Summary Notes

- In the recent past, the recognition of gender equality and importance of women in decision-making has increased in the field of climate change adaptation and sustainable development, supported by global processes such as the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda and driven by civil society engagement. However, in climate change mitigation sectors such as technology transfer and renewable energy, women are still underrepresented. This has led to lost opportunities of innovative solutions and capacities that women can bring for sustainable living, environmental management and climate action.

- Some key experiences on how to address this gap from a policy perspective, was shared by the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE) Government of Viet Nam that ensures that a gender perspective is included in their Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement, by inviting the civil society, women’s organizations and private sector in the process. Women also need to be included in capacity building efforts and be supported to access sustainable livelihoods. Renewable energy itself has the potential to support income generating activities for women.

- Renewable energy projects and policies have to be gender inclusive and follow a Human Rights Based Approach. This was strongly emphasized in the discussions and highlighted by the Swedish Development Cooperation (Sida), Regional Asia and the Pacific, stressing the there is a misconception that renewable energy policies and investment trickles down to everyone. This does not necessarily provide specific support to women and address their needs in the households.
Renewable energy entrepreneur Thida Khaev recognized these specific needs that women in rural Cambodia face and decided to start her own business. She saw how women were relying on household batteries and firewood and how girls had to spend their time securing energy rather than on education. She started her business in 2004 with a loan of US$1000 from a private local lending agency which though asked for a six-percent monthly interest rate, which was a high risk. Her example sets a precedence for institutions to lend their support and others to adopt similar viable business models that encourage more women to become renewable energy-based entrepreneurs. See the article “UN promotes Cambodian “women empowerment” in Singapore”.

The Private Financing Advisory Network (PFAN) supports initiatives such as Thida’s and noted that the number women entrepreneurs in the renewable energy sector has started to increase. However, there is still some way to go before women’s entrepreneurship in this sector can its full potential as a result of cultural norms, lack of access to finance and lack of targeted leadership and business support to women.

Businesses/ Private sector players such as Singaporean company City Developments Limited (CDL), emphasized the importance of women’s leadership in contributing to the SDGs and practical ways to lead this change such as adopting green financing initiatives that have been instrumental in their success and the establishment of ‘Women4Green Network’ to engage more women to become decision-makers in the environment and sustainability sector.

The critical contribution from civil society representatives in the audience, and the facilitator representing the Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group), emphasized that the discussions comes back to the fundamental questions of people’s rights to a healthy environment and access to resources, finance and skills to adapt to environmental challenges. Key learnings are that women’s roles, contributions and solutions should play a key role the UNEA-4 discussions within the theme of ‘Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production’.

In summary, there is a golden opportunity to put in place a regional network connecting women leaders and entrepreneurs in renewable energy, private sector, government and UN agencies, that can provide a venue to scale up sustainable solutions and showcase how investing in women is part of the #SolveDifferent motto. The Project EmPower – Women for Climate Resilient Societies, jointly implemented by UN Environment and UN Women with the support of the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency can support in creating this regional space of knowledge to increase attention to the role of gender in environmental management.

Contributors to the Side Event

Master of Ceremonies (MC):

Ms. Isabelle Louis, Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, UN Environment

Facilitator:

Ms. Elenita (Neth) Daño, Co-Executive Director of Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group)
Panelists:

- Ms. Esther An, Chief Sustainability Officer, City Developments Limited (CDL), Singapore
- Ms. Thida Khaev, owner of Solar Green Energy Cambodia, woman entrepreneur renewable energy
- Ms. Åsa Hedén, Head of Swedish Development Cooperation (Sida), Regional Asia and the Pacific
- Ms. Chu Thi Thanh Huong, Deputy Head Science Technology and International Cooperation Division, Department of Climate Change, Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE) Government of Viet Nam
- Mr. Nagaraja Rao, Head Investment Facilitation, Private Financing Advisory Network (PFAN)

**Agenda**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.15-12.20</td>
<td><strong>Objective of the side event</strong>&lt;br&gt;Elenita Cogonon Daño, Co-Executive Director of Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.20-12.25</td>
<td><strong>Video</strong>&lt;br&gt;How supporting women's leadership in the renewable energy sector can contribute to #SolveDifferent in climate action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.25-13.10</td>
<td><strong>Panelists’ presentations</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Ms. Åsa Hedén, Head of Swedish Development Cooperation - Regional Asia and the Pacific&lt;br&gt;2. Mr. Pham Vam Tan, Deputy Director General, Department of Climate Change (Gender Focal Point), Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment and Environment (MONRE) Government of Viet Nam&lt;br&gt;3. Mr. Christopher G. Zamora, Manager of APAEC Programme, ASEAN Centre of Energy&lt;br&gt;4. Ms. Thida Khaev, owner of Solar Green Energy Cambodia, woman entrepreneur renewable energy&lt;br&gt;5. Mr. Nagaraja Rao, Head Investment Facilitation, Private Financing Advisory Network (PFAN)&lt;br&gt;6. Ms. Esther An, Chief Sustainability Officer, City Developments Limited (CDL), Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.10-13.30</td>
<td><strong>Panel Q &amp; A</strong>&lt;br&gt;13.30-13.45 Questions, inputs and experiences from the floor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>