"POWER AFRICA" & PARTNER COUNTRY ENERGY IN THE NEWS

May 30, 2015 – June 25, 2015

Article Summaries & Full Clips

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IN THE NEWS: Featured Partner Country Energy News

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POWER AFRICA, AFRICA, & REGIONAL NEWS

Opinion - Neil van Niekerk: Power Africa Partnerships for Development
June 8 | BusinessFightsPovery.org
As a financial institution with a history of over 150 years, and active across 16 African markets, Power Africa has deepened Standard Chartered Bank's already strong relationships with multilateral financial institutions, who play a critical role in the development of power and other infrastructure across Africa. Neil van Niekerk is the Managing Director, Project & Export Finance Africa, Standard Chartered Bank.

'Africans Living On Less Than U.S.$2.50 a Day Spend U.S.$10 Billion On Energy'
June 10 | The Guardian
A new report from Kofi Annan's Africa Progress Panel, Power, People, and Planet: Seizing Africa's Energy and Climate Opportunities, suggested that African governments, investors, and international financial institutions must significantly scale up investment in energy to unlock Africa's potential as a global low-carbon superpower.

Africa On Threshold of Triple Energy Win for People, Power and Planet
June 11 | IPS
According to a new report by former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Africa Progress Panel, titled Power, People, Planet: Seizing Africa's Energy and Climate Opportunities, renewable energy is at the forefront of the changes sweeping Africa, and a "triple win" is within the region's grasp to increase agricultural productivity, improve resilience to climate change, and contribute to long-term reductions in dangerous carbon emissions.

Energy Sufficiency Will Top My Agenda for Africa – Adesina
June 15 | Leadership
The president-elect of African Development Bank (AfDB) and former minister for agriculture, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, has said that energy sufficiency will top his agenda for Africa when he assumes office in September.

How to Power Africa, Business Daily (Audio)
June 19 | BBC World Service
A view of Africa's energy landscape, covering how South Africa's power crisis is costing businesses and the energy innovation happening across the continent.

Opinion - Tony Blair: Access to electricity is the single most vital precondition for success in African nations
June 10 | Quartz Africa
Developing better access to electricity is crucial for African nations, says Blair.

Shining Light On Refugees' Energy Needs
June 22 | IRIN
When refugee crises strike, energy provision is well down the list of priorities, and ad hoc solutions tend to persist for years, even when they are unsatisfactory, expensive, damaging to the environment, and in all ways unsustainable.

Why we're building an investment fund to back solar energy in Africa
June 16 | Quartz Africa
Focusing on traditional electric grids would be like investing only in copper landline telephone networks in Africa in 1995. Instead, investors should help Africa build a cleaner and more distributed electricity infrastructure. The three charts below illustrate why.

World Power Sector Emissions Seen Peaking in 2029 – Research
June 23 | Thompson Reuters Foundation
Global greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector are expected to peak in 2029 and then start falling, but

will still be some way above levels needed to limit temperature rise, research showed on Tuesday.

Southern Africa: SunEdison to Build 371 Megawatts of Solar Power in South Africa
June 8 | Bloomberg Business
SunEdison Inc., the best-performing U.S. solar company, won bids to build and operate 371 megawatts of solar power in South Africa.

East Africa: Manufacturers Urge EAC Govts to Prioritise Energy, Trade Facilitation
June 3 | The New Times
On June 11, Rwanda and the other East African Community (EAC) member countries - Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi - presented their 2015/16 financial year budget estimates. In advance of the presentation, manufacturers explained why they want governments to prioritize the energy and transport sectors, as well as support skills development and innovation.

East Africa: REC to enter African solar market amid 100 GW predictions
June 25 | PV Magazine
REC will enter "numerous" markets in East and South Africa this year on the back of its expectations that 100 GW of solar PV will be installed there by 2030. Norwegian solar company REC has announced it will focus on entering "numerous" East and South African regions, which are expected to see 100 GW of solar PV installed over the next 15 years.

East Africa: Solar Firm Notches Up 200,000
June 2 | East Africa Business Week
M-KOPA Solar, a pay-as-you-go energy provider for off-grid customers, has announced it has powered up 200,000 homes in East Africa.

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia plans extra energy in power projects
June 18 | World Bulletin
Ethiopia plans to launch hydropower dams and other renewable energy projects over the five years to 2020 that will add an additional 12,000 megawatts of electricity upon completion, a senior official said on Monday.

Electric Power Prepares Draft Master Plan for Electricity Distribution At $3.5m
June 15 | Addis Fortune
The Ethiopia Electric Power (EEP) has developed the final draft of a master plan for electric power distribution in Addis Abeba and its surrounding areas, at the cost of 3.5 million dollars, financed through a loan obtained from the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Ethiopia Energy Exports Worth 2.9b Br, Below GTP I Targets
May 31 | Addis Fortune
The 10 month report for 2014/2015 showed billions in export and domestic earnings but shortfalls in GTP I targets Ethiopia exported 606.5GWh of energy to neighbouring countries, amounting to 2.9 billion Br in the first 10 months of 2014/15, though planned exports were estimated at 685GWh.

Ethiopia is set to launch the Ethio-Kenya transmission line project
June 22 | ESI Africa
On Friday, Ethiopian Electric Power entered into an agreement with China Electric Power Equipment and Technology to develop the Eastern Africa Interconnector dubbed the Ethio-Kenya transmission line project.

GHANA

Energy crisis will end soon – Cretz
June 24 | Ghana Web
The US Ambassador to Ghana, Gene Cretz has expressed optimism that the ongoing energy crisis in the country will end soon. According to Mr Cretz, the US was currently involved in several projects with the government that would produce more megawatts to address the energy crisis in future.

KENYA

Forge Pacts to Benefit From Green Energy, Uhuru Tells Africa
June 15 | Capital FM
President Uhuru Kenyatta has urged African countries to forge partnerships that identify and take full advantage of the available opportunities to benefit from the economies of scale. He

said Kenya and other countries endowed with renewable energy can consult and agree on partnering to share the resources.

Google wants stake in massive energy project: Sources
June 11 | CNBC
Google is negotiating to become an investor in the Lake Turkana Wind Power Project, a more than $700 million, 40,000 acre undertaking in Kenya. It's the largest private investment in the history of the East African country—where less than a quarter of the population has access to power—and the project's 310 megawatt capacity is expected to boost Kenya's installed energy capacity by 20 percent. The deal is not finalized, according to the people, and, even if completed, Google's would be a minority stake.

Kengen Strikes 33MW From New Geothermal Wells in Olkaria
June 15 | Capital FM
The Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) has successfully drilled another set of geothermal wells in this country, further boosting Kenya's quest to be self sufficient in electricity. Three wells located within one pad with a total capacity of 33 megawatts, form one of Africa's biggest well-pad which is located in the geothermal-rich Olkaria area.

Kenya Power in Sh3.2 Billion Substations Upgrade
June 24 | Capital FM
Kenya Power has signed contracts worth Sh3.2 billion with local firms to implement 12 substation upgrade projects in the country. The deal will also involve the construction of additional 33 kV power distribution lines to meet growing demand for increasing number of customers.

Kenya's Major Power Rollout Set for September – Chumo
June 10 | Kenya Star
Kenya Power expects to connect 314,000 new households in its first phase of the new power connection that starts in September. The plan dubbed the 'Last Mile Connectivity Project' has brought down electricity connection fee from Sh35,000 to Sh15,000 which can be paid in installments targets a total of 1.5 million new users to the existing 3.3 million. The African Development Bank will finance the first phase at a tune of Sh13.5 billion, which will be used to extend low voltage network from 5,320 existing transfers countrywide.

Using Donkeys, Maasai Women Lead Solar Revolution
June 3 | Thompson Reuters Foundation
The Women and Entrepreneurship in Renewable Energy Project (WEREP), an initiative by Green Energy Africa, aims to turn Kajiado County to solar power by training women as solar installers and encouraging them to market the clean energy concept to fellow pastoralists.

LIBERIA

Electricity Remain Key to Liberia's Development
June 8 | The New Dawn
President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says electricity is cardinal and important for Liberia's growth, economic revitalization and reconstruction drive. The president said the potential for doing business and experiencing growth is significantly tied to the availability of electricity and other sources of power, which will propel the economy and enhance production.

House Concurs With Senate On Rural Renewable Energy Agency Act
June 18 | Legislature of Liberia (Monrovia)
The establishment of the Rural Renewable Energy Agency seeks to inaugurate a system that will ensure the creation of electric energy from existing resources within rural communities that could over a reasonable period.

NIGERIA

Investment in Energy Technology to Hit U.S.$400 Billion By 2030
June 24 | The Guardian
The International Energy Agency (IEA) has projected that increasing investment in renewable energy technologies in the power sector will increase from $270 billion in 2015 to $400 billion in 2030.

New Electricity Agency to Close Technical Gap Soon

June 23 | Daily Trust

With the recent presidential assent establishing the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA), its management has said the technical gap would soon be closed. A statement by the Public Affairs Manager, Uche Aneke of the agency hitherto called the electricity management services Ltd (EMSL) said "the power sector can now boast of an independent agency that has the capacity to bite while tackling issues of timely response to the needs of the privatized industry."

TANZANIA

Energy On Focus As Sweden Pledges More Ties With Dar

June 8 | Tanzania Daily News

A new cooperation chapter has been opened with Sweden pledging to strengthen relations with Tanzania through increased investments, especially in the energy sector, to spur the country's economic growth. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Business Sweden, Ms Ylva Berg, made the promise to President Jakaya Kikwete here over the weekend, saying the Scandinavian country would heavily invest in the East African country.

Rural Electrification in Good Progress – Govt

June 7 | Tanzania Daily News

More than 240,000 people have been connected to the Rural Electrification Project Phase II from July 2014 to April 2015, compared to 143,113 connected in 2013.

U.S Says Impressed With Kinyerezi I Electricity Plant

June 4 | Tanzania Daily News

Tanzania should step the war against graft and promote transparency to boost private investment in the energy sector. US Energy Undersecretary, Mr Christopher Smith, said the US was keen to seen growth of ties between his country and Tanzania in the energy sector.

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Power Africa: Opinion - Neil van Niekerk: Power Africa Partnerships for Development | June 8 | BusinessFightsPovery.org

URL Source: http://community.businessfightspoverty.org/profiles/blogs/neil-van-niekerk-power-africa-partnerships-for-development

By Neil van Niekerk, Managing Director, Project & Export Finance Africa, Standard Chartered Bank

It is clear that Africa has a very large shortfall in its power infrastructure. Although the continent accounts for a sixth of the world's population, it generates only 4 per cent of its electricity. As many as 600 million people are without electricity, and 30 countries face routine power shortages. This has a huge impact on society and on economies. Lack of access to regular, affordable energy in Africa, is widely cited as one of the main constraints to doing business by small and large enterprises alike.

Overcoming the region's power gap is estimated to cost around $100 billion per year – more than 10 per cent of the GDP of the continent. Around half of that cost will come in unlocking inefficiencies in infrastructure; and the balance will be in new capital expenditure. These short-comings, coupled with the high cost of building new infrastructure, has sometimes undermined the commercial viability of projects.

The public sector cannot carry this responsibility alone, and thus its imperative for private sector investors to get involved and partner for a brighter future.

Historically, investments into African power infrastructure have stalled due to obstacles such as inadequate legal and regulatory frameworks, and the perception of political risks. These have made it difficult for private sector investors and lenders to take full ownership of certain risks in the countries they wish to invest in. Inefficiencies in the existing infrastructure, coupled with the high cost of building new infrastructure, are also major stumbling blocks which have been known to undermine the commercial viability of projects.

'Power Africa' was launched in 2013 by President Obama to address these specific constraints, and unlock investment values. This is a five-year, multi-stakeholder partnership between the

governments of the United States, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Nigeria, along with private sector and multilateral institutions.

