

Egypt Keen to Share Energy Development Experiences with COMESA



Participants from COMESA Member States and course instructors on training in Egypt.

Egypt is keen to share its experiences in the implementation of energy projects with other COMESA Member States to address the energy deficit in the region. Subsequently, the country is working with the COMESA Secretariat towards this initiative.

Early this month, 4 to 8 August 2019, Egypt and COMESA Secretariat organized a one-week training in Cairo that was attended by delegates from 12 other COMESA Countries. These were: Djibouti, DR Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The training focused on Policy, Financing and Implementation of Energy Projects. Among the topics covered were: renewable energy strategies; investment environment in renewable energy; financing methods and lending agreements and procurement; renewable energy independent power producers among others.

Dr. Mohamed Shaker, Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy of Egypt told the COMESA Secretariat team, led by the Director of Infrastructure Mr Jean Baptiste Mutabazi, that Egypt now has excess generation capacity following

massive investments since 2014.

"Egypt had been experiencing frequent power cuts due to lack of supply of natural gas in 2014. Therefore, we had to connect 3600MW to the grid in a record time of 8 ½ Months. By June 2015, Egypt did not have any more power cuts attributed to lack of generation capacity," the Minister said.

He added that his government also signed a deal with Siemens to provide 4800MW combined cycle power plants which were also delivered in record two and half years instead of the normal 5-6-year period.

"As a result of these investments, Egypt now has excess generation capacity," he said adding that with an electricity generation capacity of over 55,000MW, Egypt has the largest installed electricity generation capacity in the COMESA region.

With regards to Renewable Energy, the Minister informed the team that his country had 6.6GW installed capacity by mid-2019 and planned to reach 20% of generation capacity by 2022. Egypt has also signed a deal with Russia for the construction of a 4800MW nuclear power plant. The first reactor is expected to be operational by 2026.

"Egypt is working on upgrading the transmission network to 500KV and working on a number of interconnectors with a view to be hub of power trading and conduit to Europe," he said. "Egypt is ready to prepare training on specific subjects and that His Excellency Abdel Al sisi the president of the Arab Republic was ready to deepen African cooperation."

Thanking the government of Egypt for providing the training support, Mr Mutabazi observed that COMESA region had a huge energy deficit and therefore there was a need for Member States to address this matter. He said:

"Generation and distribution of energy could be extended to the private sector, while transmission be left to governments. The missing link, was in installing interconnectors."

The training also included the sharing of experiences from the Member States present as well as field visits to the Kuraymat Solar Thermal Power Plant, and the Mokatam Training Centre.

Participants recommended that, for the trainings to be effective, there is need to have a critical mass of COMESA Energy experts to help in wider dissemination the knowledge to the region.

COMESA Management Retreats for Joint Planning



Management team and staff at the retreat

COMESA Secretariat Management retreated for two days on August 20 – 21 to review how the organization performed in the past year and identify areas of improvements for overall efficiency and effectiveness.

The retreat helped to determine priorities to guide the development of work programmes and budgets for 2020. Further, the retreat provided space for management team to review policy proposals to be presented to the COMESA Policy Organs besides promoting internal decision making that is underpinned by increased transparency and accountability.

Former Secretary General of COMESA Mr. Erastus Mwencha, who was enroute to Livingstone to attend the Trade and Development Bank meeting stopped over in Lusaka to address the participants at the retreat.

At the opening of the retreat, the Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe stressed the importance of reviewing the organization's performance regularly in order to keep pace with the ever-changing world in terms of technology and management styles.

"We need to review how we have performed this past year and identify further enhancements required to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness and also determine priorities that will guide the development of work programmes

and budgets for 2020," she said.

The SG emphasized the role of staff in the effectiveness of the COMESA Secretariat in delivering on its mandate stating that aside from the elaborate planning and budgeting, the success of the organization will be determined by its human capital hence the need to place staff welfare as a priority.

