas, Programme Officer with Energy for Development at United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India.

The questioning focussed on the HPPI and UNDP projects and the regional contexts, with the line of questions then broadening out to the implementation and potential scaling up of these projects, how to ensure that renewable energy projects are planned in a way that deliver multiple sustainable development solutions to the beneficiary communities, the financing of sustainable energy access and finally how policy frameworks can create an enabling environment for the multi-stakeholder efforts in delivering sustainable energy access for all. The discussion then centred around issues such as corruption, subsidies provided for projects and how there can be a scaling-up of programmes so that entire communities can benefit from biogas initiatives.

The activity was extremely well received by participants and the report back highlighted the importance of having a strong Chair able to redirect Members and their attention throughout the hearing. The conversation also digressed slightly onto more general parliamentary processes, which highlights how important effective committees are regardless of the content being discussed. It also helped emphasise how important it is for Members to have prior knowledge of the topic in order to ask probing questions and deliver a well-informed and effective inquiry.

At the end of the committee hearing the parliamentarians were joined by students and members of the Commonwealth Youth Climate Network (CYCN) and students from Teri University and Amity Law School, who questioned the witnesses further and brought interesting new perspectives to the discussions.

The report-back session highlighted some of the common challenges faced by Committees across the region. These related to the independence of Committees as well as the need for more structured questioning of witnesses.

The Workshop ended on a high note, with a World Café discussion session which will help inform the e-handbook for parliamentarians to be launched at the International Parliamentary Conference at the Houses of Parliament in London on 10-14 March.



Mock Committee Hearing exercise chaired by Dawn Butler, MP



Group report-back sessions

Conclusion

The workshop enabled members of the Fiji delegation to network with other parliamentarians and participate in discussions on Sustainability, Energy and Development. It also enabled members to note the important role that parliamentarians play to:-

- identify how they can implement and monitor the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level; and
- promote the sustainable energy agenda in their respective countries; and
- create a more attractive climate for investment in renewable energy.

The Fiji delegation to the Asian Regional Workshop on Sustainability, Energy and Development wishes to extend their appreciation to the Hon. Speaker of the Fiji Parliament for giving them the opportunity to attend the workshop in Delhi, India and also to UNDP and CPA (UK) for facilitating their trip.

Recommendations

The delegation wishes to make the following recommendations for approval by the Hon. Speaker:

1. That the Natural Resources Committee conducts an inquiry into the use of bio-gas and other renewable energy by rural communities.
2. That the Natural Resources Committee, in consultation with the relevant ministries and departments, carry out awareness programs on the importance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and how it can be implemented within the communities.

References

www.uk-cpa.org

sdg@parliament.uk

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Annexure A

DELEGATE LIST:

Bangladesh	Mr Md. Tajul Islam, MP Prof. Md. Ali Ashraf, MP Ms Shamsun Nahar Begum, MP
Fiji Islands	Hon. Joeli Cawaki, MP Hon. Ro Kiniviliame Kiliraki, MP
India	Dr Kirit Somaiya, MP Sh Vinayak Bhaurao Raut, MP Smt. Kanak Lata Singh, MP Dr Sanjay Jaiswal, MP
India (Haryana)	Smt Geeta Bhukklal, MLA Sh Zakir Hussain, MLA Sh Abhe Singh Yadav, MLA
India (Uttar Pradesh)	Hon. Raghuraj Singh Shakya, MLA Hon. Neeraj (Kushwaha) Maurya, MLA Hon. Smt. Bimla Singh Solanki, MLA
Pakistan	Hon. Amra Khan, MNA Hon. Bhawan Das, MNA
Sri Lanka	Hon. Hirunika Premachandra, MP Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya, MP Hon. Anura Sidney Jayarathne, MP
United Kingdom	Dawn Butler, MP Nigel Evans, MP

Annexure B