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African ministerial meeting on energy
Nairobi, 8 May 2004

Report of the African ministerial meeting on energy

I. Introduction

1. During the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, a plan of implementation was adopted which called upon the international community to take joint actions and to work together at all levels to improve access to reliable and affordable energy services for sustainable development. The African ministers of energy who attended the Summit recognized the need to collaborate together to follow up this plan of implementation. The Government of Uganda took the initiative of requesting the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to assist in organizing a ministerial forum on energy. On 21 November 2003, UNEP hosted a working lunch for African ministers and heads of delegations who had come to Nairobi to attend a meeting organized by the European Union focusing on its energy initiative for poverty eradication and sustainable development. This event was facilitated by the Minister of Energy of Uganda, Ms. Syda Bbumba, and was attended by 16 ministers and heads of delegations. Those present strongly supported the convening of a ministerial forum and requested UNEP to work with the Government of Uganda and other partners to achieve this end.
2. A meeting of African ministers of energy took place on 8 May 2004 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi. It was jointly organized by the African Union, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development of Uganda, the Ministry of Energy of Kenya, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and UNEP in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany.
3. The meeting of ministers had been preceded by meetings of technical experts and a major purpose of the meeting of ministers was to officially adopt recommendations emanating from the technical experts' meetings. These recommendations included a draft of the African statement on renewable energies which would be submitted to the forthcoming International Conference for Renewable Energies scheduled for Bonn, Germany, from 1 to 4 June 2004.

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II. Opening of the meeting

4. Mr. Sekou Toure, Director of the Regional Office for Africa of UNEP, welcomed participants to the meeting and invited Mr. Mwangi Kiunjuri, Assistant Minister of Energy of Kenya, to address the meeting.
5. Mr. Kiunjuri read the speech of his minister, Mr. Ochilo Ayacko, which outlined the aims of the Kenya Government, as articulated in its national energy policy, to provide Kenyans with quality energy services at affordable prices so as to facilitate economic development as well as to reduce poverty. Whereas conventional fossil fuel-based power generation perpetuated unsustainable external trade imbalances, a diversification of the energy supply matrix would produce power that would be not only cheaper but also environmentally friendly. Kenya was already generating 121mw of electricity, or 10 per cent of installed capacity, by exploiting geothermal resources and intended to intensify the use of this plentiful and indigenous resource. In addition, Kenya planned to promote the co-generation of electricity by sugar companies as well as the use of small renewable systems such as wind to meet the energy needs of rural communities. Mr. Kiunjuri concluded by expressing the hope that present meeting would come up with a consolidated African position on renewable energy which could be presented to various forums such as the forthcoming International Conference for Renewable Energies. He then declared the meeting officially open.
6. Mr. Arcado Ntagazwa, Minister of the Environment of the United Republic of Tanzania and President of the Governing Council of UNEP, expressed his appreciation to his counterpart, the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development of Uganda, Ms. Syda Bbumba, for having convened the meeting. He noted that the World Summit on Sustainable Development had underlined the importance of ensuring access to reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services and resources. One of the major outcomes of the Summit had been the launching of a variety of global and regional partnerships. He called upon the participants to take advantage of the present meeting as well as the forthcoming conference scheduled for Bonn in order to define the role of the African region in the global movement for the development of renewable sources of energy.
7. Mr. Manfred Konukiewitz, Head of the Water, Energy and Urban Development Division of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany and a member of the European Union's energy initiative for poverty alleviation, informed the participants about the International Conference for Renewable Energies scheduled for 1–4 June 2004 in Bonn, Germany. That conference should be of particular interest to Africa, given the continent's rich natural resources and its potential to produce not only hydropower but also geothermal, solar and wind power. He expressed the hope that the African delegates would take advantage of the conference in Bonn to articulate the viewpoint of Africa and to bring the energy needs of the continent to the attention of the international community.
8. Mr. Bernard Zoba, the African Union Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy, informed the participants that the Commission of the African Union had been set up during the third ordinary session of the Heads of State and Government which had met in Maputo, Mozambique from 10 to 12 July 2003. The Commission, he explained, was made up of a president, a vice-president and eight commissioners representing the five regions of Africa. In order to put in place a viable energy policy, African nations should cooperate with partners from within the continent as well as from outside, under the political leadership of the Commission. The institutional mechanism for overseeing the implementation of Africa's energy policies was the African Energy Commission (AFREC). Unfortunately, however, the convention setting up AFREC had not as yet come into force due to the fact that the minimum number of member States, which was 15, had not as yet ratified the convention. He therefore called on the ministers of energy present to take all appropriate steps to ensure that their Governments sign the convention so as to enable AFREC to play its role in furthering Africa's energy policies.
9. The Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Klaus Töpfer, welcomed participants to UNEP headquarters. He pointed out that energy, which was based on natural resources, was the basis of the world's economic development. As for Africa, the continent consumed the smallest proportion of the world's energy but suffered the most from climate change. Africa had the opportunity to use renewable sources of energy and Kenya had a successful geothermal energy project which should be an example for other countries to emulate. It was important, he stressed, to decentralize energy projects. Small and medium hydropower projects could promote the economic development of rural areas and stem the tide of migration to cities. In conclusion, he wished the participants a successful meeting.