Collectively, this partnership aims to deliver more than 30,000 MW of cleaner, more efficient electricity to millions of homes and business across the continent. More than $20 billion of support has already been mobilised from private sector partners for new power projects and partners have already concluded enough projects to generate over 4,000MW of electricity, and another 15,000MW will be generated from the current list of projects in the planning stage.

Standard Chartered is one of the largest private sector contributors to the Power Africa initiative through advisory, financing, debt structuring services and policy framework development. In 2014 we increased our commitment from $2 billion to $5 billion, which we anticipate will bring more than 7,500MW of the collective power commitment into African grids.

There have been attempts to bridge Africa's electricity gap before, but Power Africa represents a far more focused, coordinated effort than we have seen in the past. Traditionally, in a true public-private partnership there is a very fine line between equitable risk allocation between public and private sector – the right party should assume risks that it is best able to manage and influence.

Working closely with the World Bank and other multilateral institutions, Standard Chartered has taken proactive steps to put risk mitigation mechanisms in place, which encourage a more equitable balance of risk-sharing between the public and private sectors.

Further investment is being unlocked through the provision of investment guarantees and po-litical risk insurance to address international investors concerns over complexity and long tenors associated with greenfield infrastructure projects in frontier markets.

We are now seeing similar successful models being rolled out across the continent. Nigeria, for example, has remained committed to privatising its power sector and has now attracted billions of dollars in investment. We are proudly advising and funding the development of the Azura-Edo project, the country's first-ever privately-funded power plant, which now provides a blueprint for other independent power projects (IPP's) to replicate and secure sustainable investment flows for long term productivity.

As a financial institution with a history of over 150 years, and active across 16 African markets, Power Africa has deepened our already strong relationships with multilateral financial institutions, who play a critical role in the development of power and other infrastructure across Africa.

We are now witnessing countries make exciting new discoveries of natural resources, which adds further incentive to growing power generation. In Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania and Mozambique we are seeing newly-found, or newly-leveraged gas resources driving investment in power. The same is true of hydropower in Zambia, Cameroon and Ethiopia and geothermal energy in Kenya. Countries are at last beginning to leverage their natural resources to unlock their potential and break down barriers to economic growth and job creation.

With the right catalytic investments and dynamic partnerships, the next decade of Africa's economic development could be driven by infrastructure, rather than constrained by it. Initiatives like Power Africa show that there is worldwide support from the public and private sector to help move this change forwards.

'Africans Living On Less Than U.S.$2.50 a Day Spend U.S.$10 Billion On Energy' | June 10 | The Guardian

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506100283.html

By Roseline Okere

African governments, investors, and international financial institutions must significantly scale up investment in energy to unlock Africa's potential as a global low-carbon superpower.

That was the main message of a new report from Kofi Annan's Africa Progress Panel, Power, People, and Planet: Seizing Africa's Energy and Climate Opportunities.

The report revealed that households living on less than $2.50 a day collectively spend $10 billion every year on energy-related products, such as charcoal, kerosene, candles and torches.

According to the report, measured on a per unit basis, Africa's poorest households are spending around $10/kWh on lighting - 20 times more than Africa's richest households.

By comparison, the national average cost for electricity in the United States is $0.12/kWh and in the United Kingdom is $0.15/kWh.

The report also called for strengthened international cooperation to close Africa's energy sector financing gap, estimated to be $55 billion yearly to 2030, which includes $35 billion for investments in plant, transmission and distribution, and $20 billion for the costs of universal access.

The report called for a ten-fold increase in power generation to provide all Africans with access to electricity by 2030. This would reduce poverty and inequality, boost growth, and provide the climate leadership that is sorely missing at the international level.

Chair of the Africa Progress Panel, Kofi Annan stated: "We categorically reject the idea that Africa has to choose between growth and low-carbon development. Africa needs to utilize all of its energy assets in the short term, while building the foundations for a competitive, low-carbon energy infrastructure."

The report stated that Africa's leaders must start an energy revolution that connects the unconnected, and meets the demands of consumers, businesses and investors for affordable and reliable electricity. The 2015 Africa Progress Report urges African governments to:

- Use the region's natural gas to provide domestic energy as well as exports, while harnessing Africa's vast untapped renewable energy potential.

- Cut corruption, make utility governance more transparent, strengthen regulations, and increase public spending on energy infrastructure.

- Redirect the $21 billion spent on subsidies for loss-making utilities and electricity consumption - which benefit mainly the rich - towards connection subsidies and renewable energy investments that deliver energy to the poor.

The report challenges African governments and their international partners to raise the level of ambition for the crucial climate summit in Paris in December, and calls for wholesale reform of the fragmented, under-resourced and ineffective climate financing system. He said: "Many rich country governments tell us they want a climate deal.

But at the same time billions of dollars of taxpayers' money are subsidising the discovery of new coal, oil and gas reserves.

They should be pricing carbon out of the market through taxation, not subsiding a climate catastrophe.

"By hedging their bets and waiting for others to move first, some governments are playing poker with the planet and future generations' lives.

This is not a moment for prevarication, short-term self-interest, and constrained ambition, but for bold global leadership and decisive action.

"Countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa are emerging as front-runners in the global transition to low carbon energy. Africa is well positioned to expand the power generation needed to drive growth, deliver energy for all and play a leadership role in the crucial climate change negotiations."

Africa: Africa On Threshold of Triple Energy Win for People, Power and Planet | June 11 | IPS

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506111012.html

By Kwame Buist

Cape Town — Renewable energy is at the forefront of the changes sweeping Africa, and a "triple win" is within the region's grasp to increase agricultural productivity, improve resilience to climate change, and contribute to long-term reductions in dangerous carbon emissions.

This is the message of a new report by former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Africa Progress Panel, titled Power, People, Planet: Seizing Africa's Energy and Climate Opportunities.

The report calls for a ten-fold increase in power generation to provide all Africans with access to electricity by 2030, saying that this would reduce poverty and inequality, boost growth and provide the climate leadership that is sorely missing at the international level.

It also urges African governments, investors, and international financial institutions to scale up investment in energy significantly in order to unlock Africa's potential as a global low-carbon superpower.

"We categorically reject the idea that Africa has to choose between growth and low-carbon development. Africa needs to utilise all of its energy assets in the short term, while building the foundations for a competitive, low-carbon energy infrastructure" - Kofi Annan

"We categorically reject the idea that Africa has to choose between growth and low-carbon development," said Annan. "Africa needs to utilise all of its energy assets in the short term, while building the foundations for a competitive, low-carbon energy infrastructure."

Over 62 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to electricity - and this number is rising.

The report notes that, excluding South Africa, which generates half the region's electricity, sub-Saharan Africa uses less electricity than Spain. It would take the average Tanzanian eight years to use as much electricity as an average American consumes in a single month. And over the course of one year someone boiling a kettle twice a day in the United Kingdom uses five times more electricity than an Ethiopian consumes over the same year.

Power shortages are estimated to diminish the region's growth by 2-4 percent a year, holding back efforts to create jobs and reduce poverty.

Despite a decade of growth, the power generation gap between Africa and other regions is widening. Nigeria, for example, is a petroleum exporting superpower, but 95 million of the country's citizens rely on wood, charcoal and straw for energy.

The report reveals that households living on less than 2.50 dollars a day collectively spend 10 billion dollars every year on energy-related products, such as charcoal, kerosene, candles and torches.

Measured on a per unit basis, Africa's poorest households are spending around 10 dollars/kWh on lighting - 20 times more than Africa's richest households. By comparison, the national average cost for electricity in the United States is 0.12 dollars/kWh and in the United Kingdom 0.15 dollars/kWh.

The report says Africa's leaders must start an energy revolution that connects the unconnected, and meets the demands of consumers, businesses and investors for affordable and reliable electricity.

It urges African governments to:

Use the region's natural gas to provide domestic energy as well as exports, while harnessing Africa's vast untapped renewable energy potential.

Cut corruption, make utility governance more transparent, strengthen regulations and increase public spending on energy infrastructure.

Redirect the 21 billion dollars spent on subsidies for loss-making utilities and electricity consumption - which benefit mainly the rich - towards connection subsidies and renewable energy investments that deliver energy to the poor.

The report also calls for strengthened international cooperation to close Africa's energy sector financing gap, estimated to be 55 billion dollars annually to 2030, which includes 35 billion dollars for investments in plant, transmission and distribution, and 20 billion dollars for the costs of universal access.

A global connectivity fund with a target of reaching an additional 600 million Africans by 2030 is said to be needed to drive investment in on- and off-grid energy provision, with aid donors and financial institutions doing more to unlock private investment through risk guarantees and mitigation finance.

Time to end 'climate negotiating poker'

The report also challenges African governments and their international partners to raise the level of ambition for the crucial climate summit in Paris in December, and calls for wholesale reform of the fragmented, under-resourced and ineffective climate financing system.

G20 countries are called on set a timetable for phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, with a ban on exploration and production subsidies by 2018. "Many rich country governments tell us they want a climate deal. But at the same time billions of dollars of taxpayers' money are subsidising the discovery of new coal, oil and gas reserves," said Annan. "They should be pricing carbon out of the market through taxation, not subsiding a climate catastrophe."

While recognising recent improvements in the negotiating positions of the European Union, the United States and China, the report says that current proposals still fall far short of a credible deal for limiting global warming to no more than 2˚C above pre-industrial levels.

The former U.N. Secretary-General said that "by hedging their bets and waiting for others to move first, some governments are playing poker with the planet and future generations' lives. This is not a moment for prevarication, short-term self-interest and constrained ambition, but for bold global leadership and decisive action."

"Countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa," he added, "are emerging as front-runners in the global transition to low carbon energy. Africa is well positioned to expand the power generation needed to drive growth, deliver energy for all and play a leadership role in the crucial climate change negotiations."

Edited by Phil Harris

Africa: Energy Sufficiency Will Top My Agenda for Africa - Adesina | June 15 | Leadership

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506150350.html

By Ruth Tene

Abuja — The president-elect of African Development Bank (AfDB) and former minister for agriculture, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, has said that energy sufficiency will top his agenda for Africa when he assumes office in September.

He said the power challenges in Africa are unacceptable because without power, there can be no industrialisation, inclusive growth, private sector growth or agro processing.

Akinwumi, who spoke at a send-forth ceremony on Friday, organised by the Ministry of Agriculture to honour him and his counterpart, the minister of state, Hajiya Asabe Asmau Ahmed, who was conspicuously absent, was optimistic that curbing power challenges will give rise to the much-needed industrialisation Africa is long due for.

He said, "The number one thing on my agenda for Africa is energy; the fact that Africa does not have energy is not acceptable and we cannot have industrialisation, private sector development and agro processing unless we have power".

"Africa must power itself and with that, we can have industrialisation, be Green and become a global powerhouse in food and agriculture".

Akinwumi in his appreciation for the support he received during the campaigns said, "I feel so proud as a Nigerian for the tremendous support I received from everybody, particularly the then sitting President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, who nominated me and generously supported me and the then president-elect, General Muhammadu Buhari, who made several interventions and worked ceaselessly to ensure we won the elections".

He described their support as a tremendous boost "because being supported by the sitting president and the incoming president was the greatest boost we could have had".

Akinwumi said, "It is a great honour to have been called. I did not win elections; I was simply given a responsibility to lead Africa to achieve inclusive growth and I know together, we will build an Africa where we have inclusive growth, prosperity, peace, stability and security and an Africa we will all be proud to call our Africa."

He assured that there will be no rest for him until poverty is rested in the continent which he assured will happen with the development of power infrastructure across Africa.

Many stakeholders who poured encomiums on the former minister including members of the National Assembly, diplomats, youth farmers, rural farmers and cassava growers among several others, described Adesina as an "outstanding personality who had not only revived the nation's agriculture but is also set to do Africa and indeed the world proud".

