WEXFORD DECLARATION
Leaving no one behind

We the undersigned: [1]

Affirm that energy for cooking is essential for human wellbeing and that the nations of the world have committed to ensuring access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy for all by 2030[2]

Recognise that billions of people depend on wood and other biomass to cook their daily meals and that for many of them, particularly the rural poor, it will be the only fuel option available for decades to come[3]

Note with great concern that across the world biomass continues to be burned inefficiently, in unvented and pollution-emitting devices that are globally responsible for four million avoidable deaths annually; for severe forest degradation in specific areas; and for the large-scale emission of greenhouse gases[4]

Emphasise that wood and other biomass, when managed and treated properly and burned in efficient devices, can provide a low-emission, affordable, readily available, sustainable energy source[5]

Underline that advances in biomass-burning devices, fuel processing, and distribution have demonstrated that biomass can be one of the cleanest energy options

Confirm that a diversity of solutions, including biomass options, is needed to satisfy the wide range of household energy needs and to achieve international goals on human health, environmental quality, climate change mitigation and energy justice[6]

Assert that improving biomass options for cooking and other household energy services can be an effective climate, energy and gender strategy that can immediately enhance families' health and wellbeing – especially for women and children – and can help preserve the world's vital storehouses of carbon and biodiversity

Acknowledge that families regularly make parallel use of multiple devices and fuels for different types of cooking practices and other tasks, which is an approach known as 'stacking'. Accordingly, we recommend holistic approaches to sustainable cooking that address all elements of the 'stack'[7]

Call urgently for the provision of the large-scale funding which is profoundly needed for the sustainable cooking sector and the expeditious fulfilment of existing funding pledges, which amount to hundreds of millions of dollars[8]

Call on organisations that fund climate change mitigation projects to prioritise those initiatives that provide immediate emissions reductions and social benefits through sustainable cooking to the communities most vulnerable to climate change[9]

Call on citizens to help address this clean cooking challenge by using choices, as consumers, to support organisations or companies that lead the way. We further call on citizens to appeal to their elected representatives to urgently prioritise sustainable household energy in their health, climate and development policies[10]

Call for a clarification of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 7 as it currently stands, to the effect that biomass and biomass-burning devices can meet the definition of clean fuels and stoves[11]

Call for a sector-wide discussion to re-define sustainable energy indicators that are technology and fuel neutral and reflect true access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy for all[12]

Commit to working towards universal access to sustainable energy for cooking and other household needs, and in so doing, we commit to building relationships with the full range of stakeholders, institutions, and disciplines necessary to achieve this goal[13]

Pathways to Clean Cooking 2050 - leaving no one behind

[1] Wexford Declaration was drawn up during *Pathways to Clean Cooking 2050 - Leaving No-one Behind* Conference which took place from 29-31 of May 2019 in Wexford, Ireland. Participants were invited to sign-up to the declaration and signatories to date are detailed on the website. Sign-up remains open to all.

[2] Sustainable Development Goal No 7, one of seventeen goals set our under United Nations framework, aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all and specifically targets universal access to clean cooking under same timeframe.

[3] The absolute number of solid fuel users in sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southeast Asia is predicted to increase until 2050 (Bonjour S, Adair-Rohani H, Wolf J, Bruce NG, Mehta S, et al. Solid Fuel Use for Household Cooking: Country and Regional Estimates for 1980-2010. Environmental Health Perspectives. 121.7: 784-790. 2013.) and the International Energy Agency predicts that by 2030, 2.2 billion will still lack access to clean fuels and technologies (World Energy Outlook 2018) and, hence, will be left behind.

