



Energy for sustainable development in Africa in the post-COVID19 world – looking for the New Normal

Webinar 2 Report:

“Sustainable Energy for Africa: transition through growth. How to boost output, improve access and reduce impact on the nature and society? Technologies, scenarios, strategies, sources of finance and business models”

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Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, has generally low levels of socio-economic development and modern energy usage. The COVID-19 outbreak and its consequent economic downturn present additional challenges and pose questions requiring urgent answers. Success of the pandemic measures depend upon, among other elements, on a **strategic vision** reflecting current situation and future uncertainties; and aligning interests of all stakeholders. In order to help building such strategic vision, we have invited leading experts in a series of webinars to facilitate information gathering and to generate ideas for further work on strategies development and stakeholders’ engagement necessary for the continent’s energy transition in the post-COVID-19 world.

On July 22 we have continued the successful series of webinars on COVID-19 response and post-COVID development in Africa with an international discussion on **“Sustainable Energy for Africa: transition through growth. How to boost output, improve access and reduce impact on the nature and society? Technologies, scenarios, strategies, sources of finance and business models”**.

This second webinar in the series focused on practical solutions to increase energy access and advance the energy transition in the context of the Covid-crisis and recovery. Leading African and international experts presented specific challenges and solutions.

The discussion was moderated by Dr. Rashid Ali-Abdallah, Executive Director, African Energy Commission, African Union and Prof. Youba Sokona, Senior Adviser on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, South Centre; Vice-Chair, IPCC.

Mahamane Sow, CEO EDF Côte d'Ivoire has shared his experience in implementation of sustainable energy projects, including decentralized generation, which is to be strongly considered as complementary to grid extensions, in order to reach populations in rural and remote areas that have no access to electricity. He also presented several recently implemented projects, including those using biomass as well as practical innovative solutions for payments’ collection and for reducing risks of investments. Mr. Sow pointed out that the solar home system EDF offers in Ivory Coast is a successful model as it is an integrated model that is supported by a financing modality that makes their service affordable and allows to reach the poor and rural population. Although most of the equipment, e.g. for solar generation, is not produced in Africa, local businesses and personnel are trained and involved in installation and after-sales support. This creates employment and business opportunities and builds local capacities rather than dependence on international expertise. Mr. Sow emphasized that while governments should focus on grid extensions, they should in parallel integrate innovative private sector solutions on decentralized energy generation in national energy planning.

Dr. Modiba Dicko. Consultant in the area of solar energy health supply chain management and innovations, former WHO project coordinator, presented the situation of energy supply for the health system in Africa

with particular attention to availability and reliability of refrigerating for vaccines. He highlighted that reliable electricity supply is fundamental for an efficient and functioning health sector and moreover indispensable for storage and distribution of vaccines, which need electricity for cooling. In sub-Saharan Africa, on average 60% of health facilities have no access to grid electricity. In some countries like Burkina Faso – up to 80%, 95% - in DRC. Even those who have access to electricity have no reliable access to quality electricity. Cut-offs and voltage fluctuations are very frequent, while costs are quite high – often beyond the financial capacity of hospitals. Decentralized power supply, including solar, may therefore be a viable solution. Dr. Dicko identified the lack of qualified human resources and companies to provide power and refrigeration equipment as significant issues. In order to mitigate the shortcomings in these areas, he stressed that the education systems need to prepare local experts and technicians in the long run.

Mohamed Adow, Director of Power Shift Africa has drawn the attention of participants to the fact that Africa, representing 17% of the world population emits only 3% of carbon and faces the most severe impact of climate change. Costs of climate change adaptation often exceed financial capabilities of African countries and he stressed that we need to create policies and mechanisms allowing to apportion responsibility to the countries which emit most and which have resources. This would be in collective interest of the world and needs to be connected with implementation of the Paris Agreement. Mr. Adow has also proposed specific solutions developing the points of his recent article at Foreign Affairs Magazine, where he pinpointed the issue of climate debt and what developed countries owe developing countries. In order to build a climate resilient and low carbon future, both financial and technical resources are absolutely critical and the developed world that is largely responsible for the climate crisis must fulfill its part urgently.

Ms. Amadou Mounirah, UNDP – has drawn attention to the problems of gender and energy access. Women need to be more involved in building and implementing sustainable energy transition. And this is not only limited to the problem of clean cooking for all, but also linked to the underrepresentation of women in energy governance. Gender mainstreaming is therefore imperative in any policy discussion and decision.

Dmitry Kalinin, Clean Energy Innovations Partnership, presented technologies and business models available now for rapid, sustainable and affordable increase in power supply including virtual gas pipelines and decentralized cooling, heat and power co-generation. He presented efficient tools and best practices for stakeholder engagement and for dynamic strategy development for energy projects. Potential sources of finance for innovative energy solutions were also discussed. Mr. Kalinin highlighted that there are indeed great ideas and solutions for Africa's energy future and that these need to translate into practical steps and implementation, drawing from successful examples as the ones presented during the webinar.

All speakers agreed that immediate response to the pandemic must not compromise the attention and efforts surrounding a sustainable energy future for Africa and that the health, development and energy crisis are all interlinked. African communities currently face many complicated issues but have great potential to leapfrog to a successful sustainable future. The panel stressed the importance of efficient and decisive leadership for practical implementation of the most urgent and important measures.

Recording of the webinar is available on our YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEFBDDe-RcX9RbRwgRNpojVg>.

The organizers plan to continue a new webinar series starting in September with events focusing on specific areas highlighted in the first two conferences. The Program of upcoming events will be published shortly.