Proposing a toast to the minister and his wife, Mrs Grace Adesina, former director of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) who is also former VP of the AfDB, Mrs Aruma Oteh, noted that "Akinwumi's emergence as the president of the AfDB is to be celebrated because in the bank's over 50 years of existence, this is the first time a Nigerian is emerging as its leader".

Akinwumi Adesina emerged the AfDB president after securing 58 per cent of the total votes on May 28 in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. He will succeed Donald Kaberuka as head of the bank on September 1.

Africa: How to Power Africa, Business Daily - BBC World Service (Audio)

Source URL: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02tj82l

Listen in pop-out player

South Africa's power crisis is costing billions. We hear from some angry local business people in Cape Town, battling with the challenge of keeping commerce afloat. We also hear from two local business people who've switched entirely to solar energy out of frustration with the power cuts. We hear from Baldwin Ngubane, the chairman of the national power company, Eskom, and we speak to other experts: Mamadou Toure, managing director of GE Africa and founder of the organisation,

Africa 2.0; also Rachel Howell, a consultant for the US energy company Emersom which is aiming to provide local power solutions to a range of countries across sub-Saharan Africa; and we hear from Caroline Kende Robb, executive director of the Africa Progress Panel, who's just co-written a report on so-called "leap-frogging" - the idea that Africans as a whole can now by-pass the development of a conventional power grid, connecting homes to a central, national supplier, and instead use renewable energy to provide a reliable local power source, for homes or communities.

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Africa: Opinion - Tony Blair: Access to electricity is the single most vital precondition for success in African nations | June 10 | Quartz Africa

Source URL: http://qz.com/424640/tony-blair-access-to-electricity-is-the-single-most-vital-precondition-for-success-in-african-nations/

Developing better access to electricity is crucial fpr African nations, says Blair.

A decade on from the Gleneagles Summit, Africa is undergoing a remarkable transformation. Standards of living are increasing, the middle class is set to double in the next ten years and a continent that was then a scar on the conscience of the world is now the most exciting. Africa's challenges are still better known than its prospects; but with a digital revolution in full-swing and data revolution underway, African nations have a chance to leapfrog stages of development.

In the early 90s, average growth in sub-Saharan Africa was around -2%. Nearly two-thirds of external finance came from aid, while exports were just $700 million. Today, 10 of the 15 fastest growing economies are in Africa, with countries such as Kenya, Rwanda and Ghana growing by 6%-8% a year, exports are more than $150 billion and aid makes up around a fifth of external finance.

There has also been an explosion in the growth of digital technologies. There are now 650 million mobile phone subscribers on the continent – a more than 40-fold increase since 2000. In countries such as Nigeria, mobile phone ownership among adults is the same as it is in the US. This growth far exceeds growth in access to basic services. But mobile technology is now simply universal personal technology – and it has the potential to revolutionise the delivery of services in Africa, both in the private and public sector.

This change is profound – and it is already happening. The mobile money service, M-Pesa, dramatically altered payments for goods and services in Kenya, ending queues to pay for utilities in an instant and turning the cash economy upside down. It was an innovation that had clear and immediate application for public services. Similarly mobile health services, mHealth, has the potential to radically improve health outcomes in Africa, through simple uses such as reminding patients to attend appointments or to disseminate public messaging such as those during the Ebola outbreak.

Through tapping into the world marketplace of ideas and applying existing technology to build new systems of delivery, African nations have the potential to skip traditional stages of development. But

those who succeed today will not only need to continually source new ideas irrespective of where they originate, but also create new knowledge.

This is why education will be crucial. As economic power transfers to knowledge industries a nation's human capital will determine whether it prospers or not. The global software industry, which didn't exist a generation ago, now generates revenues of around $500 billion a year. African nations must therefore invest in the quality of their education systems and in building world-class universities, but also be open to partnerships with institutions beyond their borders.

"The next Silicon Valley won't be a specific location but could be a global network of like-minded, open and engaged people thinking of products and solutions for the modern economy"

Collaborations between countries, such Carnegie Mellon in Kigali and MIT's Civic Design Lab in Nairobi, can transfer skills and expertise, as well as deepen understanding between students of different faiths and cultures. And new global education innovations such as massive online courses (MOOCs) have the potential to create global network effects, with the transfer of knowledge and ideas between students based in Monrovia and Munich, Freetown and Frankfurt. Such innovations could mean that the next Silicon Valley won't be a specific location; instead it could be a global network of like-minded, open and engaged people thinking about how to create products and solutions needed in the modern economy.

However, the single most important precondition for a country's success will be access to electricity. In a knowledge economy access to electricity – even a simple solar charger – is the foundation for everything; a game-changer. You don't merely have the things electricity traditionally got you, but you've got access to technology. Roads, rail, ports and airports also all have to be connected today. This is why my foundation, the Africa Governance Initiative, made delivering electricity a major focus. We have worked with the governments of Rwanda and Sierra Leone to help turn on the lights and are now providing support to President Obama's Power Africa initiative, which aims to deliver 60 million new power connections on the continent.

Developing this infrastructure will require partners, not just from governments and international bodies, but also from the private sector. It will also require embracing new and innovative ways of thinking. Governments are not traditionally good at innovation. But they have a key role in creating the right environment, the enabling institutions as well as encouraging receptivity to new ideas. These are the foundations on which dynamic economies are constructed, and what many African leaders are building today.

It means there is a genuine sense of optimism and opportunity in much of Africa. Despite the challenges, there is a restless spirit, a desire for progress, expression, and a belief that change is underway. The digital and data revolutions provide a chance for this change to become a reality – and, in doing so, for the future to be more evenly distributed.

Tony Blair served as Prime Minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 1997 to 2007. He is the founder and Patron of the Africa Governance Initiative. We welcome your comments at africa@qz.com or @qzafrica

Africa: Shining Light On Refugees' Energy Needs | June 22 | IRIN

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506232048.html

By Elizabeth Blunt

London — When refugee crises strike, energy provision is well down the list of priorities, and ad hoc solutions tend to persist for years, even when they are unsatisfactory, expensive, damaging to the environment, and in all ways unsustainable.

Dadaab, a complex of camps in northern Kenya that is home to a third of a million Somali refugees, is located in an arid, treeless region, but it gets through 120,000 tonnes of firewood a year, most of which has to be trucked in, as well as more than three million dollars' worth of diesel to run its generators.

Even in camps where firewood is available, it has to be collected in sufficient quantities. In Chad, a UNHCR survey of two refugee camps (Kounoungou and Mille) last year found that 69 percent of households reported that members had been assaulted in the previous six months while they were out gathering firewood. And the supply was never enough - 35 percent of families had skipped meals because there was no fuel to cook them, and 28 percent had eaten their food undercooked because the fuel ran out.

"Their energy requirement has effectively been put on their own shoulders," says Ben Good, the CEO of the Global Village Energy Project (GVEP). "It's 'Find you own firewood'. For some that means collecting it; for others, buying it from local traders."

In the humanitarian world, energy specialists are thin on the ground. The UN's refugee agency, UNHCR, has only two - one based in Geneva and one currently in Jordan, where the influx of refugees from Syria has put a huge strain on the country's power generating capacity.

"The humanitarian do-no-harm agenda is poorly represented in terms of environmental impact," says Joe Attwood, an energy specialist with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). "From the point of [view of] a humanitarian responder I would like to open up that discussion about why it is that do-no-harm does not embrace these issues."

At the moment in a major emergency, participating aid agencies are coordinated through the so-called "cluster" system; there's a cluster for those working on health, those working on food, and those working on water and sanitation, for instance. But there isn't an energy cluster. Should there be?

Betsy Lippman, who heads UNHCR's Operational Solutions and Transition Section, says people have tended to think of energy as a cross cutting issue. "It's only something we've started to take a hard look at in the last couple of years. Perhaps there will be an energy cluster in the future, but I'm not sure that it needs a cluster to be relevant or have impact."

Most refugee settlements are not connected to the local power grid because host governments are opposed to any sense that they are permanent - even though the camps may remain for 10 years, or even longer.

Now agencies are starting to explore ways of providing power which also benefit host communities, defusing political tensions. Much of this work is going on in Jordan where the Syrian refugee population is urban and middle class and largely living in privately-rented accommodation subsidised by UNHCR.

When funding to pay for this accommodation was running low, someone had the bright idea - a light-bulb moment - of offering landlords solar roof panels, which could be paid for out of the EU sustainable energy budget.

This has proved a success: the panels were accepted in lieu of rent, the refugees and the host household both have electricity, and community relationships have improved. Also in Jordan, UNHCR is planning a solar farm at Azraq to supply the refugee camp there that will also feed power into the national grid. It will remain as a legacy for Jordan if and when the refugees go home.

David Nicholson, of Mercy Corps, says the humanitarian sector needs to stop thinking about refugee populations in isolation. "Many of these populations have ended up embedded for many, many years, and economies get moving within camps, but also within the surrounding areas .... We talk about wanting to create market-based solutions, but we still focus just on the humanitarian sector instead of the whole ecosystem."

The larger camps offer sizeable markets and residents are already spending significant sums of their own money on firewood, kerosene and torch batteries. Businessman Mansoor Hamayun, whose company BBOXX sells solar power systems, doesn't just want to be a supplier to those running the camp; he wants to get inside the fence and sell directly to the users.

"If you are talking about refugee camps and displaced populations, it's not an accessible marketplace for us," he tells IRIN, "There are layers of bureaucracy. We have done quite a number of projects, but they are one-off; there is no ongoing relationship with the customer, the sort of thing we need in order to justify a long-term investment. We already have a lot of risks to deal with, but if they were to say, 'Hey, we have this really great camp, lots of customers, please come and set up shop', then we would be like 'Great! This is a really great place to come!'"

Allowing private suppliers of sustainable energy solutions like Hamayun direct access to markets in and around camps would represent a dramatic shift, but such shifts may be what is needed.

The goal of a new project, the Moving Energy Initiative, which involves both GVEP and the NRC as well as UNHCR and the London-based foreign policy think-tank, Chatham House, is to reform the relevant humanitarian policies and practices that affect energy provision rather than focusing on specific technologies like solar-powered stoves. Many refugee camps are strewn with a variety of such stoves and lamps, the remnants of pilots that were never taken to scale, or short-term projects abandoned when the money ran out.

Those behind the initiative, which is funded by DFID, the UK's Department for International Development, say they want to engage the private sector to be part of the solution.

The Moving Energy Initiative is still a work in progress, but it is already raising some profound issues. Chatham House's Associate Director of Research Partnerships, Michael Keating, says, "What we are glimpsing is that a focus on energy provides an entry point to illuminate a wider set of issues -

livelihoods, cost-saving opportunities, relationships with host communities, environmental protection, and the security, health and safety of displaced people."

[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.]

Why we're building an investment fund to back solar energy in Africa | June 16 | Quartz Africa

Source URL: http://qz.com/429427/why-were-building-an-investment-fund-to-back-solar-energy-in-africa/

Solar's competitive advantage

If you find yourself bored at a business conference in Africa, try playing bingo with the words 'leapfrog' and 'telecoms'. The story of how Africa went straight to mobile phones, never building a vast network of copper wire for its telephone infrastructure is told and retold. It is now a cliché in African business. Like most clichés, it is tiresome, but is also instructive. Africa need not follow the same path to growth as other industrialized countries. It can skip long detours into redundant technology and accelerate the pace of growth.

And Africa is growing. In the next two years the World Bank expects Africa's GDP to rise at an annual rate of around 5%–double the rate of the OECD. The rising African Lion is the new Asian Tiger.

