REPORT

ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF CSOS AND PRIVATE SECTOR IN REALIZING ENERGY ACCESS IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

Kigali, Rwanda

December 13-14, 2022

+237 672734521

info.acsea@acsea54.org

www.acsea54.org

Sub-Saharan Africa consists of all nations that are located south of the Sahara Desert, which typically includes all African nations, excluding countries in North Africa. This region has strong reserves of natural resources and is the richest region on the planet in terms of mineral resources. Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest electricity access levels of 31% compared to other developing regions. The major problems of the electricity sector are low consumption levels, high electricity costs, unequal access, unreliable supply, and power shortages. In order to increase access to electricity, the performance of the energy sector must be improved in areas of governance, access to finance, and increasing regional trade. It is for the purpose of increasing access to energy in this region that CSOs, government representatives and partners in the RE sector met in Kigali to discuss the impeding factors to energy access and to propose possible solutions to increase access to sustainable energy.

In the opening session, it was discussed that due to decreasing income levels Sub Saharan nations need to be supported in acquiring sustainable energy which does not come cheap. About 1.5trillion dollars from 2015 to 2050 to ensuring energy access in Africa. There is a need to understand the scale of the problem of access to energy which is a solvable problem. The demand for energy is enough to boost the transformation of the abundant available energy potential. It goes without saying that energy is the driving force of development at all levels. It was noted that by 2016, 59% of the total investments from the ADB towards the energy sector were for renewable energy. By 2019, this investment had increased to 75%. This shows the commitment of the ADB and its partners to achieving access to RE.

More often, technology financing tends to be unappropriated-oversized or undersized and the frustration is on both the developer and the financing institution. According to the ADB, the issue with finance for RE is in the bankability of the project. Otherwise, Capital can be provided almost free (cheap capital). Nations still need to do more advocacy, creating awareness and building capacity. In this regard, emphasis was laid on the need for both developers and the financing institutions to have adequate information on energy demands.
Solving the problem of finance is half-way to solving the problem of energy access in this region. However, when soliciting for funds for RE projects the following should be taken into consideration;

Focus areas

- ·Affordability of finance
- ·Availability of technical and bankable proposals
- ·Availability of innovative technology
- ·The place of evidenced based research cannot be overemphasized.
- Durability of the innovation/project.

The role of CSOs in improving access to RE cannot be overemphasized. It was highlighted that CSOs face challenges in exploiting RE resources for both micro and macro uses. These challenges could be overcome by;

Possible solutions

- ·Creating a network of CSOs that governments can engage in an ongoing basis.
- ·Strengthening the CSOs sector working groups on energy and climate.
- ·Harnessing a broad policy system to consider cross-sectoral synergies.
- ·CSOs are encouraged to engage in evidence-based research to generate a data ecosystem to ensure it communicates the changes and aspirations we want to drive (under the research, need for collaboration between governments and CSOs and technical institutions.

Notwithstanding, it is paramount for CSOs and the private sector to collaborate and be on the same page as far as advancing RE access is concerned. The role of the private sector needs to be amplified and its involvement in RE investments should be facilitated by the issue of governance. The capacities of financial institutions need to be built so that they do not view investment in RE from just a risky perspective.

As discussions evolved, it was projected that the demand for energy for production and services in Africa would expand rapidly between 2020 and 2030. This demand is driven by:

- ·Increase use of air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machine, and fans
- ·Increase in the demand for energy for industrial development.
- Increase in the use of energy in the agricultural sector.

From this demand perspective, the need to add value to energy production to meet future energy exigences was accentuated. This entails powering up energy output for the agricultural, industrial and the service sectors. In order to have sustainable access to RE, it is imperative that Sub Saharan nations achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG7) by 2030. These goals include:

- ·Ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
- ·Increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix
- ·Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency
- ·Enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology
- ·Expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programs of support.

On energy governance, participants urged governments within the Sub-Saharan region to develop policy frameworks that respond to the needs of the population. Inadequate policies and regulations, rather than insufficient funding, is the main reason for Africa's failure to exploit its huge renewable energy potential. Minimizing administrative bottlenecks that impede the exploitation of RE resources in the region would go a long way in increasing access to sustainable RE sources. Solving the problem of access to RE would subtly reduce energy security and affordability, increase job creation, future economic strategic positioning, and address environmental and other externalities.

In recent years, the call has been made on the need for nations to transit to RE sources. This transition must be just and accessible to the maximum population. In a conclusive statement, stakeholders in the energy sector were called upon to work in conjunction in order to improve access to RE in the Sub-Saharan region. this can be achieved through;

- ·The building of an operational framework to assess governance and evaluate progress over time.
- ·Improve communication and create a platform for environmental and social voices.
- ·Build the capacity of major groups and governments to practice good governance.
- To complement efforts that advance public interest.