10. Ms. Syda Bbumba, the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development of Uganda, thanked all those who had accepted her invitation to attend the meeting. She outlined the objectives of the meeting as follows:

(a) To discuss the status of implementation of the plan of action drawn up at the World Summit on Sustainable Development as well as the action plan on energy of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in order to identify priority areas for further action;

(b) To discuss the recommendations emanating from the meeting of the thematic programme network on renewable energy and environmentally sound technologies and to decide on further actions in the area of energy and desertification;

(c) To explore the possibilities of further strengthening both the Council of African Ministers of Energy and AFREC;

(d) To formulate the African position on renewable energy which would be presented to the International Conference for Renewable Energies in June 2004.

11. She reminded participants about the commitments undertaken with regard to energy during the Summit in Johannesburg, which included:

(a) Diversifying energy supply and substantially increasing the proportion of renewable energy;

(b) Improving access to reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services and resources;

(c) Removing energy market distortions;

(d) Promoting domestic programmes for energy efficiency.

12. She drew the attention of participants to the special problems affecting the development of hydropower projects. The current controversy surrounding large dam projects and consequent reluctance of development partners to fund such projects is one reason why Africa has so far been able to exploit only 4.7 per cent of its hydropower potential. She expressed the hope that this issue would be exhaustively discussed during the forthcoming conference in Bonn and in conclusion, she wished the participants fruitful deliberations.

III. Attendance

13. Government ministers from the following countries, accompanied by technical experts, attended the meeting: Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

14. Representatives of the following Governments were also present at the meeting: Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Finland, Gambia, Germany, Guinea, Italy, Malawi, Netherlands, Niger, Swaziland, Sierra Leone, Togo and Tunisia.

15. The following United Nations organizations were represented at the meeting: Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, UNEP.

16. The following international and civil society organizations also attended the meeting: African Union, African Energy Policy Research Network, African Development Bank, Arab Maghreb Union, Community Project Support Organization, Energie Solaire et Eolienne, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, New Partnership for Africa's Development, Southern African Development Community and the World Energy Council.

IV. Agenda and organization of work

17. The following agenda was adopted for the meeting:
1. Official opening.
 2. Adoption of the agenda.
 3. Presentation and adoption of the report on the follow-up of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.
 4. Presentation and adoption of the recommendations on the thematic programme network on renewable energy and environmentally sound technologies
 5. Presentation by Mr. Manfred Konukiewitz about the forthcoming International Conference for Renewable Energies.
 6. Presentation and adoption of the African statement on renewable energy to be presented to that forum.
 7. Presentation and adoption of the draft recommendations on institutional strengthening.
 8. Official Closure of the Meeting.

V. Presentations

A. Report on the regional follow-up of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the NEPAD energy initiative

18. Ms. Syda Bbumba presented the report on the regional follow-up of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the NEPAD energy initiative as well as the recommendations on the way forward. Within the context of these recommendations, Ms. Yvette Stevens, Director, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa at the United Nations proposed that United Nations agencies should more actively assist African countries to access financial mechanisms, in particular, those put in place after the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and partnerships focussing on energy with an aim of promoting energy projects in the continent. This proposal was approved by the participants. Ms. Stevens also informed participants that Africa was failing to take advantage of many funding opportunities which existed and advised them to take steps to ensure that this anomaly was rectified.