But the Lion lacks energy. Electricity, a fundamental necessity for growth, is expensive and unreliable in Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa today, almost 600 million people remain without electricity. Businesses experience an average of 8 power outages per month, each lasting almost 5 hours. The economic impact of this is severe. Businesses that experience outages lose more than 7% of annual sales as a direct result. To maintain productivity, 48% of businesses are forced to rely on expensive, and dirty, diesel power to supplement their grid supply.

For investors, these challenges also represent opportunities. McKinsey estimates that $835 billion of investment is needed to meet sub-Saharan Africa's energy needs by 2040.

Focusing on traditional electric grids in Africa today would be like investing only in copper landline telephone networks in 1995

The near-trillion dollar question is: what kind of power infrastructure should Africa build? Should it replicate the large-scale electricity grids of the developed world, or is there a shorter path to electrifying Africa?

In our view, focusing on traditional electric grids would be like investing only in copper landline telephone networks in Africa in 1995. Instead, investors should help Africa build a cleaner and more distributed electricity infrastructure. The three charts below illustrate why.

Solar is a technology, not a fuel

First, Solar power is a technology not a fuel. Over time, fossil fuels become harder and more expensive to extract. But each incremental advance in solar technology makes it cheaper. In fact the dynamics of solar resemble the microchip industry more than the energy industry. Solar even has it's own version of Moore's Law. 'Swanson's law' states that solar modules drop in price by 20% with every doubling of cumulative shipped volume. Just like Moore's law, this is a transformative force. This chart from Bloomberg New Energy Finance shows the predictive power of the law.

And solar has halved in cost in the last four years

It's nice to have 'laws' and theories but it's nicer to have facts.According to data from Lazard, the installed price of solar has more than halved in cost in the last four years.

And cheaper solar is beginning to beat the grid across Africa and the world

Solar has now reached grid parity in many developed and emerging markets. On the African continent, with its high irradiation and expensive, unreliable grid power, solar is even better equipped to beat the grid. Analysis by the German solar company Q-Cells has estimated that solar will be at grid parity in more than half of Africa countries by the end of 2015. By 2020, solar is projected to be cheaper than the grid in 85% of Africa.

Even if these numbers prove optimistic, it is clear that the underlying economics of energy are shifting. Empowered by this shift, new business models are emerging. Given the absence of old legacy infrastructure and the prevailing high cost of power, Africa will be a proving ground for these new models of power delivery.

Innovative entrepreneurs are challenging the status quo by offering affordable solar solutions directly to African consumers and businesses. M-KOPA, a provider of pay as you go solar home systems has now connected 200,000 customers across East Africa. Microgrid providers such as Powerhive are successfully operating solar micro-grids in remote villages.

Competition from distributed solar means that the supply of electricity is no longer a natural government monopoly

Our company, CrossBoundary Energy is building a dedicated fund for commercial and industrial solar. Through the Solar4Africa platform we finance solar conversions for large commercial and industrial customers so they can purchase power directly from panels on their own roof. Power is no longer a privilege bestowed by the presence of the grid. Now it's a product. A product to be competed.

This is not the end of the grid. African countries still need centralized generation and transmission. Yet competition from distributed solar means that the supply of electricity is no longer a natural government monopoly. African countries can skip an outdated era of power delivered solely through large-scale generation and transmission lines run by monopoly utilities.

Without the burden of legacy infrastructure, Africa can pioneer new methods of energy delivery. Utilities can focus on providing mass, base load power to major population and commercial centers. Regulators can allow private provision of distributed generation to where demand remains greatest. With the grid and distributed self-generation operating in tandem, powering Africa's growth

becomes an achievable goal. By 2040, Africa could have the smartest, cleanest and most decentralized electricity infrastructure in the world.

World Power Sector Emissions Seen Peaking in 2029 - Research | June 23 | Thompson Reuters Foundation

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506231640.html

By Nina Chestney

London — Global greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector are expected to peak in 2029 and then start falling, but will still be some way above levels needed to limit temperature rise, research showed on Tuesday.

Electricity generation worldwide is forecast to rise by 56 percent by 2040 as economies develop and populations grow, which will hit a peak in power sector emissions of 15.3 gigatonnes in 2029 from 13.1 gigatonnes now, a report by Bloomberg New Energy Finance said.

World emissions will start to fall after 2029 to 14.8 gigatonnes in 2040, which is 13 percent above 2014 levels.

This will make it very unlikely that the world will be able to limit average the rise in temperature to within 2 degrees Celsius, a threshold seen by scientists as necessary to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

"We will see tremendous progress towards a decarbonised power system. Despite this, coal will continue to play a big part in world power with emissions continuing to rise for another decade and a half, unless further radical policy action is taken," said Michael Liebreich, chairman of Bloomberg New Energy Finance's advisory board.

Overall, around $12.2 trillion will be invested in global power generation between 2015 and 2040. Renewables will account for two thirds of that, while $1.6 trillion will be spent on coal, $1.2 trillion on gas and $1.3 trillion on nuclear.

Fossil fuels will account for 44 percent of world power generation in 2040, down from 67 percent in 2014.

Natural gas will not be the main transition fuel to wean the world off coal, the report said. Coal-to-gas switching will mainly take place in the United States, while developing nations will use both coal and renewables.

New investment in solar capacity should rise to $179 billion in 2040 from $136 billion last year, as the cost of photovoltaic (PV) technology continues to fall.

Small-scale solar capacity, such as rooftop or local PV systems, is seen rising to nearly 1.8 terawatts in 2040 - 17 times more than the current 104 gigawatts - due to a 47 percent crash in the cost of solar projects per megawatt as new materials and more streamlined production methods improve conversion efficiency.

The full report is available at: http://about.bnef.com/

(Reporting by Nina Chestney; Editing by Mark Heinrich)

Southern Africa: SunEdison to Build 371 Megawatts of Solar Power in South Africa | June 8 | Bloomberg Business

Source URL: http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-08/sunedison-to-build-371-megawatts-of-solar-power-in-south-africa

SunEdison Inc., the best-performing U.S. solar company, won bids to build and operate 371 megawatts of solar power in South Africa.

The five power plants will supply electricity to state-owned Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd. under 20-year contracts, Maryland Heights, Missouri-based SunEdison said in a statement Monday. The plants in Northern Cape and North West provinces will provide enough power for more than 200,000 homes.

SunEdison has gained 51 percent over the past year through June 5, the most of any U.S. company on the 21-member Bloomberg Intelligence Global Large Solar Energy Index.

East Africa: Manufacturers Urge EAC Govts to Prioritise Energy, Trade Facilitation | June 3 | The New Times

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506030886.html

By Peterson Tumwebaze

On June 11, Rwanda and the other East African Community (EAC) member countries - Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi - will present their 2015/16 financial year budget estimates. Before the D-Day, the The New Times will serialise views and budget expectations of various players in the local and regional economies, including traders, industrialists, academics and farmers, as well as bankers and SACCOs and the microfinance sector, among others.

Today manufacturers tell us why they want governments to prioritise the energy and transport sectors, as well as support skills development and innovation, writes Peterson Tumwebaze.

Robert Bayigamba, the chairman of the Rwanda Manufacturers Association, says increasing funding to the energy and transport sectors will facilitate industrial growth and boost Rwanda's economic development generally.

Bayigamba says there is need to further improve local infrastructure facilities to ease market access, "which will eventually reduce cost of doing business".

These sectors if well funded have the potential to boost the manufacturing sector, create jobs and facilitate export promotion, he argues.

Bayigamba adds that supporting innovation and skills development is essential as it will provide the required personnel to run industries and help grow the sector.

"All these initiatives will help reduce the cost of manufacturing and, ultimately, benefit consumers, and governments in terms of taxes," Bayigamba told The New Times on Friday.

According to the budget framework paper, Rwanda will spend Rwf1,768.3 billion during the 2015/16 financial year, an increase of Rwf5.9 billion compared to Rwf1,762.4 billion this year.

This fiscal year, government prioritised infrastructure development, agriculture and export promotion to spur rural growth, one of the key components of the second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II) development blueprint.

Meanwhile, Lawrence Oketcho, the head of policy and advocacy at the Uganda Manufactures Association, urges regional law-makers to draft producer-friendly tax measures to fast-track economic development across the EAC bloc.

"Most often such tax measures and reforms are designed to benefit consumers without considering producers. However, ignoring manufacturers means that consumers will still bear the burden of such reforms through price increases. Therefore, it is important that EAC governments adapt tax regimes, which will not deter consumption," Oketcho counsels.

He was speaking during the East African Manufacturers meeting in Kigali last week.

Bernard Selemani, the vice-president of the Burundi Manufacturers Association, says EAC member states should invest more in value-addition ventures to make the industrial sector more competitive and profitable, as well as a vehicle for job creation.

"We are talking about focusing on promoting standardisation and other facilities that will help support value-addition to boost regional export volumes and revenue."

Betty Maina, the chief executive of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, calls for initiatives that will boost cross-border trade and industrial growth.

"We expect regional governments to channel more money into Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs) to produce the right expertise and reduce the skills gaps the region faces."

Regional manufacturers are currently seeking ways of working together in dealing with the challenges facing the sector. Last month, industrialists agreed to set up a lobby association to promote their interests.

Dr. Samuel Nyantahe, the chairman for the Confederation of Tanzania Industries, says governments should work harder to eliminate trade barriers, arguing that they are pushing up the cost of doing business in the region.

Rwanda's manufacturing sector grew by Rwf67 billion during the fourth quarter of 2014 compared to Rwf68 billion during same period the previous year, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda.

The sector also contributed only 5 per cent to the national growth domestic product (GDP).

East Africa: REC to enter African solar market amid 100 GW predictions | June 25 | PV Magazine

Source URL: http://www.pv-magazine.com/news/details/beitrag/rec-to-enter-african-solar-market-amid-100-gw-predictions_100019950/

25. June 2015 | Global PV markets, Industry & Suppliers, Market & Trends | By: Becky Beetz

REC will enter "numerous" markets in East and South Africa this year on the back of its expectations that 100 GW of solar PV will be installed there by 2030.

Norwegian solar company REC has announced it will focus on entering "numerous" East and South African regions, which are expected to see 100 GW of solar PV installed over the next 15 years.

"We expect around 100 GW of solar panels to be installed in the region by 2030, with residential markets and turnkey solutions offering particularly good opportunities," said Luc Graré, senior VP EMEA at REC.

In Ghana, for instance, REC expects 75 to 100 MW of utility-scale solar to be installed in 2016, 10 MW of commercial and one to two MW of residential. pv magazine recently reported that under Ghana's renewable energy plans – universal access to electricity by 2016 and 10% renewables by 2020 – the government aims to deploy around 30,000 solar home systems and two million solar lanterns by 2020. The energy commission has also issued licenses and permits to utility-scale solar projects totaling 1.835 GW, and a construction permit for a 20 MW project.

In addition to supplying its PV modules tp projects, REC is confident it can make headway in Africa, via its partner program and training expertise for the local solar industries. With favorable irradiation levels, rising populations, a lack of stable electricity supply and high fossil fuel prices, the market for solar is ripe on the continent, it added.

The company plans to open regional offices across South and East Africa this year and next. "To accommodate the markets' demand for small-scale off-grid power generation systems, REC will be offering kit solutions for residential installations and solar hybrid boxes for 20-50kW installations," it said in a statement released. REC also plans to open a REC Academy to train distributers.

The company could not be immediately reached for further detail.

East Africa: Solar Firm Notches Up 200,000 | June 2 | East Africa Business Week

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506041683.html

Nairobi — M-KOPA Solar, a pay-as-you-go energy provider for off-grid customers, has announced it has powered up 200,000 homes in East Africa.

Jesse Moore, the Managing Director and co-founder of M-KOPA Solar said last week, "It took us two years to connect our first 100,000 homes and just eight months to connect our second 100,000 homes. We are pushing hard to grow even faster and reach our goal of one million homes by the end of 2017."

