

We must unite for a prosperous future for our region, powered by renewable energy and energy efficiency

by Sustainable Energy Access Forum (SEAF) – East and Southern Africa

A famous fable entitled “The Four Oxen and the Lion” best illustrates the sustainable energy challenge of East and Southern Africa. A Lion (energy poverty) used to prowl about a field in which several Oxen (those without access to basic energy services) used to dwell. Over the years, because each of the oxen grazed on its own, the lion had claimed the lives of many. But in a certain year they gathered together and came up with a solution – they would gang-up together with the young, sick and other weak ones (the energy poor) in the centre while the strong ones turned their tails to one another to form a strong united circle of resistance to the lion. Since then, none of them died, for whenever the lion attacked them, he never succeeded because whichever way he approached them he was met by the two strong horns of one of the oxen.

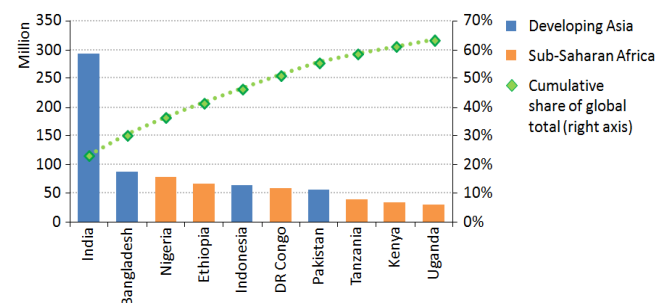
Thus the story goes, our region has since time immemorial tried to address energy poverty in a piece-meal approach and hence we have failed; nature and human health continues to be derailed due to our dependence on traditional energy services in our region. Like the Oxen what is needed is to pool our technical, financial and human resources together to fight this lion of energy poverty. There is no other way we must unite if we are to secure a prosperous future where all energy needs are met from clean, affordable, renewable and accessible energy services.

The people of Eastern Africa especially face unique some challenges in regard to energy poverty; five of the ten electricity poorest countries in the world are found here. They are Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda.

The majority of the population in these 5 countries use firewood and charcoal for their cooking needs. They are utilized through traditional technologies such as the popular three-stone fire-stoves that is one of the most common features in kitchens across Africa. The direct result of such inefficient use of wood fuel is the alarming rate of deforestation that sees no less than 1.2 million hectares of forests lost every year across just five Eastern Africa countries; Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Uganda and Kenya. A hectare is a football pitch; the area of forests lost every year in our region is equivalent to over 1.2 million football pitches! This high rate of deforestation has seen an increase in poverty through higher wood fuel costs and more time spent in the collection of firewood. This has had a heavier effect on women and children. In Uganda, the

Countries with the largest population without access to electricity, 2010

WORLD
ENERGY
OUTLOOK
2012



Over 95% of those without electricity are in developing Asia or sub-Saharan Africa & nearly two-thirds are in just ten countries

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distance travelled to collect firewood has exponentially increased by over 15 times between 1992 and 2002 from 0.06 km to 0.9 km. This exacerbates human development conditions, especially for the most vulnerable people.

The majority of people in Sub-Saharan Africa depend on kerosene-powered hurricane and tin lamps to light their homes. Due to the high cost of kerosene and the poor lighting from such lamps, many children from these homes are unable to revise and do their homework in the evenings leading to poor performance in schools, which traps them in the poverty cycle.

In addition, the Eastern African countries spend over USD\$5 billion annually to import petroleum which are consumed in the transport sector. But more importantly the bulk of the petroleum imports are used in producing electricity, which only serves less than 19% of the population in the region. To overcome these energy challenges just like the proverbial lion and the oxen fable above depicts, our region will require a united effort to tackle energy poverty by sharing lessons and coordinating the required technical, financial and human resources to harness renewable energy and energy efficiency opportunities. It is upon this basis that the Sustainable Energy Access Forum (SEAF) for East and Southern Africa has come into being.

What is SEAF?

Sustainable access to modern energy services is a prerequisite to improvements in poor communities' livelihoods and environments as well as their education, gender equality, access to information and better health. With this in mind, a consortium that utilizes the principle of Public Private Partnership (PPP) and which brings together a myriad of organizations, companies and agencies has been recently established to address the challenges of access to modern energy services in East and Southern Africa through what is called, the Sustainable Energy Access Forums (SEAF) for East and Southern Africa.

This SEAF currently includes the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Practical Action, Bare Foot Power, Global Village Partnership (GVEP), SNV Netherlands, Tanzania Renewable Energy Association (TAREA) and is expected to grow to include more civil society, private sector as well as government agencies involved in sustainable energy access initiatives across the region.

This forum is brought around a common belief that once renewable energy solutions are provided with a joint thrust through sufficient policy, technological and institutional support frameworks, East and Southern Africa can secure a sustainable pathway towards access to modern energy services for all. For this to happen, the region has to address some key barriers that include limited financing, lack of consumer awareness, poor technology and ineffective policies.

SEAF believes that more financing for renewable energy should be provided and at the same time fossil-fuel subsidies should be done away with. The national governments, regional government, civil society, individuals and the private sector should champion consumer awareness on sustainable energy. Finally and most importantly, technology transfer and innovations should be encouraged to ultimately aid in the provision of renewable energy services for the poor.

