

Press release – for immediate release

Seminal Pan–African workshop about policies to support renewable energies
Harvesting the sun and wind is key for African development

Accra, June 23, 2010. “The solar radiation Africa receives could make this continent the Saudi–Arabia of the future”. With this bold statement, Hafsat Abiola, daughter of Nigeria’s late President Elect Moshood Abiola, summarized the results of “Power Kick for Africa”, a two–day strategy workshop on renewable energy policies. The gathering was organised by the World Future Council Foundation, based in Hamburg, Germany, in cooperation with the Energy Commission of Ghana. It brought together representatives from utilities, regulators, industry and civil society from ten African countries who are determined to expand their cooperation under the umbrella of the African Renewable Energy Alliance (AREA). Their main point of discussion was how policy–makers can support the harvesting of abundant renewable energy and thus open the door for sustainable African development.

“If we repeat the mistakes of the developed world by realising African development mainly on the burning of fossil fuels, climate change will have a disastrous effect on our countries”, said the Executive Director of the Regional Centre for Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency of ECOWAS, Mahama Kappiah, at a press briefing in the Coconut Grove Regency Hotel, Accra. On the other hand, decentralised energy production through solar systems and wind farms could bring power to many remote regions, thus allowing development, creating jobs and benefitting health. Kappiah: “Solar power is reliable and can be installed easily and without the need to connect to the national electricity grid.”

Policy–makers could facilitate the use of renewable energies vastly by implementing tried and tested policies which make the necessary initial investments affordable. Among the discussed and recommended policies were micro–credits for the purchase of solar home systems, the reduction or abolition of import duties on renewable energy technology, renewable energy payments for independent electricity–producers in regions with a grid and policies for subsidising the use of solar water heaters as widely used in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean countries.

Wisdom Ahiataku, Head of Renewable Energy in the Ghana Ministry of Energy: “Africa is already suffering the negative impacts of climate change. It is a challenge to find efficient conversion devices and sustainable alternatives for fuel wood and charcoal. This is why renewable, decentralised energy is absolutely essential for

sustainable development. The knowledge and information exchange enabled by AREA will help us to find the best policy solutions to reach this goal.”

Right after the press briefing in Accra the delegates set off for the two hour journey to the small, non-electrified town of Oboadaka near Aburi where the World Future Council and cooperation partner Energiebau Sunergy Ghana staged a Football World Cup public viewing powered by solar energy. Together with several hundred people from Oboadaka and the surrounding villages – and a few German World Future Council employees – they watched the all-important Ghana–Germany game on a screen installed in Oboadaka’s half-open school-house. At half-time the solar system was donated to the town for the benefit of the local health clinic that hitherto had to operate completely without electricity. This is a big step forward for the town’s infrastructure, a step that many other African towns and villages can take if AREA’s renewable energy policy recommendations are taken up by governments.

African Renewable Energy Alliance

The African Renewable Energy Alliance was founded as result of a World Future Council workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 2009. In this Alliance, political decision-makers, representatives from business and civil society exchange information and consult about policies, technologies and financial mechanisms for the deployment of renewable energies in Africa.

World Future Council

The World Future Council brings the interests of future generations to the centre of policy making. Its up to 50 eminent members from around the globe have already successfully promoted change. The Council addresses challenges to our common future and provides decision-makers with effective policy solutions. In-depth research underpins advocacy work for international agreements, regional policy frameworks and national lawmaking and thus produces practical and tangible results. The World Future Council is registered as a charitable foundation in Hamburg, Germany.

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