[4] Inefficient burning of solid fuels, for the most part biomass, in pollution-emitting devices is the main cause of household air pollution which globally results in over 4.3 million premature deaths per year (World Health Organization guidelines for indoor air quality: household fuel combustion. 2014). In many rural population-dense settings, use of fuelwood is a major driver of deforestation and forest degradation (Bailis R, Drigo R, Ghilardi A, and Masera O. The Carbon Footprint of Traditional Woodfuels. Nature Climate Change. 5:266-272. 2015). Emissions from biomass fuels contribute to 2-8% of anthropogenic climate impacts, including 20-30% of black carbon emissions (Masera OR, Bailis R, Drigo R, Ghilardi A, and Ruiz-Mercado I. Environmental Burden of Traditional Bioenergy Use. Annual Review of Environment and Resources. 22.9: 15.1-15.30. 2015).

[5] Woodfuel use is currently mostly renewable (Masera et al, 2015) and solid biomass resources can be managed sustainably. Woodfuels are widely and locally available. Their use creates local jobs and improves the local rural economy. Advanced biomass cook-stoves with processed fuels can meet revised International Standards Organisation / International Workshop Agreement Tier 4 and 5 designations for indoor emissions during in-use testing and with a sustainably harvested feedstock, can be essentially carbon-neutral (Champion WM, & Grieshop, AP. Pellet-Fed Gasifier Stoves Approach Gas-Stove Like Performance during in-Home Use in Rwanda. *Environmental Science and Technology.* 201953116570-6579, 2019). Substantial gains have been reported from the use of chimney stoves by reducing indoor air pollution and exposures by venting pollutants outside (Medina P, Berreuta V, Martinez M, Ruiz V, Masera OR. Comparative performance of five Mexican plancha-type cookstoves using water boiling tests, Development Engineering, Volume 2,20-28, 2017).

[6] From promoting “single devices” to integrated portfolios of options, tailored to socio-environmental context and based on understanding users needs and priorities, programs should focus on displacement of open fires and adoption and sustained use of cleaner, adoptable and reliable devices and practices (e.g. moving the open fire outside, making the fire portable, drying wood, use of pressure cooker etc.), with due regard to safety as changes in technology are introduced.

[7] Traditional fires satisfy several needs, cooking is a mix of diverse tasks and users are key determinants of stove performance. A single stove cannot cover all the tasks performed by traditional fires and combined use of various stoves and fuels, known as stacking, is the norm. Multiple options are needed to displace traditional fires. Integrated multi-fuel/device interventions (to clean the stack) are needed to meet usage requirements and need to be appropriate to local culture and habits in diverse situations worldwide. Clean biomass use and clean stacking are possible.

[8] Funding to facilitate universal access is considered ‘grossly insufficient’ by SE4All, in energising finance report 2018, with an estimated $30 million committed in 2015-16 in the 20 high impact countries that represent 2.4 of the 3 billion people without access to clean cooking, which, alarmingly, constitutes less than 1% of the estimated $4.4 billion annual requirement to achieve universal access by 2030.

[9] The climate change mitigation potential of fuel-efficient biomass cookstoves in Sub-Saharan Africa (a region that is highly vulnerable to climate change) is considerable. This potential is estimated to be 150-200 megatons of CO2 per year, and with population growth and urbanisation the carbon emissions from woodfuel, is likely to increase considerably. If population growth leads to further increase in non-renewability of biomass (i.e. an increase in harvesting that is unsustainable), carbon emissions from woodfuel may increase dramatically (Bensch, Jeuland & Peters, forthcoming).

[10] Mobilising popular demand for accelerating the energy transition particularly for the most vulnerable people and communities through consumers and voters is likely to require more information and awareness.

[11] The measurement of SDG 7 focuses currently on clean, but what is meant by "clean" from a health and climate perspective? Is the focus on the cooking fuels and technologies or the entire cooking energy system? How do we measure what changes in peoples' homes and lives?

[12] Bring together governments, international community, private sector, researchers and other stakeholders from across various sectors such as public health, environmental and energy, to re-define indicators and targets for sustainable energy for all.

[13] Signatories of this Declaration share an ambition for working towards universal access to sustainable energy for cooking and other household needs. Each signatory is asked to make a contribution to the collective, committing to work on a project that helps to realise the Declaration ambition and to build relationships with the full range of stakeholders, institutions, and disciplines necessary to achieve this goal.