

**Conclusions from AEEP & REN21 Scoping Meeting at Vienna Energy Forum; Pan-African energy transition initiative - *facilitating clarity and value addition through harmonization***

**Vienna, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015, 16.00 – 18.00**

As a follow-up to a development partners coordination meeting held in New York at the occasion of the SE4ALL forum, the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) and REN21 invited key stakeholders to meet in the sidelines of the Vienna Energy Forum, 2015 to discuss potential coordination and harmonization strategies of energy initiatives operating in Africa, with a particular focus on renewable energy initiatives.

The meeting launched with the acknowledgment from participants that coordination of the numerous energy initiatives in Africa is in fact necessary; however, establishing an effective structural framework remains a significant challenge. The African Union Commission particularly called for coordination efforts, as the numerous initiatives, international organizations, bilateral partnerships and public private partnerships overwhelm their ability to track and manage at the continental level. Moreover, the representative from the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), highlighted the significance of the G7 conclusions in prioritizing renewable energy promotion in Africa and a need to coordinate and harmonize the efforts of the many organizations working in this field.

With the need for coordination established, the objective of the meeting in Vienna was therefore to collect initial proposals on concrete actions and frameworks which could improve and inspire coordination among major stakeholders working on promoting sustainable energy development in Africa. In initiating a coordination effort in Africa, participants warned against creating an additional structure that would add complexity to the existing framework of institutions, rather than add value in coordination. As such, the participants agreed on a light approach to strengthen key linkages among all major energy initiatives in Africa. As such it was recognized that the optimal framework would be to utilize the framework of SE4ALL with desirable lead from the African Union Commission with active involvement of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and support from AEEP, REN21 and key stakeholders present at the meeting. Moreover, it was agreed that there was a need for strong African leadership of the coordination effort, and that partners assist African counterparts in implementation.

Valuable insights were contributed by a representative from UNEP, sharing key success factors and lessons learned from the UN's experience in coordinating energy activities (UN Energy);

- ▶ Take-stock of current initiatives (inventory) – a mapping process as the first step to establish status-quo
- ▶ Establish a strong political leadership (in this case mainly African), and possibly a high level Champion to drive processes forward
- ▶ Keep to a light structure – framework needs to be simple
- ▶ Ensure a clear value proposition for participation of all actors involved

Moderator Mike Enskat of the EU Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility (EUEI-PDF) encouraged participants to come up with a prioritization of needs in the context of coordination in order to concretize an action plan for the effort. As such, the participants jointly drafted an initial “to do list” of possible action points from which a coordination effort should focus as a priority;

**Conduct a General Mapping Exercise of Existing Frameworks and Initiatives;**

Echoing a critical success factor brought up by the UNEP experience, participants agreed that a critical initial activity is to map existing initiatives, as well as coordination and collaborative bodies working both at the country and sector levels in Africa in order to understand the “puzzle” and where overlaps, tensions and significant gaps exist. This action area was initially called for at the G20 summit in Turkey, acknowledging that there is a wide variety of information on the topic, however not a one-stop source to access the full picture. The collection and amalgamation of such information could be a clear value proposition for a coordination initiative.

**Assist in Quality Monitoring of Energy Initiatives;**

Representatives from African institutions highlighted a need for additional capacities and assistance in quality monitoring. With numerous initiatives operating in many cases within the same regions, an overview of the quality of the outcomes and impacts is rarely undertaken. With particular consideration to the fact that energy system development is a critical infrastructure and a key driver of economic development, monitoring of quality and efficacy of the programmes was an area where support could be undertaken by a coordination body, or collective effort.

**Recommendations for Policy Framework Design;**

A proposed additional function of the coordination initiative would be to focus on capacity building and knowledge transfer between African countries and initiatives regarding efficient procurement procedures and guidelines. The participants heard from the South African representation that significant financial losses and barriers to implementation exist in the procurement process in Africa, and thus a contribution to the coordination effort could be to disseminate best practices and knowledge on procurement policy design to countries and initiatives.

**Provide Support to African Nations to Establish Action Investment Plans Under the SE4ALL Framework;**

Under the framework of the SE4ALL, many African nations have initiated action plans toward achieving the three pillars under the SE4ALL target. While these action plans have proved to initiate concrete actions and energy system development in some African countries, others lack the capacities to undertake such a task. Therefore, an additional proposal to the participants was for the coordination effort to support African countries in designing an action plan and monitoring the implementation.

As a follow-up, participants agreed to continue the discussion and concretize the initial action plan in Addis Ababa in the sidelines of the Financing for Development Conference in July to incorporate the larger development community and international donors, as well as to bring the discussion to South Africa for the SAIREC to announce the coordination framework to key stakeholders at the event.

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