We need renewable energy now

We as Africans now know more about renewable energy than we did 10 years ago, and have the solutions that will pave the way for greater access to modern energy services, we have become more experienced and aware of the energy potential around us.

Key drivers have spurred this growth in renewable energy solutions such as the population growth in Sub-Sahara Africa that far outpaces grid connection, thus implying an increasing off-grid population. In addition, the declining access to cheap fuel-wood is driving more communities to search for alternative low cost solutions by way of more energy-efficient cooking appliances. The rapidly increasing mobile phone subscriber population in Africa is another key driver, which emphasizes the need for better and cheaper mobile phone charging options. Finally, the large and growing expenditure on non-renewable fuels for lighting (due in part to rising fuel costs), estimated to be approximately USD 13-17 billion in Africa has forced many Governments to go back to the drawing board and seek new and lasting solutions to their energy needs.

Our SEAF Commitments for 2014

Together the partners cooperating under SEAF have committed to deliver solutions to sustainable energy access that will reach over 6 million people targeting key barriers to renewable and sustainable energy developments in East and Southern Africa in 2014.

We commit to:

1) Enable at least 1.7 million people across Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya to access modern energy services (WWF: will enable at least 12,000 new households in the Kasese Clean Energy Champion District of Uganda to access either clean lighting and/or clean cooking solutions. Barefoot Power: will enable 100,000 homes in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to access solar lighting. GVEP: will enable 1.6 million people to access modern energy services, such as lighting, phone charging, cooking, and heating);

2) Provide USD\$ 6.5 million to enable growth and expansion of the supported sustainable energy enterprises (GVEP: will provide at least USD\$6.5 million in financing to enable growth and expansion of the supported sustainable energy enterprises through guaranteed and non-guaranteed bank loans, equity and grants. Enable 340 SMEs to be on renewable energy (solar, ICS, briquettes) targeting urban and peri-urban areas while establishing an Energy Guarantee Fund to support financial access to the SMEs);

3) Reach over 8 million people across Eastern Africa with information and knowledge on sustainable energy and renewable energy solutions (Barefoot Power: has committed to reach 500,000 with solar energy messages. TAREA: has committed to reach 6 million people in Tanzania. WWF: estimates to reach at least 2 million people across the region. Practical Action: will hold 12 media briefings and produce 4 documentaries as part of campaigns and advocacy on universal access to energy);

4) Provide improved knowledge, business and technical advisory services on sustainable energy to 740 micro, small and medium energy enterprises; over 50 district local government staff, and 100 CSOs (WWF: will empower at least 100 CSOs on sustainable energy. TAREA: will train 56 district local government personnel on renewable energy in 28 districts. GVEP: to provide 450 micro, small and medium energy enterprises with advisory and mentoring services in business and technical aspects in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Rwanda. Practical Action: will develop an energy map showing actors and technologies to identify energy access gaps in Kenya. Practical Action: to support 340 SMEs on renewable energy (solar, ICS, briquettes) targeting urban and peri-urban households and establish an Energy Guarantee Fund to support financial access to the SMEs);

5) Create at least 1,300 employment opportunities in the supported sustainable energy enterprises “green jobs” including specifically 200 youth entrepreneurs (Barefoot Power: will train and support 200 youth entrepreneurs. GVEP: will create at least 1,155 employment opportunities in the supported sustainable energy enterprises “green jobs”);

6) Collaborate and coordinate their resources as well as activities towards a common agenda on sustainable energy as well as recruit new partners into the SEAF partnership (WWF: will facilitate the activities of at least two national level partnerships on collaborating efforts amongst government, civil society and private sector actors on sustainable energy in at least 2 countries);

7) Provide awareness and sensitization to 400 members of parliament in Tanzania as well as review the Kenya Energy Bill and Energy Policy, as well as the EAC Energy Access Strategy (TAREA: to sensitize 400 members of parliament and related officers on the importance of the renewable energy policy and net metering scheme. WWF: to coordinate partners in the review of the Kenya Energy Bill and Energy Policy; as well as the EAC Energy Access Strategy. Practical Action: to hold consultative forum with EAC Energy Unit, to advocate for CSOs engagement in planning and delivery of energy access in the region);

8) Increase national and regional attention to the gender equality dimensions of energy access and sustainable energy development (Practical Action: to build capacity of at least 50 energy project planners and implementers to mainstream gender in energy delivery at both county and National level in Kenya. This will reach indirectly over 5 million people.)

The future for renewable energy solutions and access in East and Southern Africa is bright. With these solutions, we will no longer be asking ourselves whether we live in an electricity poor country but more mundanely, how were we living in an electricity poor country before.

 Barefoot Go	<i>Do you have a personal commitment on renewable energy you wish to share? Then let us know by texting as follows; “I [your name] commits to by end of 2014”. Example “I MELISA COMMIT TO START USING SOLAR LIGHTING BY END OF 2014” Send your commitment through our website before 30th June, 2014 and stand a chance of winning these fabulous solar products donated courtesy of Barefoot Power.</i>	 Barefoot Go
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