In his remarks Mr. Mwencha, who is a former Deputy Chair of the African Union provided insights on global trends

in regional integration, the emerging challenges to globalization and the need for the region and Africa to stay the course. He stressed the need for COMESA to demonstrate the impact of its programmes and the benefits to Member States especially its highly successful institutions and trade facilitation tools.

The COMESA Secretariat is preparing the 2020 Work Programme and Budget for consideration by the Council of Ministers later this year.



Former SG Erastus Mwencha (middle) escorted by COMESA ASG Finance and Administration Dr Dave Haman (right) and Director of Legal Affairs Brian Chigawo (left)



Renewable Energy Strategy Validated



Delegates at the validation workshop on the development of a synthesized renewable energy and energy efficiency strategy for EA-SA-IO region.

The final draft of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan for from Eastern Africa Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean region (EA-SA-IO) has been validated. The strategy was validated in Lusaka, Zambia, during a workshop of energy experts hosted by COMESA through Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa (REARESA) on 21- 22 August 2019.

The strategy is expected to support the region address the production capacity of energy in the context of climate change challenges which are increasingly affecting generation of energy and the resultant cost of living. It is estimated that energy deficit causes about 2% loss of growth of gross domestic product (GDP) in most of our countries.

Participants to the validation workshop were drawn from ministries responsible for energy and regulators from the representative Regional Economic Communities as well as power utilities. Chief Executive Officer of the REARESA Dr Mohamedain Seif Elnasr officially opened the workshop.

Dr Elnasr said statistics for the region are an indication of the amount of work needed to be done to ensure that energy becomes a key enabler and game changer to doing business and increasing the productivity of industries.

"The challenges in our energy networks, as well as ever increasing deficiencies in energy supply are a common feature of our countries. These challenges contribute to

the reduction of revenue of our industries through increase in production costs," Dr Seif Elnasr said.

According to the world energy outlook 2014 factsheet, published by the international energy agency related to sub-Saharan Africa over the period to 2040, 950 million people are projected to gain access to electricity. Urban areas experience the largest improvement in the coverage and reliability of centralised electricity supply.

Elsewhere, mini-grid and off-grid systems provide electricity to 70% of those gaining access in rural areas. Cumulative investment of more than \$200 billion lowers the total without access by 15%: a major step forward, but not far enough, as it still leaves 530 million people in the region, primarily in rural communities, without electricity in 2040".

Acting Principal Energy Officer at the Ministry of Energy in Zambia, Mafayo Ziba thanked COMESA for coming up with an initiative that will see individual Member States tap into regional strategies for the development of renewable energy projects.

Mr Ziba who is a renewable energy expert implored all the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to take a regional approach to the development of energy production projects as Climate change is affecting not only parts of the region but all the countries.

"This is an important development as the project end results is an enhanced

regional energy market with a harmonised, efficient and gender- sensitive regulatory framework; and capacitated regional regulators and power pools to more effectively oversee and stimulate increased regional power trade," Mr Ziba said.

The programme on Enhancement of a Sustainable Regional Energy market in Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region (ESREM- EA/SA/IO) is an EU funded project and the beneficiaries of the programme include all the RECS in Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region including their energy regulatory associations and power pools.

The overall objective of the programme is to enhance a sustainable regional energy market in the EA-SA-IO region, which is conducive to investment and promoting sustainable development.

Further, the project aims at achieving an enhanced harmonized, efficient and gender-sensitive regulatory environment in the EA-SA-IO region; and capacitate regional regulatory associations and power pools to more effectively oversee and stimulate increased regional power trade. It is expected that this will stimulate an average increase of 10% in investment flows in energy generation and transmission projects in the region.

Coming Soon: New Capacity Building Programme for COMESA Secretariat



Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to the Republic of Zambia Mr. Gianluca Azzon addressing COMESA staff

COMESA and the European Union Commission conducted a validation workshop of the COMESA Institutional Capacity Building Programme, funded under the 11 EDF COMESA Sub envelope. The overall objective of the programme is to enhance the capacity of the COMESA Secretariat and its member states to deepen regional integration.

