

## The Africa-EU Energy Partnership High Level Meeting, 2010

The Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) High Level Meeting postponed from April 2010 will be held in Vienna, Austria on 14 and 15 September 2010. The meeting is expected to attract the participation of energy ministers from several African countries, ministers from EU Member States, and Commissioners from the EU and AU. This will be the first meeting of the AEEP at this level since its launch in 2008. The agenda for the meeting is relevant to the concerns of civil society organisations in Europe and Africa, and participation by civil society organisations and private sector representatives is invited by the organisers.

### High Level Meeting Agenda

The [High Level Meeting](#) will consider political targets for the AEEP until 2020, launch an Africa-EU Renewable Energy Co-operation Programme (RECP), endorse the road map for implementation of AEEP activities, and debate the question of access to energy in Africa.

### Political targets

There are five draft political targets, one of which is specifically to address energy poverty in Africa. This is *to bring access to modern and sustainable energy services to at least an additional 100 million Africans by 2020*.

The other draft political targets are concerned with energy security, renewable energy and energy efficiency. For energy security, targets *are to double the capacity of cross border electricity connections and to double the use of natural gas in Africa and natural gas exports to Europe*. For renewable energy they are *to increase the use of renewable energy in Africa by building 10GW of hydro-power, 5GW of wind power capacity and tripling the capacity in other renewables*. For energy efficiency the target is *to improve energy efficiency by 1.5% a year in Africa and Europe*.

There is also a commitment to strengthen dialogue at multiple levels on energy issues of mutual interest.

### Renewable Energy Co-operation Programme

At its inception in 2008 the AEEP proposed establishing a joint renewable energy co-operation programme (RECP). This would mobilise technical expertise in Europe to build capacity in Africa for

#### The Africa-EU Energy Partnership

The AEEP is one of eight partnerships established under the [Joint Africa Europe Strategy]. Its purpose is to provide a long-term framework for structured political dialogue and cooperation on energy issues. The agreed objectives of the AEEP are:

- Effective Africa-EU dialogue on energy access and energy security for both continents;
- Improved access to reliable, secure, affordable, climate friendly and sustainable energy services for both continents; and
- Increased European and African investments in energy infrastructure in Africa, including promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The structures of the AEEP provide for the engagement of African and European civil society. This includes participation in the meetings of the Joint Experts Group and the proposed Partnership Forum.

the development of renewable energy resources, and help build commercial co-operation between Africa and Europe in the area of renewable energy. A draft outline for such a programme was circulated earlier in 2010, before postponement of the High Level Meeting.

The concept note states the proposed objective of the programme is to promote greater use of renewable energy in Africa for improved energy security and energy access. It is intended as a framework for co-operation between Europe and Africa to do more than is included in existing co-operation plans and meet the proposed political target.

The programme of co-operation on renewable energy is expected to include:

- Facilitation of dialogue and co-operation between the private sectors in Africa and Europe;
- Identification and promotion of effective policies and actions to increase the share of renewable energy in Africa's energy balance;
- Sharing of scientific and technical knowledge, and information about renewable energy activities in Africa; and
- Increased visibility and support for the development of renewable energy in Africa.

The specific actions to be taken under the RECP have yet to be defined. The concept note provides only options and ideas about how the programme would be implemented. Nevertheless it does give an idea of how the Renewable Energy Co-operation Programme is being perceived by the European Commission, African Union Commission and Member States.

#### **The Road Map**

The action plan for the AEEP is the '[Road Map](#).' Priority areas to be addressed by the Road Map of the Partnership are:

- Promoting regional integration of electricity markets in Africa,
- Promoting an enabling environment to enhance private investment,

- Developing energy interconnections between Africa and Europe,
- Launching a Renewable Energy Co-operation Programme,
- Supporting the reduction of gas flaring and venting,
- Mobilising additional resources for investment in the energy sector both on supply and demand side, notably to improve access to energy services,
- Making progress in implementing existing EC support to enhance the institutional and technical capacity of the AUC,
- Strengthening cooperation to improve energy efficiency in all energy sectors,
- Facilitating contacts and increasing exchanges of know-how between relevant European institutions and their African counterparts.

Comments on the draft Road Map from EU civil society and the business sector were submitted in June 2009, and further comments in February 2010.

#### **Energy Access**

Access to basic energy services in most African countries lags behind the rest of the world. Today there are over 560 million men, women and children in Sub-Saharan Africa without access to electricity. 620 million rely on solid fuels for cooking. On current plans, according to the IEA, there will be the same numbers, if not more, living in energy poverty in 2030. A target of 100 million by 2020 – less than 20% of those who need improved energy access – seems to lack the degree of ambition that the international goal of poverty reduction calls for. Adoption of a target of universal access to basic energy services by 2030, as recommended by the UN Secretary General's Advisory Committee on Energy and Climate Change, would demonstrate real political commitment.