19. A second proposal, to set up an African task force to be comprised of energy experts from Africa to advise ministers of energy, generated considerable debate. While the participants concurred that the idea had merit, they could not agree on the body to which this task force would report, whether it would report to the African Union, NEPAD, AFREC or directly to ministers of energy. Several participants felt that there was no need to create an additional organization; instead, the already existing organizations should be strengthened. It was, however, pointed out that the task force would not become another organization but rather, it would consist of experts who would gather together from time to time to offer technical advice. Since no consensus was reached on these issues, it was decided to task the African Union to formulate proposals concerning the proposed task force. The discussion was brought to a close when the participants adopted the recommendations concerning the regional follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development outcomes and the NEPAD energy initiative. These recommendations are contained in annex I.

B. Recommendations of the thematic programme network on renewable energy and environmentally sound technologies

20. Ms. Syda Bbumba presented the recommendations of the thematic programme network on renewable energy and environmentally sound technologies formulated under the umbrella of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Participants concurred with the recommendations contained in this document that renewable energy activities should form part of strategies aimed at combating desertification and at eradicating poverty. Such activities could best be carried out through joint projects. It was essential, they felt,

that issues such as renewable energy and desertification should feature more prominently during consultations between African countries and their bilateral and multilateral development partners, given the fact that, currently, there were not many sources of funding for desertification initiatives. No contentious issues arose and after a few minor editorial changes had been made in the French version, the document was adopted. It was furthermore agreed unanimously that the thematic programme be launched. The recommendations as approved by participants are contained in annex II.

C. Forthcoming International Conference for Renewable Energies

21. Mr. Manfred Konukiewitz provided participants with more detailed information about the forthcoming International Conference for Renewable Energies scheduled for Bonn in June 2004. He explained that the conference would revolve around the following themes:

- (a) Policies for market development;
- (b) Financing options;
- (c) Human capacity institutions and technology development.

22. The outcomes expected from the conference were as follows:

- (a) A political declaration to be adopted by ministers and representatives of Governments;
- (b) An international action programme (Participants were invited to send in their proposals before 22 May 2004);
- (c) Policy recommendations for renewable energies and follow-up.

23. More than 1,000 participants, representing Governments, organizations and the private sector, were expected to attend the conference and he expressed the hope that many participants from Africa would be present.

D. African statement on renewable energy

24. Mr. July Moyo, the Minister for Energy and Power Development of Zimbabwe, presented the draft of the African statement on renewable energy which would be presented to the forthcoming conference in Bonn. During the discussion which followed, participants expressed agreement with the recommendations contained in the document, although one participant formulated the wish to see wind power mentioned specifically. Other participants, however, felt that if wind was mentioned, then all forms of renewable energy would have to be listed.

25. The main contentious issue raised by participants during this session revolved around the construction of large dams. It was noted that the negative publicity surrounding large dams meant that donors and the private sector were increasingly reluctant to fund such projects. Ms. Bbumba noted that the economic development of Uganda had been adversely affected by this stand taken by development partners. While appreciating the importance of protecting the environment, participants were generally of the opinion that the failure to exploit Africa's enormous hydropower potential through dams projects was impacting negatively on the continent's economic progress and that consequently, development partners should be encouraged to invest in such projects once sustainability criteria had been met. It was agreed that the wording of the relevant recommendation was excessively courteous and that stronger language was required. The following wording was therefore adopted: "Request our development partners to work with our respective governments in designing guidelines for the development of large hydropower projects in a sustainable manner and also to invest in these projects." After some additional editorial corrections, the modified recommendations as contained in annex III were adopted by participants.

E. Recommendations made by the group of experts on regional institutional strengthening

26. Mr. André Nkundikije, Minister for Energy and Mines of Burundi, presented the recommendations made by the group of experts on regional institutional strengthening. Participants concurred with the recommendations outlined in the document and in particular with the necessity of having an effective

institutional mechanism for the energy sector in Africa. Given the previous lack of coordination, they were pleased to note that NEPAD was now a programme of the African Union, which meant that there was no need to draw a line between the two. They noted with concern, however, that AFREC was not as yet able to play its intended role since only six member States had ratified its convention. This number was far short of the fifteen States which were required in order for the convention to come into force. No contentious issues were raised and, after some minor editorial corrections in the French version, the recommendations were adopted. These recommendations are contained in annex IV.