The company said the average M-KOPA household has over five inhabitants. It is now providing power to over one million people across East Africa.

In March the start-up announced it had connected over 20,000 homes in Uganda to affordable solar power since launching in the country in mid-2013.

M-KOPA is now selling 500 new systems each day across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania through its network of over 1,000 direct sales agents and 85 customer service centres.

The startup allows users to pay for their solar power through an annual payment plan. Daily payments start from 43 US cents. However before that customers must deposit of $35 followed by daily payments.

Ethiopia plans extra energy in power projects | June 18 | World Bulletin

Source URL: http://www.worldbulletin.net/world/160384/ethiopia-plans-extra-energy-in-power-projects

World Bulletin / News Desk

Ethiopia plans to launch hydropower dams and other renewable energy projects over the five years to 2020 that will add an additional 12,000 megawatts of electricity upon completion, a senior official said on Monday.

With one of the continent's fastest-growing economies, Ethiopia wants to become a manufacturing hub and Africa's top energy exporter by tapping the numerous rivers that cascade through its highlands. Experts say the Horn of Africa nation has the potential to generate 45,000 megawatts of hydropower.

Under a 2010-2015 development blueprint, the Growth and Transformation Plan 1 (GTP 1), Ethiopia started work on the $4.1 billion Grand Renaissance Dam and planned to complete the $1.8 billion Gilgel Gibe 3. Together the dams will boost generating capacity from 2,400 megawatts now to more than 10,000 megawatts upon completion.

Under a new 2015-2020 plan, or GTP 2, that is due to be endorsed by parliament in September, projects generating 12,000 megawatts will be added, Azeb Asnake, Chief Executive of state-run Ethiopian Electric Power, told Reuters.

"For this ambitious plan, the idea is to finance at least 50 percent by our own coffers, by the Ethiopian government, and the rest from different sources," she said of the projects slated to be launched by 2020.

Ethiopia's total energy plans could cost the country up to $25 billion, Azeb said.

"They could be grants, soft loans and commercial loans from foreign banks, governments and the like," she said.

POWER EXPORTS

Mega dams supplying up to 2,000 megawatts each set up on several main rivers and tributaries including the Omo and the Nile are part of the plan, according to official documents obtained by Reuters.

Solar, wind and geothermal projects are also planned.

Ethiopia said in 2011 it planned to launch projects to raise generating capacity to 20,000 megawatts by 2020. GTP 1 and GTP 2 will put the country slightly ahead of that target, once the projects are completed.

The government says its priority is to satisfy domestic needs but given demand still remains insignificant, a large amount of electricity produced will end up being exported.

Addis Ababa already sells a small amount of power to neighbours Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti. It has signed memorandums of understanding with South Sudan, Tanzania and Rwanda, while an underwater power link with Yemen is also in the pipeline.

Once Ethiopia's grand plans are complete, it wants to export power to countries in North and southern Africa and beyond.

"We have sufficient resources to power a very large part of Africa," Azeb said.

Other major African producers such as South Africa and Egypt boast generation capacity of about 42,000 MW and 34,000 MW, though their actual production is lower as many plants are old and need to be temporarily closed for maintenance.

Ethiopia: Electric Power Prepares Draft Master Plan for Electricity Distribution At $3.5m | June 15 | Addis Fortune

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506151203.html

By Lucy Kassa

The plan which will improve supply to Addis Abeba and its environs, was financed by an AfDB loan

The Ethiopia Electric Power (EEP) has developed the final draft of a master plan for electric power distribution in Addis Abeba and its surrounding areas, at the cost of 3.5 million dollars, financed through a loan obtained from the African Development Bank (AfDB).

The distribution master plan, which is for the next 20 years, looks at gaps in the electricity distribution network in order to fill the growing demand, includes a distribution improvement plan, an environmental and social assessment study and the transfer of technology to EEP. The plan incorporates the 10 districts of Addis Abeba and 12 Oromia towns within a 50Km radius.

Development of the master plan started in 2014. The document was presented on June 11, 2015 by Oona Nanka (PhD.), principal power systems engineer at Parsons Brinckerhoff, the UK firm contracted to do the drafting, at a meeting attended by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of EEP, Azeb Asnake (Eng.).

The plan will assess existing conditions and upgrade the existing capacity in terms of generation, transaction and distribution. It will also estimate the size and location of load and forecast loads, integrate the electric distribution system with existing plans for construction and other infrastructure, identify capacity shortfalls, and add to the transformers' existing capacity which is 132Kv.

For future network challenges, the draft plan proposes to increase supply using primary substations and underground cables, introducing 133Kv capacity to existing substations, improving the capacity of transformers and distribution lines. It also proposes repairing existing networks and installing new expressway networks. In the long term, the proposed projects require an estimated 1.6 billion dollars, which will be funded by development partners, Misiker Negash, EEP external relations head told Fortune.

According to the EEP's top executive, the draft master plan is developed to identify the whereabouts of the problems. Other than the 25-year master plan for the whole country, there was no specific master plan for Addis Abeba, she added. The GTP I also had no specific targets for Addis Abeba, she disclosed, but the draft master plan and its proposed recommendations are going to be used as an input and reference in the second GTP.

"It does not mean anything if I do not mention the exact demand for electricity in Addis Abeba. However, there are continuous power interruptions in the city and the actual supply is not more than 60pc to 70pc of the total demand," Azeb said after a press briefing held at Intercontinental Hotel on Thursday June 11, 2015.

Alemayehu Tegenu, minister of Water, Irrigation & Energy also weighed in, saying that the demand for energy is growing at 25pc to 32pc annually in the country. Actual supply for the whole country amounted to 2,300MW in GTP I, but the government wants to attain the 10,000MW mark by the end of the second GTP. The 10,000MW figure was initially conceived as a target for the end of this fiscal year in a few weeks, which is also the end of the GTP I period.

The World Bank awarded Ethiopia last place in Africa, with power utilization of 45kWh per person in 2009, the year before GTP I was launched, as compared to South Africa, which ranks first with 4,532kWh. The Bank gave a slightly higher rating of 51.96kWh for 2011. Total power consumption in Ethiopia in 2014 was, according to the World Bank, 4,645,000,000kWh, compared to 6,515,000,000kWh in Kenya and 6,715,000,000kWh in Sudan.

Ethiopia: Ethiopia Energy Exports Worth 2.9b Br, Below GTP I Targets | May 31 | Addis Fortune

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506020901.html

By Brook Abdu

The 10 month report for 2014/2015 showed billions in export and domestic earnings but shortfalls in GTP I targets

Ethiopia exported 606.5GWh of energy to neighbouring countries, amounting to 2.9 billion Br in the first 10 months of 2014/15, though planned exports were estimated at 685GWh.

Production levels during this period rose to 7,923GWh, from the planned 7,462GWh, and generated 3.5 billion Birr from exports to Djibouti and border towns of Kenya and Sudan.

Ethiopia had planned to generate 10,000 megawatts (MW) of electric power by the end of the five years of the GTP I, but so far it has only attained 2,301MW.

The installation of the electric carriage lines in the country was also planned to reach 17,000Km from 11,440Km in 2010/11, currently reaching 12,825Km. Electricity access was also planned to rise to 75pc from 41pc, but now stands at 55pc.

"We have identified 290 Weredas with critical problems and we are working to improve electricity access in these places," said Alemayehu Tegenu, minister for the Ministry of Water, Irrigation & Energy. "These places have problems related to poles, which we are changing to concrete poles to solve the problem."

According to Bezuneh Tolcha, Communications Director at the MoWIE, the lag in the accessibility of the rural part of the country is attributed to the time taken to organise associations that can produce poles and make installations in every region,.

The Ministry had organised 139 associations for the production of concrete poles and 129 associations for the installation of electric lines.

The wooden poles are not suitable in marshy areas while the concrete ones are suitable for every kind of topography, according to Bezuneh, who added that the poles were now ready for distribution.

The government has seven ongoing power projects, with which it was to attain its target of 10,000MW. But only the Gibe III hydropower plant, which generates 1,870MW, and the Adama II wind farm, which generates 51MW are near completion, at 90.3pc and 93pc, respectively.

The construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which is planned to generate 6,000MW of electricity, has reached 42.5pc completion. Genale Dawa III, hydro electric power plant which has the capacity of generating 254MW of electricity, has reached 73.8pc completion and the Repi landfill site, where the plan is to generate 50MW, has reached 59.6pc.

The two thermal power projects - Melka Sidina Bamza and Aluto Geothermal Project, are 17.7pc and 72.8pc complete.

"We are giving priority to basic issues of power demand, such as areas with water pumps and health centres," said Minister Alemayehu. "The others like mills and hotels will be addressed after these are done."

In the fiscal year 2014/15, the country had planned to give electricity access to 1,570 towns and communities while the actual performance was 562 towns and communities, attaining a mere 36pc of the plan. The Ministry had also planned to install 21,980Km of medium and small capacity electric lines but accomplished only 33pc of its performance goal.

Ethiopia: Ethiopia is set to launch the Ethio-Kenya transmission line project | June 22 | ESI Africa

Source URL: http://www.esi-africa.com/transmission-ethiopia-is-set-to-launch-the-ethio-kenya-transmission-line-project/

Posted by: Ashley Theron

June 22, 2015

This transmission project is said to boost confidence in surrounding countries and supply cleaner, greener power

On Friday, Ethiopian Electric Power entered into an agreement with China Electric Power Equipment and Technology to develop the Eastern Africa Interconnector dubbed the Ethio-Kenya transmission line project.

Ethiopian Electric Power CEO Azeb Asnake said that the transmission line will stretch across 433km from Wolayita Sodo in Ethiopia to the Kenyan border, StarAfrica reported.

Asnake added that the 2,000MW bi-directional transfer capacity 'Eastern Electricity Highway' would be finalised in 26 months.

The African Development Bank will be responsible for financing the Ethiopian side of the deal.

Strengthening the East African Power Pool

In 2006, governments of Ethiopia and Kenya signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of an interconnection network between the neighbouring East African countries.

Asnake added that the realisation of this project is also in the interest of other East African countries such as Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda.

According to the Kenya Electricity Transmission Company (KETRACO), the Ethiopian government intends to develop the country's vast hydro capacity for domestic consumption and export where the proposed line is to act as a major highway to the southern countries such as Tanzania.

KETRACO added that the large potential for electricity trade in the Eastern Nile countries together with its socio-economic and environmental benefits will create the idea of a regional power market and enhance the East African Power Pool.

Transmission infrastructure is lacking in this region and KETRACO believes that this project will help overcome this setback and in addition, create transmission capacity needed in the cross-border trade of electricity between Ethiopia and Kenya, in the long run.

Ghana: Energy crisis will end soon – Cretz | June 24 | Ghana Web

Source URL: http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Energy-crisis-will-end-soon-Cretz-364269

The US Ambassador to Ghana, Gene Cretz has expressed optimism that the ongoing energy crisis in the country will end soon.

According to Mr Cretz, the US was currently involved in several projects with the government that would produce more megawatts to address the energy crisis in future.

US envoy made this known at a roundtable with journalists in Accra to announce his departure from Ghana after three years of service.

“I think that the pieces are in place now and there are several projects that the US has been involved in. In addition, once the Millennium Challenge Compact really kicks in, you will see a revamp of ECG and its ability to generate electrical power, transmit it and get revenue to the point where it makes that particular enterprise efficient. I think it is all there in a mix; it is just taking a little bit of time.

“One has to be positive but I don’t know if we can put definite end dates to when the power situation is going to end, but I think Ghana is on the way towards really revamping its power sector for future needs,” Mr Cretz said.

The US government is expected to release over $500 million through the Millennium Challenge Compact (MCC) Fund to help improve power distribution in the country under the second compact of the MCC programme.

