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IEEE-USA

Biogas technology with potential to save thousands of lives to be featured at Texas event

WASHINGTON (31 March 2010) -- About 1.6 million people -- mostly women and children -- die each year from indoor air pollution caused by cooking and heating with wood, dung, coal or crop waste, according to the World Health Organization.

Justin Henriques, a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow at the University of Virginia and co-executive director of Least of These International (LOTI), thinks he might have an answer to help solve the problem.

The IEEE student member will present findings on his biogas digester system at the IEEE Green Technologies Conference, 15-16 April, at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas. Early registration has been extended to Friday, 2 April.
http://www.ieeegreentech.org

Speaking on the ScienceNews Radio Network show Promise of Tomorrow (http://www.promiseoftomorrow.biz/bizradio/032110/032110.htm), Henriques explained how his team updated 1930s biogas digester technology to allow the units to convert animal waste into enough methane gas daily to sustain a household of eight. The difference from previous attempts to utilize such fuel sources, he said, is the compact size, ease of construction, sustainability through easily available materials, low cost and rapid installation via a pre-packaged system.

The fuel Henriques and the LOTI team used in Western Kenya was a mixture of cow manure and water. "Through that anaerobic fermentation process, you actually kill most of the pathogens that would cause sickness from the manure in the first place," Henriques said on the program.

The conference will explore emerging technologies in renewable energy, alternative fuel, alternative vehicle power sources and technologies to promote energy conservation in the home and business. It will also look at the social, economic and political impacts of renewable energy sources, as well as the social and economic impact of new technologies.

IEEE-USA and Oncor, the largest regulated electric delivery business in Texas, are cosponsors of the IEEE Green Technologies Conference. Oncor Senior Vice President Jim Greer, who oversees asset management and engineering, will be a keynote speaker on 16 April and discuss his company's Smart Grid Initiative.

Representatives from the following universities, among others, are participating: the University of Tokyo; Birla Institute of Technology, India; the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago; Southern Illinois University; University of Southern California; Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi; and the University of Texas at Arlington.

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