

Statement made by Dr.Sarala Gopalan from the Farmers' Group

Majority of the farmers of the world are poor.

They need to use a large number of new technologies that are emerging. This requires a great deal of effort to access the new technologies, transfer of these technologies and finance to build the infrastructure. How would we ensure the availability of finance with specially directed policies and strategies for this purpose to meet their demands for energy? What kind of subsidies, incentives and opportunities will be provided for them - particularly, with the stipulations of the WTO?

Women farmers in rural areas have to go in the dark to ease themselves. They are sometimes molested and subjected to other kind of violence. The availability of solar lanterns has provided them greater security, and they can go out more confidently in light with the lantern. Some women have taken this as an economic activity and sell these lanterns as business. It has become thier economic activity as well.

Another is the case of the farmers adapting their traditional water mills for pumping water, and even generating electricity as micro hydels. Farmers have to be encouraged for these innovations and assisted. Mindsets have to change.