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PRESS RELEASE

Energy experts refer to the civil society's role as being "strategic" for the promotion of renewable energies in Africa

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – African and European Union energy experts have released a joint statement, describing the role of the civil societies as "strategic" for the implementation of renewable energies, adding that they could speed up the Africa-EU Energy Partnership's (AEEP) 2020 targets on energy security, energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

"We acknowledge the progress the AEEP has made in bringing energy access onto the development agenda," reads the joint statement, according to which the representatives of civil-society organizations must recognize the AEEP as a unique and important regional partnership that could improve millions of lives across the African continent. Furthermore, it is stressed that the partners "emphasize the potential and need for the AEEP and its members to quickly and dramatically increase efforts to bring energy to the energy poor."

Kevin Kinyangi, Climate and Energy Officer for HIVOS East Africa, revealed that less than 60 percent of East Africans have access to energy, describing the situation as disfavours the poor and less-empowered people.

Kinyangi added that stronger relationships between civil societies and parliamentarians in African states will facilitate energy legislations targeting millions of lives especially in rural areas.

"Unlike in the health sector, with a stronger advocacy from so many civil societies, the energy sector has only a few civil societies in West Africa. We need duty-free concessions on energy, tax incentives, and more women in decision making," pointed out Ishmael Edjekumhene, Executive Director of the Kumasi Institute of Technology and Environment.

Besides showing their concern about a squeeze in funding for civil-society groups in the energy sector across Africa, stakeholders also raised the importance of the media in creating awareness on the use of renewable energy sources – a clean, cost-effective, reliable, and cheap alternative.

Talking along similar lines, David Ebong, Managing Director of Clean Energy Partnership Africa Ltd., mentioned that donor funding should target small-scale producers and -consumers. He added that the partnership dialogue between governments, private sectors, and the civil societies was a key framework for promoting renewable energy in Africa.

Referring to the pivotal role of women in the use of energy for cooking, Agnes Kalekye Kithikii, a Kenyan expert with the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), stated that “women are not well-represented in promoting the use of clean energy such as biomass, solar energy, and wind energy. If they are included into policy implementation, they will be better-placed to increase the access to clean energy.”

The need for collaboration

The AEEP recognises the importance of civil societies in promoting renewable energy in Africa. It aims at mobilising increased financial, technical, and human resources-related support for increasing Africa’s energy supply. It also scales up European and African investments in energy infrastructure and in energy interconnections within Africa and between Africa and the EU.

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About the AEEP

The AEEP is a long-term framework for structured political dialogue and cooperation between Africa and the EU on energy issues of strategic importance, reflecting African and European needs. Through the partnership, Africa and Europe will work together to develop a shared vision and common policy answers, and to stimulate specific actions to expand access to energy, to achieve greater energy security and to maximise the contribution of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

AEEP stands for Africa European Union Energy Partnership.

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