

## Solar Cookers International Statement

Solar Cookers International fully supports United Nations Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. We anticipate full participation aiding and supporting the Post-2015 Goals. Many global citizens live in sun-rich, fuel-poor regions of Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and Latin America. The most vulnerable members of these populations are women and children. Household fuel can be expensive or unattainable for those who live in poverty. Many of the three billion people currently cooking over traditional fires using biomass or fossil fuels could benefit by adopting solar thermal technology, which makes household cooking and water pasteurization possible with free, zero-emission solar energy.

The Millennium Development Goals established in the Beijing Platform identify goals to improve the lives of women, girls and their families. All eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have demonstrated progress for the most stressed human populations.

Gender, technology, agriculture and entrepreneurship are also concerns of Solar Cookers International that are addressed in its mission, prioritizing the capture and use of free solar energy for cooking processes and water pasteurization. These tasks are fundamental to improving daily life for women, children, families and communities, supporting the MDGs.

Using solar thermal technology, which has a higher energy efficiency than solar photovoltaic, supplementing with biomass, biogas and/or fossil fuels when solar energy is not available, leads to a significant improvement in human health and safety, and reduces stressors on environments. The economic benefits of solar energy and water pasteurization are multiple. Families spend meagre resources for cooking fuels, such as charcoal and wood, as well as for fossil fuels such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). By prioritizing the use of solar thermal energy, family income can be redirected for education costs, additional food, and basic sanitary and health needs.

Because many types of solar cookers do not need tending during the cooking process, women save not only money but also time - also a valuable economic resource. Women can spend time with family and community members, begin micro enterprises, receive education, or rest and improve their health, and reach their full human potential. With the elimination of unpaid time collecting cooking fuels, women in agriculture will now be able to turn their attentions to improving their farming skills or learning about different types of crops. Time made available through solar thermal cooking makes it possible for the women to devote more time to growing additional crops for her family if she's a primary provider. The reduction in time spent searching for organic fuels and clean water sources reduces exposure to rape, theft, abduction and murder; best of all, the girl child can turn these previous hours of drudgery into a quest for education.

The social benefits of solar thermal cooking include increased gender equality and greater women's participation in decision-making leadership in their communities. Cooking in almost all cultures has been the domain of women and girls. Changes introduced in this area improve the well-being of the family and the community. Use of solar thermal cooking will reflect positively in expanding the independence of women.

The use of solar thermal cooking reduces black carbon emissions from biomass cooking fires, which are a climate change forcing agent. Therefore has considerable impact on improving air quality. Reducing

deforestation is another significant environmental advantage for sustainable development and climate change. Desertification results from the removal of wood, leaves and other biological materials from the environment. By reducing the demand for biomass fuels, mature trees left in the environment create an invaluable carbon sink that helps cool the planet.

With the elimination of unpaid time collecting cooking fuels, women in agriculture often report they have more time for planting and crop care, and animal husbandry.

As described, solar thermal cooking helps improve family and community health, economics and quality of the physical environment. Human health and quality of life are improved, and the environment benefits from replacing biomass and fossil fuels with free, zero-emission solar energy. With time and money saved, healthcare, entrepreneurship and an educated citizenry become possible.

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An international, non-governmental nonprofit organization working since 1987 to improve human and environmental health through solar thermal cooking technology.

[www.solarcookers.org](http://www.solarcookers.org)