The access agenda would be better supported if there was more emphasis on distributed smaller scale generation and the building of local mini-grids. The policy framework is in place to support this approach in many African countries and activities are underway in some to develop private

sector interest and build local project development capacity. For the lowest income groups, the most promising ways of reaching people are with low cost, money-saving, products like small solar lanterns, good quality improved stoves, briquettes (eco-charcoal) where these can be made at lower cost than charcoal, and through supporting small businesses which use wind turbines or solar panels to provide low cost battery charging services.

## Renewable Energy

Though it is suggested in the concept note that the RECP is, at least in part, about energy access, very little in the programme appears to be concerned with biomass, which is not only the most significant renewable energy resource currently used in Africa, but also the energy source most used by people living in poverty. Over 80% of Africans use traditional biomass for cooking, the cause of over 500,000 premature deaths a year in Sub-Saharan Africa. A renewable energy co-operation programme that is serious about energy access would be one that improves access to improved stoves, seeks to reduce the number of premature deaths from smoke, and ensures biomass use is environmentally sustainable.

What is provided for in the RECP, as outlined in the concept note, is biased towards large-scale renewable energy provision. The draft AEEP political targets reinforce this, emphasising the role of large-scale hydro-power. While this is important for the business community and the growing middle class, it is unlikely to make much difference to the millions of people who do not have access to electricity.

A major proportion of renewable energy capacity is envisaged to come from hydro-power. Though unexploited hydro-power potential currently exists, water resources across Africa are becoming scarce and increasingly uncertain with the effects of climate change. Water resources will therefore need to be managed in ways that take account of all uses at local and watershed levels.

Large-scale hydro-power infrastructure has in the past resulted in environmental and social problems.

AEEP promotion of large-scale hydro-power should therefore only be done in ways that are consistent with the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams.

## The Road Map

The AEEP Road Map or action plan gives priority to large-scale energy infrastructure investments, which do not necessarily lead to rural development, poverty reduction and equitable access to modern energy services. The Road Map includes the provision for energy exchange infrastructure between Africa and Europe, which seems to address mainly the energy security interests of Europe.

Decentralised, renewable options, which do not feature strongly in the Road Map, are generally more cost effective for rural areas where there are low incomes and low population densities. These require more support for local capacity building on technical, management and institutional levels, as well as appropriate financing mechanisms for both consumers and service providers. More focus should also be given to household energy and the development of modern biomass energy options, in recognition of their contribution to poverty reduction.

The Road Map and the RECP propose a significant role for private sector engagement in Africa-EU co-operation on the development of the energy sector in Africa. The general approach appears to be that of joint Africa and EU investment in building or creating energy capacity, rather than the promotion or stimulation of independent African private sector capacity. Small and medium scale energy service enterprises in Africa, or SMEs providing goods and services to energy suppliers and consumers, do not have a mention. Yet, these are critical to delivering improved energy services to the majority of Africans.

## Recommendations

- The AEEP should adopt a target to achieve universal access to basic energy services in Africa by 2030.
- AEEP programmes and plans should give greater emphasis to smaller scale, off grid options for electricity supply.
- The RECP should include actions to increase access to improved stoves and increase the sustainability of biomass fuel supplies.
- Large-scale hydro power investments under the AEEP should be implemented in accordance with the recommendations of the World Dams Commission concerning environmental and social impact.
- AEEP programmes and plans should provide for the promotion of small and medium scale enterprises in the energy sector.

## Further Information

The official website for the Africa-EU Partnership  
[http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/partnerships/items/energy\\_en.htm](http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/partnerships/items/energy_en.htm)

News and Resources on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy  
[http://europafrica.net/jointstrategy/5\\_energy/](http://europafrica.net/jointstrategy/5_energy/)  
<http://europafrica.net/civil-society/>

*Strengthening Popular Participation in the African Union: A Guide to AU Structures and Processes*, Oxfam/AfriMAP, 2009.  
<http://www.afriMAP.org/english/images/report/AfriMAP-AU-Guide-EN.pdf>

Report from the Second AU-CSO Consultation on the Implementation of the Africa-Europe Partnership, 3-5 March 2009.  
<http://europafrica.files.wordpress.com/2007/02/reportau-eunairobi2009-2.doc>

Prospects for Africa – Europe's Policies: The VENRO Project on the Africa-EU Partnership  
<http://www.prospects-for-africa.de/?L=1>

Sustainable Energy Challenges and Policy Recommendations from Civil Society, March 2010.  
[http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/venro\\_forum\\_practical\\_action\\_en.pdf](http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/venro_forum_practical_action_en.pdf)

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We would like to acknowledge Katherine Begg, Mike Bess, Nicola Cantore, Judith Charni, Simon Collings, Peter Davies, and John Magrath for comments which have contributed to the preparation of this briefing.

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