Under the MCC, which will last for five years, Ghana has agreed to offer the management of ECG to a private company to boost efficiency.

Mr Cretz said Ghana government has made a decision with regards to the kind of concession under which ECG would be managed for a few years.

“The board had been constituted on the Ghanaian side and papers had been drawn up to specify the requirement of the concession here that would guide the activities of the project for the next several years,” he said.

The US Ambassador disclosed that Ghana was not out of the woods yet but was hopeful the economic situation would improve in the next couple of months.

“I see a confluence of events in developments that would be taking place over the next couple of weeks and months that I think would lead the government and the country out of its current economic troubles. I’m very optimistic that over the next several months you would see a turnaround,” he added.

Kenya: Forge Pacts to Benefit From Green Energy, Uhuru Tells Africa | June 15 | Capital FM

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506160243.html

By Pscu

Johannesburg — President Uhuru Kenyatta has urged African countries to forge partnerships that identify and take full advantage of the available opportunities to benefit from the economies of scale.

He said Kenya and other countries endowed with renewable energy can consult and agree on partnering to share the resources.

"We have an unusually large supply of geothermal energy, for example, and Green energy accounts for some 70 per cent of our power generation at present - well ahead of the pack on our continent," President Kenyatta added.

"For those countries whose resource endowments differ from ours, the answer is not to despair of the path of green growth: rather it is to make partnerships," he said.

He said Kenya has chosen an ambitious low-carbon and climate-resilient development path with extensive green economy programs to restore degraded ecosystems.

He spoke on Kenya's interventions in green growth and green financing during a meeting on climate change on the sidelines of the ongoing 25th AU Summit in Johannesburg South Africa.

"The shift to green growth is a mix of both policies and programs touching on investments in renewable energy, promotion of clean and resource-efficient production," the President said.

President Kenyatta said the country's commitment to green growth is strengthened by firm policy commitments, key among them the National Climate Change Response Strategy and sound legislation.

He said the government was investing more on agriculture, energy, manufacturing and transport, as key sectors with potentially transformative impact to lift additional 3.1 million people out of poverty by 2030.

President Kenyatta, who had a busy day attending a series of meetings, later held talks with South Sudan President Salva Kiir where they discussed IGAD's efforts to restore peace in Africa's youngest country.

The President also attended a meeting of troop-contributing countries in Somalia.

The meeting was presided over by Somalia President Sheikh Hassan Mohamoud and centred on strategies of weeding out Al Shabaab militants.

President Mohamoud thanked countries that are supporting a peaceful and stable Somalia after many years of turmoil.

President Kenyatta also held talks with the Vice President of Cuba Miguel Diaz-Canel where they discussed issues of mutual interest between the two countries.

Kenya: Google wants stake in massive energy project: Sources | June 11 | CNBC

Source URL: http://www.cnbc.com/id/102751803

Thursday, 11 Jun 2015 | 2:07 PM ET

Google gets lots of attention for expanding into novel technologies like driverless cars and artificial intelligence. But the technology giant also has put big bucks—more than $2 billion to date—into the next generation of energy production.

Now, the company is in discussions to back the largest wind power project in Africa, a fast-growing but power-starved continent, according to people familiar with the situation.

Google is negotiating to become an investor in the Lake Turkana Wind Power Project, a more than $700 million, 40,000 acre undertaking in Kenya. It's the largest private investment in the history of the East African country—where less than a quarter of the population has access to power—and the project's 310 megawatt capacity is expected to boost Kenya's installed energy capacity by 20 percent.

The deal is not finalized, according to the people, and, even if completed, Google's would be a minority stake.

A spokesman for Google declined to comment, and Turkana representative Rizwan Fazal said, "Google is not involved in LTWP at present and LTWP has no agreement or understanding of any nature with Google."

Most of Google's renewable energy investments have been domestic, largely in wind and solar farms in places like West Texas and California's Mojave Desert. But the environmentally conscious company is increasingly looking outside the U.S.

In 2013, Google invested $12 million in South Africa's Jasper Power Project, one of the largest solar installations on the continent.

Read More Three big takeaways from Google's I/O conference

Google's director of energy and sustainability, Rick Needham, has said publicly the company only pursues investments that both make financial sense and that have "transformative" potential for the growth of clean energy.

"We're investing in clean energy so it's more accessible for our company and for everyone," Google's "Green" website states. "We're helping create a clean energy future that's better for our business and the environment."

While Google's green investments are for profit, its philanthropic arm has supported SolarAid, which is working to build solar access for so-called off-grid African communities.

The positives of small-scale solar aren't lost on other investors, including Zouk Capital and Vulcan Capital (which backed Tanzania-based Off Grid Electric); LGT Venture Philanthropy (which backed Kenya-based M-KOPA Solar); and CrossBoundary Energy (which recently raised an investment fund to finance rooftop solar power for African businesses, both on and off the electrical grid).

Google is hardly new to sub-Saharan Africa. The tech company has offices in Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; Lagos, Nigeria; Dakar, Senegal; Johannesburg; and Kampala, Uganda.

While the company's investment would likely be relatively small—perhaps in the tens of millions of dollars, according to the people with knowledge of the talks—it would have broader implications.

One is that Google's involvement could encourage others to follow.

Sophisticated investors are increasingly looking to build power and energy infrastructure on the continent, including private equity firms Blackstone Group, Carlyle Group and Denham Capital. But there have been few so-called exits, when investors in a project cash out by selling their stake to another party.

Since Turkana has already raised all the money it needs, a Google investment—if it plays out—would be a boost of confidence for other investors to know there are buyers once a project is relatively developed.

"As assets mature you will begin to see developers and private equity firms looking to exit transactions to parties looking for steady annuity income," Kwame Parker, head of power and infrastructure for East Africa at South Africa's Standard Bank, said in an email about Google potentially purchasing an existing stake in the wind project.

"Given Google's global profile and the profile of Lake Turkana Wind Farm, a Google investment would be a significant vote of confidence for investors considering African power market entry," added Parker, who helped arrange financing for Turkana (he declined to comment on Google's plans specifically).

Read MoreTesla batteries: A game changer for the grid

Turkana locked in the money it needed in 2014 with a so-called financial close after years of planning. The money raised for the project is broken down into equity stakes, which have higher risk but also higher rewards, and debt, which carries less risk for the lenders. The majority of the equity is held by co-developers KP&P Africa, a group of Dutch and Kenyan businessmen, and power project specialist Aldwych International, which is majority owned by South Africa-based private equity firm Harith.

Other financial backers include the governments of Denmark, Finland and Norway, and Vestas, the Danish wind company making the project's 365 turbines. The African Development Bank and the European Investment Bank also provided debt and other support.

If successful, Turkana also will be a symbol for making renewable energy work for Africa, which is estimated to have the combined installed power generation base of Spain.

"Turkana is a significant opportunity to demonstrate wind at utility scale," Jonathan Berman, CEO of investment and advisory firmJ.E. Berman Associates and author of "Success in Africa," said in an email. "If they deliver on time it could prove very attractive for political leaders worldwide who need to rapidly address energy shortfalls."

Bringing in the U.S. government

Another big implication of the Google investment is that it would likely unlock an investment guarantee of up to $250 million from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation—the U.S. government's development finance institution.

OPIC's board announced in June 2014 that it had approved the financing for the project as part of President Barack Obama's Power Africa initiative, which is working to bring in private investors to produce 10,000 megawatts of new energy for the more than 600 million sub-Saharan Africans without power.

A spokesman for OPIC declined to comment, but Turkana, like all other OPIC deals, would require "meaningful involvement of the U.S. private sector," according to its publicly stated mandate. In this case the catalyst would appear to be Google as no other American companies are presently involved.

Not always easy

Turkana was twice named Africa's best renewable energy deal for 2014, but its success wasn't always obvious.

The project was first thought of in 2006 after a local businessman noticed strong area winds. It wasn't until 2014 that construction began after years of negotiations with the government, developers and financial backers.

The location is also remote, requiring a new major road for construction materials to be trucked in, and 250 miles worth transmission lines to take the power out. Both are in progress. The lakeside site was also studied intensely, according to project developers, to consider environmental and social impacts—including a 12-month study to understand the effects on local birds— in addition to making sure the technology would work.

Kenya has also suffered some political instability over the life of the project, especially violence that followed contested a presidential election in late 2007 (terror attacks in 2013 and earlier this year have also been of international concern).

Turkana is scheduled to begin commercial operations in October 2016 with 50 megawatts and hit full 310 megawatt capacity seven months later, according to Fazal.

Read MoreThe life and death of Africa investor Bruce Wrobel

Lots of investment

Google wouldn't be the only investor in renewable energy on the continent.

One example is U.S.-based private equity firm American Capital Energy & Infrastructure, which announced on Monday that it would invest about $86 million in Senegal's first industrial-scale wind project, a 152-megawatt farm in Taiba Ndiaye, east of Dakar.

"Renewables will play a very big role in providing the power that will drive the economic growth of Africa," said Paul Hanrahan, co-founder and CEO of ACEI, part of $23 billion American Capital.

Other major wind and solar investments in recent years include Actis and Lekela Power, Denham Capital Management and BioTherm Energy, and Inspired Evolution Investment Management and Red Cap.

Top private equity investments in African renewable energy

Fund Manager	Company	Country	ICB Subsector	Investment Type	Investment ($M)	
Actis	Lekela Power	South Africa	Alternative Electricity	Growth	220	Feb-15
Denham Capital Management	BioTherm Energy	South Africa	Alternative Electricity	Growth	150	Oct-08
Harith General Partners	Lake Turkana Wind Project	Kenya	Alternative Electricity	Growth	70	Mar-14
Inspired Evolution Investment Management	Red Cap	South Africa	Alternative Electricity	Growth	21	Dec-10
Vantage Capital	Mabele Fuels	South Africa	Alternative Fuels	Mezzanine	17	Jan-14
Metier	Genesis/Mainstream	South Africa	Alternative Electricity	Growth	16	Jul-14
Metier	AE-AMD Renewable Energy	South Africa	Alternative Electricity	Growth	2	Feb-13
Novastar Ventures	SolarNow	Uganda	Renewable Energy	Venture Capital	1	Oct-14

			Equipment			
Zouk Capital	Off Grid Electric	Tanzania	Alternative Electricity	Growth	N/A	Dec-14
Metier	ACWA Power Solafrica Bokpoort CSP	South Africa	Alternative Electricity	Growth	N/A	May-13
EFG Hermes Private Equity	Ridgewood Egypt	Egypt	Alternative Electricity	Buyout	N/A	Dec-09

Source: EMPEA. Data as of 31 March 2015. Published 28 April 2015. Deals since 2008.

Read MorePay-as-you-go solar power takes off in Africa

Correction: This story has been updated to better describe the title of Jonathan Berman.

Kenya: Kengen Strikes 33MW From New Geothermal Wells in Olkaria | June 15 | Capital FM

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506051728.html

By Kennedy Kangethe

Nairobi — The Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) has successfully drilled another set of geothermal wells in this country, further boosting Kenya's quest to be self sufficient in electricity.

Three wells located within one pad with a total capacity of 33 megawatts, form one of Africa's biggest well-pad which is located in the geothermal-rich Olkaria area.

The wells comes months after, KenGen had mid last year, struck 30MW from a single geothermal well, named OW-921 in the same field. The well was connected to the 140MW Olkaria IV project.

The huge steam finds have been made possible owing to the company's experience in geothermal exploration, improved technology and world-class expertise. Drilling fewer wells with higher output will see the company make savings running into millions of dollars.

"The multi-well pad drilling approach reduces drilling costs. We drilled two directional wells and one straight well and when we tested the wells, their output is up to 33 MW," said Geothermal Development director Eng. Abel Rotich.

