



Regional Virtual Event Africa

Access to Sustainable Energy, Water and Sanitation: Integrated approaches to these key services for ensuring the health and well-being of vulnerable communities in the world

Virtual Webinar | 17 November 2020

Ms. Sheila Oparaocha, International Coordinator of **ENERGIA**, acted as moderator for this event.

Welcoming Remarks: *Mr. Linus Mofor*, Senior Environmental Affairs Officer at the **UN Economic Commission for Africa**, welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of access to sustainable energy and water for fighting COVID-19 and building back better, as well as the interdependence of these critical resources with food, climate and land. He pointed out that, with 2020 marking the beginning of the [Decade of Action](#) to deliver the SDGs, policy coherence and integrated implementation have become even more crucial. In this connection, he announced the development by ECA, DESA and UNDP in Cameroon and Ethiopia of a programme on *Climate, Land, Energy and Water systems (CLEWs)* to promote the implementation of the SDGs and Paris Agreement, ensuring capacity for technical modelling, policy coherence and institutional coordination. Emphasizing the critical role of the private sector to mobilize substantial investments, Mr. Mofor mentioned the *SDG7 Initiative for Africa* launched by ECA, which aims to bring together countries, financiers and developers of clean-energy projects to align interests and combine scale and speed to fast-track financing from the private sector for the deployment of clean energy for access and climate in Africa.

Introductory Session: *Ms. Heather Adair-Rohani*, Technical Officer at the **WHO**, highlighted access to energy as a prerequisite for quality health care and for the achievement of many other SDGs. She underscored the need to ensure sufficient and reliable electricity in healthcare facilities, which is particularly critical during emergencies such as COVID19, to ensure that women can give birth safely at night, medical equipment can be powered and better sterilized, and clinics can preserve life-saving vaccines. To that end, she stressed the urgency for the health and energy sectors to join forces to develop normative recommendations, using multi-stakeholder and multi-lateral approaches. *Mr. Paul Yillia*, Research Scholar at **IIASA/ The Energy Nexus Network (TENN)**, discussed the issue of “sector coupling and how to overcome challenges.” One example he cited was the importance of the water-energy-food nexus, as it has crucial policies and planning instruments for strengthening cross-sector interactions and highlighted the opportunities and challenges for doing so. Building on the multiple trade-offs and interconnections within this nexus, he reiterated the importance to move from the traditional “silo” into “systemic” approaches that will help identify and manage trade-offs while maximising co-benefits.

Panelist Session: *Ms. Doris Edem Agbevivi*, Energy Analyst of the **Energy Commission, Ghana**, shared Ghana's experiences in managing the water-energy nexus. In doing so, Ms. Agbevivi highlighted some of the most important challenges faced in the country, such as providing access to off-grid communities, and emphasized the need to enhance access to clean renewable energy options. After sharing some success stories as well, Ms. Agbevivi concluded recommending next steps to be taken in order to address barriers and continue progress, such as defining priority investment areas; considering integrated approaches at both policy and investment decisions, including inter-ministerial and sectoral representation on projects; involving local assemblies; addressing data gaps and encouraging data use in a harmonized water-energy ecosystem; and promoting local initiatives that require national frameworks and national policies that benefit from the implementation of global goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Bas Berends, Chief Partnership Officer at **OffGridBox**, introduced integrated solutions for clean water, solar energy and connectivity in remote areas, designed and developed by his organization in the form of a practical and self-contained water and energy box. Emphasizing the numerous enterprise and market opportunities that the combined use of integrated water and energy solutions can bring, he explained the positive impacts that their developed structures have provided to local communities, including the hiring and training of women to operate the boxes on a daily basis, the empowerment of businesses and the provision of purified water, which has helped promote good health, for families in particular.

Ms. Anne Kayiwa, Head of Commercial at **Tulima Solar**, introduced the solutions designed by her organization to provide affordable payment plans to farmers so that they have access to customized solar water pump equipment and technologies. Ms. Kayiwa explained how providing these technologies to farming communities, including to those who are predominately off the grid, is enabling a more sustainable and efficient use of water and energy resources, contributing positively to social impact, and allowing to generate more income and increased services. She highlighted the remote monitoring of these services as a positive tool to enhance capacities, ensure sustained operations and decrease the likelihood of wasted water-energy resources from reoccurring.

Mr. Sansom Tsegay, Country Director of the **Solar Energy Foundation** in Ethiopia, reiterated the importance of enhancing synergies between water and energy and the critical role that solar technologies have for community development. Citing notable accomplishments, such as the establishment of the first solar village in Ethiopia -with 10,000 inhabitants and 2,000 households, Mr. Tsegay explained how these technologies do not only provide quality drinking water but also alleviate the challenges faced by many women and families to access these resources. He shared several success stories and lessons learned when implementing water and energy solutions in off-grid communities in Ethiopia, and how the joint cooperation by government and different donors and stakeholders was key in ensuring success.

Closing: *Mr. Martin Niemetz*, Sustainable Development Expert at UN DESA, concluded the meeting, thanking the moderator and all panelists for their participation. Acknowledging the insightful perspectives and relevant experiences shared at the event, he invited participants to stay engaged in the discussions through the recently launched website of the [Global Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions Network](#), which aims to be a hub for knowledge sharing on integrated water and energy solutions in support of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.