



**A Report of International Women's Day event
by Nigerian Alliance for Clean Cookstoves**

"Empowering women through clean cooking Energy, technology & Entrepreneurship"

Held at
British Nigerian Academy, Prince & Princess Estate
Abuja.

March 9, 2015



**BRITISH
NIGERIAN
ACADEMY**



Background

The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves is a public-private partnership led by the United Nations Foundation to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and protect the environment by creating a thriving global market for clean and efficient household cooking solutions. The Alliance's 100 by '20 goal calls for 100 million households to adopt clean and efficient cookstoves and fuels by 2020. The Alliance is working with its public, private and non-profit partners to help overcome the market barriers that currently impede the production, deployment, and use of clean cookstoves and fuels in developing countries.

The Nigerian Alliance for Clean Cookstoves is a public-private partnership that seeks to introduce 10 million fuel-efficient stoves to Nigerian homes and institutions by 2020. The Alliance supports policy change, better technical standards and innovative financing in the development of a national clean cookstove industry. It works with public, private, and non-profit partners to scale up access to clean cookstoves in Nigeria.

International Women's Day (www.internationalwomensday.com) is a global web of rich and diverse local activity that connects women from all around the world. Thousands of events are held annually on the 8th of March throughout the world to inspire women, celebrate their achievements and advocate for their advancement.

About 239 participants representing Internally displaced women (IDPs), women/girls groups, stove producers and distributors, Students & teachers, NGOs and donors convened in Abuja to commemorate International Women's Day under the theme **"Make it Happen through Clean Cooking Energy, Technology and Entrepreneurship"**. The event was organised by Nigerian Alliance for Clean Cookstoves an affiliate of the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, Creeds Energy and Roshan Global Ltd. It was hosted by the British Nigerian Academy and supported by Techwomen Alumni, Embassy of the U.S, Mercy Corps, Save the Children International, National Christian Pilgrims Commission and Sosai Renewable Energies Ltd.

The event sought to raise awareness among the global gender community that access to clean cooking solutions, renewable energy and information technology are critical drivers of gender equality. It is necessary for achieving global gender equality goals and targets and provides significant opportunities for women's empowerment. It showcased how clean cooking energy, renewable energy, information technology and entrepreneurship play important roles in unleashing the potential of women for a better future. It showcased how despite the diversity in Nigerian women's experience and identity, gender can be a unifying factor. This factor is one that will enable women to develop common strategies and action leading to their economic, social and political empowerment. Specific objective includes:

- Exposing positive role models in the clean cookstoves market, information technology and entrepreneurship to share their stories/journeys, successes and challenges.
- Introducing the available solutions for clean cooking, renewable energy and technology for women empowerment
- Hearing voices from women in the IDPs and public on their experiences with clean cooking, renewable energy and Information technology for women empowerment
- Opportunities for entrepreneurship in clean cooking, renewable energy and Information technology for women empowerment

Welcome Address

Ewah Otu Eleri, Coordinator, Nigerian Alliance for Clean Cookstoves highlighted the clean cooking energy challenge being faced in the world and especially in Nigerian. He noted that in the world today, about 4 million people especially women and children die of smoke from the kitchen. This is more than the number of deaths from malaria and hepatitis put together worldwide. He stated that in Nigeria only two diseases kill more than cooking - Malaria and HIV/AIDs, stating that nearly 100,000 lives are lost from smoke inhalation from cooking on "three stone fire". He commended Creeds Energy and Roshan Global Services for their involvement in the fight for a better world where women and children do not have to die because they are doing something as simple and ordinary as cooking. He urged all participants to embrace clean cookstoves as cooking should not Kill! He ended his address by stating that " we all can do something about this problem, we can end global warming, we can end energy poverty, we can restore the health of our women and children and it starts from you and I".

Opening Remarks

Shanthi Vedanayakam Jenkins, IB Diploma Coordinator, British Nigerian Academy remarked that the school is excited to host this IWD event. She noted that the issues that will be discussed during the event will go a long way to empower the students as they are the future leaders of tomorrow's world.