IV. Official closure of the meeting

27. Ms. Bbumba expressed her gratification that the following objectives had been achieved in the course of one day:

(a) The implementation of the plan of action drawn up at the World Summit on Sustainable Development as well as that of the NEPAD action plan on energy had been discussed;

(b) The thematic programme network on renewable energy and environmentally sound technologies had been launched;

(c) The African position on renewable energy due to be presented at the International Conference for Renewable Energies in Bonn had been formulated.

28. After the customary exchange of courtesies and in particular, the thanks expressed to the German Government for having supported the holding of the event, the meeting was declared closed.

ANNEX

African Ministerial Meeting on Energy

7-8 May 2004, Nairobi, Kenya

Regional Follow-up to WSSD outcomes and NEPAD Energy Initiative

RECOMMENDATIONS

Acknowledging the facts that:

1. The WSSD has established in the JPOI, implementation and review mechanisms that were to be undertaken by all parties (countries, UN-system, and other stakeholders), and provided the framework for review and evaluation of progress made towards achieving Agenda 21 (Agenda 21, WSSD/JPIO).
2. The WSSD/JPOI further stipulates that the achievement of the international agreed development goals require a substantially increased effort, both by countries themselves and the international community.

Recommendations are therefore tailored accordingly, in particular to the UN-system and to African Governments.

To the UN System:

The UN System is to pursue its commitment to:

1. Support regional development initiatives

Regionally and subregionally agreed sustainable development initiatives and programmes, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) will continue to be supported.

Drawing on the achievements of the sub-cluster on Water, there is a need for establishing an appropriate framework that would facilitate input to CSD-14 on the thematic cluster on energy for sustainable development for NEPAD.

2. Ensure coherence, complementarities, effectiveness and efficiency in the UN actions towards achieving sustainable energy provision

This is to be achieved through activities such as:

- Africa Annual Regional Consultations of UN Agencies: ECA is convening the Annual Regional Consultations of UN Agencies working in Africa with a view to improving coherence and synergies in the UN, particularly around the systems' response to NEPAD.
- UN-Energy Initiative: At the initiative of the HLCP¹, an ad hoc task force of UN experts in energy was convened in Rome, April 7-8, 2004. The task force decided to create UN-Energy, an inter-agency collaborative mechanism on energy with mandate to develop collaborative links with non-UN energy stakeholders. The Terms of References of UN-Energy, created along the line of UN-Water, will be approved at the next HLCP meeting. As in the case of UN-Water, the UN agencies are advocating the creation of a regional collaborative mechanism on energy called UN-Energy/Africa to provide more efficiency, coherence and effectiveness to the UN system and non-UN organizations actions towards meeting the energy challenges in Africa

3. Review progress towards achieving the WSSD goals

The third meeting of the African Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD-3) decided to modify the Terms of references of the CSD so that it serves as Africa's regional forum of experts that deals with all the fields mandated by the UN General Assembly to the global Commission on Sustainable Development.

To African Governments:

The African policy-makers should accelerate energy sector reforms and adapt energy governance as to:

4. Mainstream poverty reduction issues in national policies and all programmes on energy;
5. Use holistic, and integrated approach to solving the energy problem based on the real energy demand;
6. Adopt emergency priority measures to address specifically the basic energy needs and minimum energy provision required for productive activities of the rural population;
7. Modernize the traditional biomass sector to ensure efficient use and the sustainability of the resource;
8. Adopt energy security measures through regional cooperation arrangements for promoting cross-border energy trade (interconnection of electricity grids and oil and gas pipelines networks);

¹ High Level Committee on Programme (HLCP)

9. Promote by all means the development of renewable energy services and technologies. This should include institutional support and incentives to RE service entrepreneurs and to research and development of RE technologies;
10. Promote decentralized energy production strategies that would use more effectively all available energy resources, and involve a greater participation of local population to the provision of energy services and the management of the resources.
11. Attract private sector's participation to the production, transport and distribution of energy, through measures that would lower investment risks, and help establish a sound energy market.
12. Change the current pattern of energy use and transformation by awareness raising campaigns and regulatory measures in favor of energy efficiency behaviors both at end-use side and at the energy transformation/production side.
13. Streamline sustainable energy production and services as a priority national strategy for poverty reduction and sustainable development in national development programmes.
14. Establish WSSD/WDG review mechanism at national level, which capitalizes on the findings of PRSP of countries, and build national ownership of the goals of WSSD.
15. Advocate the need to adopt a meaningful definition of the concept of "access to electricity" beyond electricity service vicinity, so that it reflects accessibility, affordability, social acceptance of the users