The meeting took place at the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka, on 23 August 2019. It brought together management and professional staff of COMESA to discuss and validate the action document for the Capacity Building

programme funded by the EU under the 11 EDF to a tune of Euro 7 Million.

The discussions were led by the Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Zambia, Mr. Gianluca Azzon and Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe.

The project will address organizational challenges and constraints that COMESA faces which have contributed to the reduction of effectiveness and efficiency of the Secretariat to deliver its mandate. It will support enhancement of key identified areas which include management, monitoring and evaluation process, procurement systems, financial

management and audit processes.

The programme will also provide support to implement the Statistics Strategy to support the development of statistical data on infrastructure, industrialization and ensure harmonization of gender statistics and ability to measure progress towards the attainment of targets on gender equality and empowerment of women.

The programme will also provide support to ensure COMESA communicates and makes visible its achievements. Under this initiative, the programme is expected to support the creation of ICT platforms to enhance effective communication between the Secretariat and stakeholders both internally and externally.

Linked to this, COMESA also needs to strengthen partnership through structured engagements with relevant stakeholders including at the level of donor coordination, networking with other organisations to exchange knowledge and skills, good practices and progress towards the achievement of common goals and commitments.

**Showcasing 2019
Eswatini International
Trade Fair.... P5**



Secretary General Kapwepwe(left) with EU Head of Cooperation at the EU Mr. Gianluca Azzon



Egypt welcomes 50 Million African Women Speak Networking Platform



Amb. Mona Omar (2nd right) flanked by Director for Gender and Social Affairs Mrs Beatrice Hamusonde (2nd left) and FEMCOM CEO Mrs. Ruth Negash (right), SOM AWS Project Manager David Sabiti (left)

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Egypt became the latest country to formally commence the implementation of the 50 Million African Women Speak Project (50MAWSP) on 21 August 2019, joining over 30 other states across the continent on an initiative to empower women entrepreneurs through a digital networking platform.

The launch of the 50 Million African Women Speak Project in Egypt took place in Cairo adding. The project aims at supporting African women in business through a platform which will provide easier access to information on financial and non-financial services, and in turn help women entrepreneurs grow their businesses.

It is a venture which is funded by the African Development Bank and is being jointly undertaken by three regional economic communities namely the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); East African Community (EAC) and; Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with a combined membership of 38 countries.

Presiding over the launch, the Board Chair of the Egyptian Women Council Amb. Mona Omar lauded the transformative potential of the project.

"Let me point out that the project has the potential to transform the role of women entrepreneurs in Egypt and Africa at large," Amb. Omar said.

"We all agree that women play a critical role in the social economic development of our economies despite the numerous challenges, some gender specific, that they encounter," she added, and explained that the 50 Million African Women Speak digital platform will be one way to overcome these challenges.

Studies have shown that Africa has a thriving start-up community with dynamic women entrepreneurs targeting new opportunities in sectors such as agriculture. One study has shown that Egyptian women account for at least 10% of all micro and small enterprises in the country. In addition, the African Economic Outlook 2017 also revealed that women in Africa are twice more likely to start a business than women elsewhere in the world.

The COMESA Director for Gender and Social Affairs Mrs. Beatrice Hamusonde who led the COMESA delegation at the launch explained that the platform development was now complete. The next step was updating the platform with content for the benefit of women entrepreneurs in the countries where the platform will be operational.

"Women entrepreneurs in Egypt and the region will use the platform to access information and linkages to business services, training and market opportunities," Mrs. Hamusonde stated.

"The platform will build a community of existing and potential women entrepreneurs who will act as peers, mentors and advisors to each other. This will allow women to share lessons, success stories as well as conduct business online with counterparts in Africa and beyond".