Victoria Sloan, Public Affairs Officer, US Embassy, remarked that "the problems that face the world today cannot be solved without the full participation of women and only when women make progress does their country make progress too". She noted that it is generally known that investing in women entrepreneurs will boost the economy for everyone. At a time with unstable oil prices and lack of stimuli in various sectors of the economy, innovation and entrepreneurship spearheaded by women is the answer. She highlighted that the united States of America is committed to the empowerment of women through clean cooking energy, renewable energy, technology and entrepreneurship.

She informed all participants that in 2010, the US secretary of States, Hilary Clinton, announced the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves (GACC). GACC seeks to save lives, improve livelihood, empower women and combat climate change by creating a thriving global market for clean and efficient house hold cooking solutions. She further stated that for women all over the globe, the commemoration of the IWD is an opportunity to reflect on "how far we have come and our struggles for equality and peace". Today's event is an opportunity to unite, network and mobilize for meaningful change. She commended the organizers for putting together this inspiring event that will create inspiring opportunities for women. She concluded her remark by noting that "as the event banner says today, to make it happen! I believe in empowering women because it is the right and smartest thing to do. As president Obama and first lady Michelle Obama have observed, men must be part of the solution!".

Lekan Tobe, Income Generation Team Lead, USAID/SHARE also shared ways in which they promoting cookstoves, solar lamps and water products by training women in entrepreneurship and offering financing to enable sustainability. He talked about the save space for young married women programme. The programme is important especially in the Northern part of Nigeria where adolescent girls are married and start bearing children before the age of 16 and as such miss out on life's opportunity to make themselves contribute to the economy. The

programme empowers the women by trainings them to learn various vocational skills to empower them and improve the community they belong.

Students of the British Nigerian Academy, the host school, presented a stage play titled *The Plight of the Nigerian Woman*; written, directed and acted by the students. The play highlighted the essence of respecting and empowering women and how respecting them can go a long way in ensuring they operate at optimum capacity.

Panel Discussions

Lack of access to energy, be it for cooking or for lighting, and resulting energy poverty are issues that need to be tackled today, and women are ready to play their part as innovators, entrepreneurs, policy makers and consumers! They can make it happen! The discussions focuses on women and clean cooking energy in Nigeria; women and renewable energy; women and information technology; and women and entrepreneurship.

Women and Clean Cooking Energy in Nigeria

This session highlighted the problem with inefficient method of cooking, how clean cookstoves can alleviate the sufferings of Nigerians especially the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and lessen women's hardship in IDP camp as well as prevent physical violence and respiratory diseases.

Panelist : Happy Amos - MD, Roshan Global Services

Precious Onuvae- Market Development Manager, Nigerian Alliance for Clean Cookstoves

Dr. Awani - Asokoro General Hospital

Ms Amos narrated her continuing passionate journey as stove entrepreneur and noted that her stoves (Happy Energy Saving Stoves) are meant to save lives and save money for women and she intends to make this happen!

According to Ms. Onuvae, Nigeria loses 3% of its forest cover annually leading to deforestation and desertification. Most of these trees are cut down and used as firewood for the purpose of cooking. Unfortunately, this method of cooking wastes wood and emits a lot of smoke too. Some nursing mothers even back their babies while cooking and expose them to the deadly smoke as well. Exposure to This smoke leads to a lot of ailments for the women and children which later leads to death. Cooking shouldn't kill she lamented!. Inefficient method of cooking further deepens the poverty level in the country as a lot of money is spent to purchase firewood, by using improved cookstoves which uses less amount of firewood, the money saved by the women can be channeled to other productive activities.

She further explained that the Nigerian Alliance for Clean Cookstoves is established to save women from the menace of indoor smoke, empower women and combat climate change by creating a thriving national market for efficient and clean cooking solutions.

Dr. Awani addressing the health related issues associated with smoke inhalation explained that smoke inhalation from inefficient ways of cooking often lead to low birth weight, respiratory infections, cancer, pneumonia, heart and lung diseases, blindness etc.

Women and Renewable Energy

Panelist: Hannah Kabir - MD, CREEDs Energy