



Press Summary

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Second Stakeholder Forum of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) “Business and Science: Leading the way to sustainable energy”

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The Second Stakeholder Forum of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) took place from 16-17 May 2016 at the Politecnico di Milano (POLIMI), Italy, with the theme: “Business and science: leading the way to sustainable energy”. The meeting which came at a time of special attention on energy in Africa, was jointly hosted by Italian Government and the African and European Co-Chairs of the AEEP: the African Union Commission (AUC) and the European Commission.

The meeting was attended by over 400 African and European political leaders, the private sector, high-level experts and heads of international energy institutions, as well as members of civil society and academia. Day 1 of the Forum, the 16th of May, was primarily a technical, thematic stakeholder day. H.E. Mario Giro, Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy described the Day 1’s purpose, “The main goal is to facilitate partnership combining the business with the contribution of academia”. The participation of youth within the Forum was also seen as crucial, with 11 Young Scientist and Entrepreneurs and a 8 Young Journalist selected from Africa and the EU to participate, document the Forum and present their ideas and projects. Master of Ceremony, Ms. Lerato Mbele, highlighted the importance of younger participation by stating, “They are our future”.

To open the discussions, H.E Dr Elham Ibrahim, High Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African Commission launched a question to the public, “How it is possible that in the 21st century Africa, with its vast potential and with the technological breakthroughs be still an energy poor country?” A lot has been achieved throughout that last couple of decades but there are over 500 million people in Africa that still lack access to reliable and clean energy. To provide this issue with real solutions participants met in two plenary panel discussions on: innovating and investing in the energy sector in Africa; and coordinating and aligning initiatives to meet the AEEP Targets. During the discussions, two new AEEP reports were launched: the ‘Status Report Update: 2016 – A mid-term report on progress, achievements and future perspectives’ and ‘Mapping of Energy Initiatives and Programs in Africa: Final Report’.

The Mapping of Energy Initiatives and Programs showcased that some of the 2020 political targets have been already been surpassed but there are still challenges, such as fostering further engagement of the civil society. Dr. Daniel Schroth, SE4All Africa Hub Coordinator, African Development Bank highlighted that coordination in three levels is needed: continental, regional and national, to meet the AEEP targets.

During the afternoon session, the Forum was divided into three key themes: Energy Access, Energy Efficiency and Energy Security. These topics were discussed in two separate blocks through the afternoon resulting in a total of six breakout sessions organized by AEEP’s Stakeholder Action Groups.

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Energy Access

The first Energy Access breakout session focused on capacity building for project developers. Lessons learned from the successful roll-out and scale-up of energy access business models and programmes were approached, with a focus on developers to “reach the last mile first”. The main conclusion was the need to create synergies between different actors. According to Felice Zaccheo, Deputy Head of Unit, Sustainable Energy and Climate Change – DG DEVCO European Commission, “Energy access is on top of our agenda ... With €2.5 billion energy budget for Africa until 2020 the EU is fully committed to sustain an African-driven process”. Coordination between the EU and the public and private sector is key for measuring results and essential to avoid duplication of efforts and initiatives. Lastly, one panelist remarked that community participation is necessary for energy projects to reach the last mile.

The second Energy Access breakout session focused on capacity building within the public sector to facilitate an increase in private investment and financing. A particular emphasis was placed on the experiences for the SE4ALL initiative.

Energy Efficiency

The Energy Efficiency sessions investigated strategies for incorporating energy efficiency into energy policy discussions within Africa; as well as in the follow up of initiatives launched at the Paris Climate Change Conference. It was stated that these will have significant implications for the energy sectors in emerging and developing countries. The importance of local political ownership and governance structures to drive energy efficiency in urban areas and the necessity of strengthening public sector capacities to facilitate increase of private investment and financing were addressed. Professor Emanuela Colombo, Rector’s Delegate to Cooperation and Development, Politecnico di Milano, Italy, explained the idea to breakdown energy efficiency by showing strategies for Africa. She detailed that, “Security efficiency is especially urgent for non-renewable energy sources such as oil and gas”.

Energy Security

The first Energy Security panel discussed the necessity of improving security access, regional integration and energy security in both Africa and Europe through cross-border transmission and power pools. Different panelists agreed on the importance of focusing on every countries individual potential. The speakers discussed the progress made on developing a legal harmonized regulatory framework for the energy sector in Africa to improve the electricity market, “We have to eliminate the barriers to make the system works”, said Mr. Peter Kinuthia, Senior Energy Officer, East African Community.

The second Energy Security panel: *Energy and Climate, After Paris, what now for energy and climate policy?* addressed two primary areas: what the COP21 was and what will the implications for Africa be. The discussion determined that COP 21 offers a transition into new regulations but that greater investments are needed with a focus on entrepreneurship and state participation. As Dr.Roberto Vigotti, Director, Renewable Energy Solutions for the Mediterranean (RES4MED) pointed out: “skills development is a pressing need in renewable energy development”.

During the closing session, the AEEP Secretariat was invited by Renewable Energy Solutions for the Mediterranean (RES4MED) to a business networking session in Rome in two days before formally launching RES4AFRICA in October in Kenya.

About the AEEP: *The Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) constitutes one of the initial eight partnerships under the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), a long-term framework for cooperation between the two continents. The African Union Commission, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat, Egypt, the European Commission, Germany and Italy are the Steering Group members providing political guidance to the Partnership. AEEP Secretariat is hosted by the Partnership Dialogue Facility (EUEI PDF) which is an instrument of the EU Energy Initiative (EUEI).*