In a brief courtesy call, which preceded the official launch, Egyptian Minister of Trade and Industry HE Amr Nassar affirmed his country's commitment to the Project, stating: "I am a strong believer in the use of digital platforms to empower women."

When complete, the platform aims at connecting at least 50 million women across the African continent, providing information to help them grow their businesses as well as giving them opportunities to connect through a variety of networking features.

The launch of the project implementation team in Egypt is the second such activity in the COMESA Member States this year. A similar launch was done in Eritrea at the end of June. Similar launches are in the pipeline for Libya and Tunisia.



COMESA Secretariat will participate at the 51st Eswatini International Trade Fair which will take place from 30 August to 9 September 2019 at Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre. The theme for the year is "Eswatini is open for Business".

Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF) is

Showcasing 2019 Eswatini International Trade Fair

by far the Kingdom's only one stop trade event that attracts both international and local businesses to exhibit their products and services in a space of 10 days. Exhibitors will include service providers, financial institutions, tourism, manufacturers, technology, education, renewable energy, agri-business, government services and more.

This year, EITF will be more diverse as it invites even young entrepreneurs who are still starting up and aspire to grow their business to come showcase their products and services.

In its Corporate Communications Policy and Strategy, COMESA has identified trade fairs and expos as part of its

outreach techniques, to engage directly with its stakeholders. This approach is intended to raise public and stakeholders' awareness on regional integration programmes and encourage them to take advantage of the opportunities that COMESA provides.

COMESA will therefore take this opportunity to show case some of the services the organization provides to Member States. An information booth has been set up in Hall 1 booth C20 where various information resources on COMESA programmes and projects will be available for the visitors to get and get an understanding of how COMESA operates.

Green Pass Committee Set up at Border Points



Fish Trading at Luangwa Harbor in Zambia bordering Zimbabwe and Mozambique

Activities to roll out of the Green Pass and Mini-labs modalities have begun in the border of Luangwa, Mwami/Mchinji and Kasumbalesa on the Zambia-Malawi and Zambia-DR Congo borders.

The COMESA Green Pass Scheme was launched in December 2018 during a regional training workshop on fish/fisheries standards and handling methods. A follow up mission on the same borders was two weeks ago and attended by stakeholders from the fisheries value chain from DRC, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe,

The Green Pass is meant to facilitate and fast-track small scale cross border traders, by reducing the overall trading costs and minimizing disruptions. It will operate within the framework of the Simplified Trade Regime (STR).

COMESA has since established a Green Pass GP committee in Luangwa comprising officials from

fisheries department, fish traders, Zambia Revenue Authority, Luangwa District Council, Ministry of health and Immigration. The Committee will be coordinated by district Fisheries department coordinator.

Luangwa was selected as the pilot border as it is at the intersection of three countries in the Southern Africa region – Zambia; Mozambique and Zimbabwe, serving as a fish trade transit route for DRC, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola, through some of the targeted borders (Kasumbalesa between Zambia and DRC, Mwami/Mchinji, between Zambia and Malawi and Nakonde/Tunduma between Zambia and Tanzania).

Some of the duties of the Green Pass committee are ensure that testing of food products/fish should be done at the source, with only verification procedures conducted at the borders. This will ease the work and shortens the process.

The Committee shall also guarantee that Fish traders' associations implement self-regulation by putting in place internal rules and regulations as well as penalties to those that do not complying with the requirements

During the mission, COMESA conducted Fish Stakeholders meeting with representatives from the district councils, fisheries department, District Health, fish traders, Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), Trade Information Desk Officer (TIDO) and Police.

Traders requested the establishment of infrastructure facilities such as modern markets, fish processing facilities and weighing scales and platform scale for quantifying the fish statistical data.

COMESA Experts on Sanitary and Phytosanitary matters: Ms. Martha Byanyima, Dr. Mukayi Musaruwa and Ms. Regina Kayitesi led the Green Pass activities.