"It is not every day that we strike 33MW from a single pad. The normal average capacity from one well is 5MW. This means that we needed up to 6 wells to attain similar capacity. We have literally saved half of the drilling costs for 30MW with this single pad," added Eng. Rotich.

The wells will be connected to the proposed 140MW Olkaria V project- KenGen's next ambitious project which is set to break ground before end of this year.

"This development means that we have guaranteed up to 22 percent of steam towards the financing of the project. We are currently negotiating with the project's consultants to hasten the progress of tendering for the EPC Contractors while funding is also being discussed with various development partners," he said.

"The new well-pad, which is among the biggest in the country, firmly positions Kenya as a major geothermal power producer globally and helps to meet Kenya's growing demand for electricity as the country implements the Vision 2030 of becoming an industrialized economy."

The developments are important as the country is now relying heavily on geothermal after the full 280MW came on stream from December last year.

The enhanced geothermal production has helped stabilize company's top line performance with revenues for the half-year period ending 31st December 2014, jumping by Sh3 billion to Sh12.8 billion. Net profitability for the same six months period to December, was up by 380pc to Sh4.9 billion.

Geothermal which peaked last December is still the main source of electricity followed by hydro. However, the full benefits of the phased 280MW have already reflected on the power bills. Data from the industry regulator showed that the share of geothermal stood at 47.9pc of the national mix for the first quarter of the year.

To accelerate its geothermal power production programme, KenGen has also resorted to mobile wellhead plants which are faster to deploy. Fourteen such wellheads are expected to be complete by 2016.

To this end, a transmission line connecting a new well head Unit 914 has been completed paving the way for injection of a further 27MW from the wellhead units.

KenGen plans to add at least 3,000 megawatts to its power generation fleet by 2018, a good chunk of which will be from renewable sources such as geothermal and wind.

Kenya: Kenya Power in Sh3.2 Billion Substations Upgrade | June 24 | Capital FM

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506241502.html

By Margaret Wahito

Nairobi — Kenya Power has signed contracts worth Sh3.2 billion with local firms to implement 12 substation upgrade projects in the country.

The deal will also involve the construction of additional 33 kV power distribution lines to meet growing demand for increasing number of customers.

Kenya Power CEO Ben Chumo said the upgrade projects are expected to improve reliability, contribute to reduction of technical losses and provide additional capacity to supply power to new customers.

"Successful conclusion of the contracts will further reinforce the Company's procurement motto of 'Buy Kenyan, Build Kenya' aimed at giving opportunities to local companies in projects implementation, building capacity and provision of goods and services," Chumo said during the signing ceremony of the contracts on Wednesday.

The various substations are located in Nairobi, Mombasa, Machakos, Nakuru, Thika, Eldama Ravine and Naivasha.

To ensure timely completion of the projects, the company plans to provide major power equipment such as transformers with "contractors expected to provide additional auxiliary equipment, carry out engineering designs, construct, test and commission the substations."

The projects are wholly funded using the Kenya Power's internally generated funds. This is part of recommendations for electricity refurbishment and expansion projects detailed out in Power Distribution Master Plan study concluded by Parsons Brinckerhoff of the United Kingdom in 2013.

'Power Distribution Master Plan aims at developing strategies that will achieve least cost power distribution system development, ensure adequate power distribution capacity in each of the 46 counties and maintain a reliable power supply at required standards," Chumo said.

The contracted companies include Powergen Technologies Limited, Ezeetec Limited, Empower Installation Contractors Limited and Histoto Limited and Encomm Limited Jv.

Others are Arm Engineering Limited, Lomas and Lomas Limited, Thames Electricals Limited and Abcos Industrial Limited (Jv).

Kenya Power spent close to 80 percent of its annual procurement budget, which amounted to Sh6.2 billion last year, on materials procured overseas mainly from India and China.

Kenya: Kenya's Major Power Rollout Set for September - Chumo | June 10 | Kenya Star

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506100995.html

By Martin Mwita

Kenya Power expects to connect 314,000 new households in its first phase of the new power connection that starts in September, managing director Ben Chumo saaid yesterday.

He said the plan dubbed the 'Last Mile Connectivity Project' has brought down electricity connection fee from Sh35,000 to Sh15,000 which can be paid in installments targets a total of 1.5 million new users to the existing 3.3 million.

Chumo yesterday said Kenya Power is currently evaluating 110 bids submitted in the tender for the project which closed on June 5.

He was speaking in Nairobi when the company released a countrywide schedule of areas to benefit.

"We expect to complete the internal evaluation early July then seek a no objection from the financier, the African Development Bank. We will be awarding the tender by end of July and thereafter sign contracts in August in time to start the ground work by September," said Chumo.

The Project was launched by President Uhuru Kenyatta in Machakos last month.

The project geared towards increasing electricity access to Kenyans across the country will be implemented in three phases.

The African Development Bank will finance the first phase at a tune of Sh13.5 billion, which will be used to extend low voltage network from 5,320 existing transfers countrywide.

"This phase is targeted at maximising the existing transformers to ensure no one within 600 meters of a transformer is without power. It will cover both those able to pay and those who will pay in installments for a period of two years," said Chumo.

Kenya Power commenced the project in April when it offered local companies an opportunity to undertake the connections in 11 different categories, broken down into various regions across the country.

The second and third phase of the project, which will be funded by the World Bank includes installation of additional transformers and extension of the low voltage network.

These two phases, according to Chumo, will reach an additional 500,000 customers that will see more than 2.5 million Kenyans access electricity.

"The entire project will cost Sh36 billion and will facilitate the government objective of connecting 70 per cent of Kenyan households to electricity by 2017 and achievement of universal access by 2020," he said.

Kenya: Using Donkeys, Maasai Women Lead Solar Revolution | June 3 | Thompson Reuters Foundation

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506031422.html

By Leopold Obi

Magadi — Not long ago, dusk was a time of unease for the people of Magadi, a village in Kenya's Kajiado County.

As the sun set, farmers began worrying about their cattle, easy prey for hyenas and leopards. Children lit fires to finish their schoolwork, filling homes with smoke.

Now as darkness falls, lights flick on across this sleepy hamlet, thanks to the efforts of more than 200 Maasai women at the frontline of a solar power revolution.

The women, trained in solar panel installation, use donkeys to haul their solar wares from home to home in the remote region, giving families their first access to clean and reliable power.

"For us, the impact of solar technology is unparalleled," said Jackline Naiputa, who heads the Osopuko-Edonyinap group, one of the five women's groups leading the alternative energy charge in the area.

Renewable energy developer Green Energy Africa provides the group with solar products - including solar panels, lights, and small rechargeable batteries - at a discount. The women sell the products at a profit of around 300 shillings ($3) each, which goes into the group's account to buy more stock.

Naiputa, who in 2014 lost 10 goats to wild cats, said her teenage son used to spend cold nights in the cattle enclosure to guard their herd. Now, with solar lamps hanging around her homestead, Naiputa and her four children can sleep soundly in the warmth of their home.

"The light scares the hyenas away, so we don't have to worry about losing our animals at night," she said.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The Women and Entrepreneurship in Renewable Energy Project (WEREP), an initiative by Green Energy Africa, aims to turn Kajiado County to solar power by training women as solar installers and encouraging them to market the clean energy concept to fellow pastoralists.

The solar energy drive began in around November 2014, and so far about 2,000 households in the country have adopted solar technology. Barely seven months into the effort, the area has jumped from zero solar energy consumption in 2006, according to estimates by the government's Arid Land Resource Management Project, to 20 percent today, energy experts say.

Compared with kerosene and firewood, the cost, convenience, and health benefits of solar are proving hard to resist.

"The nearest market where one can charge a cell phone or buy kerosene is 15 kilometres away, and it is only held one day a week," Naiputa said.

Before going solar, her household used to spend 40 Kenyan shillings ($0.40) a day on kerosene and over 100 shilling ($1) a week charging the two family cell phones.

As well as saving villagers money, the switch to solar could help slow down the destruction of Kajiado County's trees, which now cover just 1 percent of the area's land, according to the National Environmental Management Authority.

And as more villagers choose clean solar energy over wood and coal to light and heat their homes, fewer will suffer the effects of inhaling the smoke that comes with their nightly fires. According to a 2014 World Health Organization report, household smoke was responsible for 1.6 million deaths worldwide.

SOLAR POTENTIAL

Edwin Kinyatti, the CEO of Green Energy Africa, said the uptake of solar energy was likely to continue "since it is affordable to most Kenyans," even though cultural barriers, low literacy levels and difficult terrain had all presented some obstacles to the Kajiado County effort.

Even as the country's middle class continues to grow, access to electricity remains low, with 68 percent of the population either too poor or too remote to connect to the national grid.

"Kenya has great potential for the use of solar energy throughout the year, thanks to its location near the equator," said Lamarck Oyath, an energy expert and managing director at Lartech Africa Limited, a technology and consultancy firm. "Yet so far, the country gets less than 2 percent of its energy from solar power," he said.

For villagers like Naiputa, however, solar is proving a big benefit - and not just because of the clean power it provides.

"Our community customs do not allow women to own any property," she said. "But now women here own the solar technology, and it is something we are very happy about."

- Reporting by Leopold Obi; editing by Laurie Goering

Liberia: Electricity Remain Key to Liberia's Development | June 8 | The New Dawn

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506082513.html

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says electricity is cardinal and important for Liberia's growth, economic revitalization and reconstruction drive.

The president said the potential for doing business and experiencing growth is significantly tied to the availability of electricity and other sources of power, which will propel the economy and enhance production.

A dispatch from, Munich, Germany, said Presient Sirleaf made the comment when she visited the VOITH Hydro manufacturing facilities in Germany where she has gone to see firsthand the level of work being done on three Power Turbines and other parts for installation at the Mount Coffee Hydro Plant in Liberia.

President Sirlaef said the current 22 megawatts of power being used in the city and its environs with a population of about 1.3 million people, was grossly insufficient and inadequate to address the level of investments and development that the country has seen after the Liberian civil crises.

She said the Mount Coffee Hydro Power Plant with 80 megatwatts of power supply with the construction of additional mini hydro Plants for the supply of electricity in other parts of the country, will greatly impact growth and development in a major way and transform the lives of the people.

The President mentioned that in addition to the Mount Coffee Hydro Project and other mini hydro plants in rural areas, the country has made regional efforts with its neighbors in the supply of electricity through the West Africa Power Pool to now 18 communities on the borders of Liberia from the Ivory Coast and a project is being worked out with Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and the Ivory Coast for the supply of electricity from the Ivory Coast to the other Mano River Union Countries.

President Sirleaf said without major infrastructures like power, the roads and water, other development objectives like the effective running of schools, the improvement in the health sectors, the country's agriculture program and other meaningful projects will not be successful.

She, however, emphasized the need for human resource capacity development through vocational training of Liberians at the VOITH training institute in Germany for the management of the hydro and other power sources being built across the country.

Welcoming President Sirleaf and delegation to the company's facilities, the President and Chief Executive Officer of VOITH Holding, Dr. Hubert Lienhard pledged his company's preparedness and determination to working with the Liberian government in making sure that the Mount Coffee Hydro Plant is up and running in an effective and sustainable way.

Dr. Lienhard said energy and power supply is an essential component for propelling growth and the most reliable and stable source for any industrial sector, adding that it is a fundamental pre-requisite for investments and improving the standard of its people. -Press Release

Liberia: House Concurs With Senate On Rural Renewable Energy Agency Act | June 18 | Legislature of Liberia (Monrovia)

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506190763.html

The Plenary of the House of Representatives has concurred with the Liberian Senate on the Passage of the Rural Renewable Energy Act of 2014.

Members of the House reached the decision Thursday, 18 June 2015 during that August Body 42nd day regular sitting of the 4th Session based on a report from its Joint Committee on Lands, Mines, Natural Resources and Environment and Ways, Means and Finance / Development Planning and Judiciary.

