

Press Release

Brussels, 20 March 2020

New ARE President kicks off first activities with new partner SACREEE to improve energy access in Southern Africa

20 March 2020 – The Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE) held its Annual General Meeting on 17 March 2020 and appointed Claudio Pedretti (CEO, WindKinetic) as its new President, replacing Vivian Vendeirinho (Founder & Managing Director, RVE.SOL) who stepped down after serving two years as President and four years as a Board Member. To support its strategic objectives of building a sustainable decentralised renewable energy industry for the 21st century, activating markets for affordable energy services, and creating local jobs and inclusive economies, ARE Members also adopted the working programme with new key partners and initiatives for 2020.

Claudio Pedretti, new ARE President in his acceptance speech stated that: *“ARE plays a crucial role in the development of off-grid markets. As the newly elected President of ARE, I am proud and honoured to represent the interests of 150 Members, who altogether represent a large and very active part of our common “rural electrification” mission. In light of the off-grid’s sectors needs to foster partnerships, I am also delighted to announce that ARE has now entered into a new cooperation agreement with SACREEE to improve energy access services in Southern Africa.”*

Claudio Pedretti is the founder and CEO of WindKinetic, NexuS Energy and Clean Climate Ventures. He brings over 10 years of experience in industrial applications in demanding markets such as oil & gas, telecom, mining as well as rural electrification. His companies have worked to power off-grid electrical devices in remote settings. He will serve as ARE’s President till 2024.

“The Alliance is delighted to welcome its new Board leadership. I trust that with the new President and two new Board of Directors - Steve Wasira (Business Development Vice President, Virunga Power) and Alexis Rehbindler (PV Project Manager, Générale du Solaire), the industry will be in a good position to to upscale clean energy access.” says **Marcus Wiemann, ARE Executive Director**.

The major achievements of ARE in 2019 were presented at the meeting include (but not limited to) the mobilisation of 1,250 key stakeholders to deliver energy access in low- and medium-income countries and the facilitation of more than 600 B2B matchmaking meetings with its partner GET.invest to create investable project pipelines.

The association, which saw a growth of 46 new ARE Members in 2019, will continue to serve the Membership in 2020 through the:

- Expansion of ARE’s B2B services
- Establishment of ARE as a key industry thought leader on policy and regulation

- Development of further programmes to enable access to finance and risk mitigation
- Implementing capacity building programmes

SACREEE and ARE announce new partnership

In preparation of the postponed 6th ARE Energy Access Investment Forum (EAIF; new dates to be shared shortly) a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by SACREEE and ARE to deepen collaborations in southern Africa by:

- pursuing areas of collaboration through the identification and development of programmes and projects on matters of mutual interest;
- developing policy recommendations for decision makers in the SADC region to create a conducive market environment;
- supporting the dissemination and upscaling of decentralised renewable energies with a specific focus on cross-sectoral collaborations and micro- / mini-grids;
- supporting SMEs and start-ups in the clean decentralised energy sector working across the SADC; and by
- collaborating on key off-grid events such as EAIF Zambia.

Kudakwashe Ndhlukula, SACREEE Executive Director confirms: *“The MoU comes at a particularly exciting moment, as SACREEE has been mandated to play a key role in the implementation of the recently adopted Southern Africa Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan (REEESAP). Drawing from REEESAP, SADC Member States will develop national Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Strategies and Action Plans and thus kick-start national processes to accelerate energy transitions in the region. The Member States are progressively opting for distributed renewables to improve energy access for rural populations as well as low-income communities and peri-urban areas.”*

David Lecoque, ARE Senior Policy & Business Development Manager adds: *“The MoU establishes a framework for cooperation between SACREEE and ARE, with the common objective of increasing access to modern energy services and to improve energy security across the SADC Region through the promotion of market-based uptake of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and services.”*

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For further information or request images please contact:

Ling Ng
Communications and Marketing Manager
+32 2 709 55 42
l.ng@ruralelec.org

Note to the editor

The [Alliance for Rural Electrification \(ARE\)](#) is an international business association with the aim to promote a sustainable decentralised renewable energy industry for the 21st century, activating markets for affordable energy services, and creating local jobs and inclusive

economies. ARE enables improved energy access through business development support for more than 150 Members along the whole value chain for off-grid technologies.

Steve Wasira is currently the Vice President, Business Development at Virunga Power. He has over 10 years working experience in infrastructure project development in emerging markets. He specialises in energy project development and transactions in emerging markets, leading a workstream of projects in their development from the conceptual stage to financing particularly in the African market.

Alexis Reh binder is the PV Project Manager of Générale du Solaire. He set up a dedicated business unit within GDS International to develop mini-grids for rural and remoted areas, with the objective of providing a sustainable solution to the energy access issue in emerging countries.

The [Southern African Development Community \(SADC\) Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency \(SACREEE\)](#) was established as a subsidiary organisation of SADC, by the SADC Ministers responsible for Energy in July 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa and endorsed by the 35th SADC Council of Ministers Meeting in August 2015 in Gaborone, Botswana. Based in Windhoek, Namibia, SACREEE was established to contribute towards increased access to modern energy services and improved energy security across the SADC Region through the promotion of market-based uptake of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and energy services. SACREEE, among others, acts as a: think tank, lobbying agent and advisory platform for renewable energy & energy efficiency; and facilitator for capacity building, knowledge and technology transfer in SADC.