The establishment of the Rural Renewable Energy Agency seeks to inaugurate a system that will ensure the creation of electric energy from existing resources within rural communities that could over a reasonable period.

The law is also seeking to reform rural communities by generating employment opportunity that will provide for rural dwellers.

The Act for the establishment of the Rural Renewable Energy Agency was submitted to the House of Representatives for concurrence on 25 March 2014.

Following the reading of the report, Plenary unanimously endorsed a motion made by Hon. William Dakel of Electoral District #17 Montserrado County that the House agrees with the new law.

Nigeria: Investment in Energy Technology to Hit U.S.$400 Billion By 2030 | June 24 | The Guardian

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506240520.html

By Roseline Okere

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has projected that increasing investment in renewable energy technologies in the power sector will increase from $270 billion in 2015 to $400 billion in 2030.

According to the international energy watch dog in it's latest edition of World Energy Outlook released yesterday, renewable energy investment was flat in 2014 at $270 billion, with new capacity of 128 GW installed, representing almost half of total capacity additions.

IEA disclosed that wind power accounted for 37 per cent and solar for almost another third.

It stated that renewable technologies were becoming increasingly cost competitive in a number of countries and circumstances, but public support schemes are still required to support deployment in many others.

It added that renewable-based power generation capacity is estimated to have increased by 128 GW in 2014, of which 37 per cent is wind power, almost one-third solar power and more than a quarter from hydropower.

This, it added amounted to more than 45 per cent world power generation capacity additions in 2014, consistent with the general upward trend in recent years.

It added that the growth in wind capacity continued to be led by onshore installations (although offshore has also grown rapidly).

The report noted that China remains the largest wind power market, with 20 GW of new capacity. "Germany installed more than 5 GW of Renewable technologies are becoming increasingly cost competitive in a number of countries and circumstances, but public support schemes are still required to support deployment in many others. Renewables-based power generation capacity is estimated to have increased by 128 GW in 2014, of which 37 per cent is wind power, almost one-third solar power and more than a quarter from hydropower.

This amounted to more than 45 per cent of world power generation capacity additions in 2014, consistent with the general upward trend in recent years. The growth in wind capacity continued to be led by onshore installations (although offshore has also grown rapidly). China remains the largest wind power market, with 20 GW of new capacity. Germany installed more than 5 GW of wind 12 capacity".

It stated that lower oil prices proved to be a challenge for other 13 forms of renewable energy, including biofuels in transport and renewable heat, as the latter competes directly with natural gas heating (the price of which is still, in many cases, linked to the oil price).

The report said that while biofuels face challenges arising from lower oil prices, some other developments served to improve their outlook: to counter current bleak prospects for biofuels in Brazil, the government increased the ethanol blending rate from 25 per cent to 27 per cent and that

for biodiesel from five per cent to seven per cent , and increased gasoline taxes, while Argentina and Indonesia raised their biofuel mandates.

The IEA report highlights the need for climate pledges for COP21 to be viewed as the basis from which to create a "virtuous circle" of increasing ambition, and advocates, as its second pillar, a five-year review cycle to test the scope for further action. Both the situation and the solutions are evolving rapidly: the world's shrinking "carbon budget" means that any delay in taking action can be costly, while the pace of energy sector innovation means that a five-year review would allow national targets to keep up with events and help build investor confidence.

As its third pillar, the IEA recommends that the goal of keeping the increase in long-term average global temperatures to below two degrees Celsius (2 °C) also be expressed as a long-term greenhouse-gas emissions target, making it more straightforward to apply in the energy sector. Doing so would help anchor future expectations, guide investment decisions, provide an incentive to develop new technologies, drive needed market reforms and spur the implementation of strong domestic policies, such as carbon pricing - all of which are necessary to meet the 2 °C goal.

The final pillar proposed by the IEA report is that the COP21 agreement establish a strong process for tracking progress in the energy sector. Tracking national progress would both provide clear evidence of results, reassuring the international community that others are acting diligently, and identify countries that are struggling with implementation, enabling assistance to be provided if needed. In recognition of this need, the IEA report sets out appropriate metrics to monitor energy sector decarbonisation.

"Any climate agreement reached at COP21 must have the energy sector at its core or risk being judged a failure," said IEA Chief Economist Fatih Birol. "Climate pledges submitted for COP21 are an important first step to meeting our climate goal, and our report shows that they will have a material impact on future energy trends."

Nigeria: New Electricity Agency to Close Technical Gap Soon | June 23 | Daily Trust

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506231200.html

By Simon Echewofun Sunday

With the recent presidential assent establishing the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA), its management has said the technical gap would soon be closed.

A statement by the Public Affairs Manager, Uche Aneke of the agency hitherto called the electricity management services Ltd (EMSL) said "the power sector can now boast of an independent agency that has the capacity to bite while tackling issues of timely response to the needs of the privatized industry."

Experts said the new agency will only enforce the many technical rules and code made by the sole regulator of the private led power sector, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC). Such rules over the years include the metering code, the grid code, health and safety code and other rules that are meant to standardization and safety in Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry (NESI).

The agency said its timely response includes closing up of technical gaps in the electricity industry and providing adequate support for investors in the post privatized power sector which it will achieve through periodic inspection, monitoring and assessment of existing power plants/stations installations, extra high voltage and high voltage transmission lines.

The NEMSA Act which was signed into law by erstwhile President Goodluck Jonathan barely three days to his exit last month will enforce technical standards and regulations, technical inspection, test and certify all categories of electrical installations, power systems and network, electricity meters and instruments.

Tanzania: Energy On Focus As Sweden Pledges More Ties With Dar | June 8 | Tanzania Daily News

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506080706.html

Stockholm — A new cooperation chapter has been opened with Sweden pledging to strengthen relations with Tanzania through increased investments, especially in the energy sector, to spur the country's economic growth.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Business Sweden, Ms Ylva Berg, made the promise to President Jakaya Kikwete here over the weekend, saying the Scandinavian country would heavily invest in the East African country.

"We want to keep on partnering with Tanzania. We are going to increase our investment in Tanzania largely in the energy area," said the CEO during a meeting with Mr Kikwete at the World Trade Centre in this Swedish capital.

Sweden contributes One billion US dollars in the Power Africa initiative whose beneficiaries are Tanzania and other five African countries.

The project, which was introduced by US President Barack Obama, aims at increasing connectivity of electricity on African continent. Other beneficiary countries are Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria.

In his remarks, President Kikwete, pointed out that energy sector was one of the areas growing rapidly in the country. "Since the government alone cannot operate in the energy sector, we invite partnership in the area," said the head of state, who is on an official tour of the Scandinavian country.

Mr Kikwete also held talks with Sweden's Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Mr Mehmet Kaplan, who was accompanied by Swedish business people to learn about the state of investment in Tanzania.

He said that there was a number of opportunities available in the country and he invited the business people to come to invest in the country, noting that the investment would help Tanzania to become self dependent.

President Kikwete has completed his official tour after visiting the Medical University of Karolinska Institute (KI), which has been cooperating with the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) in research on malaria and HIV issues for over 20 years now.

Tanzania: Rural Electrification in Good Progress - Govt | June 7 | Tanzania Daily News

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506081203.html

By Rose Athumani

Dodoma — MORE Than 240,000 people have been connected to the Rural Electrification Project Phase II from July 2014 to April 2015, compared to 143,113 connected in 2013.

Presenting the Ministry of Energy and Minerals budget estimates, where the ministry is seeking parliament's approval of 536,960,436,000/-, Minister George Simbachawene said out of the total budget, 365,346,938,000/- is for development and 171,613,498,000/- is recurrent expenditure.

The regions and the connections in brackets are Arusha (1,333), Dodoma (389), Geita (55), Iringa (73), Kagera (1,437), Katavi (73), Kilimanjaro (1,778), Lindi (114), Mtwara (213), Mara (315), Njombe (942), Simiyu (750), Singida (1,030) and Tanga (476).

Mr Simbachawene said the government through the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) has implemented a total of 52 projects in Lindi and Mtwara regions at a cost of 6.1bn/- and by March 2015 a total of 2,270 customers were connected to electricity.

He said in phase II, the government through REA in collaboration with the Tanzania Electric Supply Company (TANESCO) has conducted an evaluation on the cost of implementing projects in the two regions and villages along the natural gas pipeline from Mtwara to Somanga which amounted to 48bn/-.

Detailing success achieved in the energy sector, the minister said they include completion of the natural gas pipeline from Mtwara to Dar es Salaam and completion of laws and regulations to govern the natural gas and oil sector.

He said the amount of electricity produced in the country increased from gigawatt hour 5,997.41 in 2013 to gigawatt hour (GWh) 6,285.03 in 2014, an increase of 4.8 per cent.

He added that the Kinyerezi I MW 150 in Dar es Salaam has been completed by 90 per cent, machines to produce electricity using natural gas have been installed and a cooling station for kV 220/132 is still under construction.

Other ongoing works include construction of distribution lines of kV220 from Kinyerezi to Kimara about 7 kilometres, another 3 kilometres line for kV132 to Gongo la Mboto.

The cost of the project, according to the minister is 183 million US dollars and already the government has released 168 million US dollars.

While giving its recommendations and opinions, Parliamentary Committee on Energy and Mineral said the development budget is not enough to complete all planned projects to take electricity to rural areas across the country.

Presenting the committee's report, Chairperson Mr Richard Ndassa said the committee proposes the development budget to be increased from 365bn/- to 663.6bn/-, calling on all MPs to join hands to ensure the increase is approved.

"The increase in the development budget will go into ensuring that government's effort in projects of electrification in rural areas that have been started do not lag behind and ensuring electricity is available through building machines and distribution lines," Mr Ndassa said.

He said until June 2015, the capacity for available machines to produce electricity for the national grid in the country went down from MW 1,226.24 to MW 943.5 due to low levels of water, stressing that this is dangerous given the needs of the nation is MW 943.64. Parliament approved the ministry's budget all the same.

Tanzania: U.S Says Impressed With Kinyerezi I Electricity Plant | June 4 | Tanzania Daily News

Source URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201506041647.html

By Abduel Elinaza

THE Tanzania should step the war against graft and promote transparency to boost private investment in the energy sector.

US Energy Undersecretary, Mr Christopher Smith, said the US was keen to seen growth of ties between his country and Tanzania in the energy sector.

Ms Smith said this after inspection of the gas-toelectricity plant at Kinyerezi area in Dar es Salaam.

"There is tremendously relationship between the US and Tanzania ..we are keen to see investments of this nature continue for our mutual benefit," he said.

"(But) there is important thing government of Tanzania has to do. It is dealing with corruption and promote transparency to bring more people in the private sector in this area," Mr Smith, who came with 10 energy companies, said.

Mr Smith and his team were said they were pleased to see the progress of gas plant where trials are expected to start next month prior to the commissioning of the project in August.

Tanesco Project Manager Mr Simon Jilima said Kinyerezi 1 plant is on final touches and once the transmission lines are connected they will start testing the 150MW dual-gas and jet fuel-plant.

"We will start with fuel but later after the gas reaches the plant we will switch to gas as well," Mr Jilima told the US delegation which is the first time to visit the country.

The plant runs in both gas and jet fuel to generate electricity even when one source of energy is not available. However, it will depend mainly on natural gas from southern parts of the country.

Kinyerezi 1 Gas Plant Manager, Mr Stephen Manda, said in later days the plant would move into combine cycle using steam to run turbines in generation of electricity.

Mr Manda said, "the challenge is water availability. We are studying if we can drill a well here or use sea water after desalination."

Lahmeyer International Site Manager, Bernd Siegemund said they will hand over the site in the next two to three months if all went as planned. The project contractor said he was proud of their safety record of 1.3million man-hours with zero accident.