

20 April – 15:00 to 16:30 CEST

Paving the Way for a Clean Energy Transition with Decentralised Renewable Energy (PWCET) Series

The Importance of Decentralised
Renewable Energy in
achieving the Sustainable
Development Goals (SDGs)



Introduction

The new joint initiative by [Alliance for Rural Electrification](#) (ARE) and [Green People's Energy](#) (GBE) titled '*Paving the way for Clean Energy Transition with Decentralised Renewable Energy (PWCET) Series*' **opened with great success** during the Digital Marketplace for Green Energy Transition day at the [EU – Africa Business Forum](#) (EABF) on 20 April 2021, **attracting the participation of more than 200 people from EU, Africa and beyond.**

The launch event of the PWCET Series managed to bring together key stakeholders to **discuss decentralisation of energy systems to respond to increased energy demand in Sub-Saharan Africa and power the green recovery after the pandemic, both of which are critical elements of the clean energy transition.** As a result, decentralised renewable energy (DRE) was discussed as one of the topics at the high-level EU Africa event.

The Partners chose to open the PWCET Series at the EABF given its **importance as a key event bringing EU and African stakeholders together under one roof.** Additionally, a core theme of the EABF was the "EU-Africa partnership for green energy transformation", which is closely related to the objective of the PWCET Series, which is to "promote public discourse on the subject of the 'clean energy transition' with decentralised renewable energy (DRE) in Sub-Saharan Africa."

Event Summary

The PWCET series was opened by Mr. Deepak Mohapatra, Policy & Business Development Officer at ARE who stood in for Mr. David Lecoque, CEO at ARE.

Subsequently, Mrs. Dorothea Otremba, Senior Advisor, GIZ carried on with the proceedings of the session as the moderator.

Mrs. Bärbel Höhn, Special Representative for Energy in Africa, The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development (BMZ) and former member of the German Bundestag gave a keynote speech where she introduced the GBE initiative and talked about the Paris Agreement and SGD7 along with outlining the importance of decentralised renewable energy to achieve global electrification goals, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

She also shared her experiences with regards to the clean energy transition in Germany and emphasised three important aspects that decision-makers can take note of to be successful in achieving clean energy transition in their countries:

- Need for stronger political will;
- Facilitation of sustainable solutions; and
- Tailored funding mechanisms.

Mr. Jens Jaeger, Policy & Business Development Manager at ARE then presented an industry association viewpoint on where the world stands in terms of energy access efforts, the hindrance created by the pandemic and what can be done to achieve a green recovery in SSA with the DRE sector playing an important role.

Mr. Jaeger introduced ARE and the services it provides to the private and public sector in the DRE industry. In addition, with practical examples like ARE-GBE cooperation and the ARE-UNIDO cooperation, he stressed the potential of successful partnerships in the DRE industry for the achievement of common goals. Mr. Jaeger also talked about ARE's COVID-19 strategy and the upcoming Green Recovery Programme.

ARE Members ACCESS SA and ENGIE Energy Access then presented concrete projects on the ground. Mr. Ibrahim Togola, Chairman and Co-Founder, ACCESS SA from Mali, talked about his experiences and highlighted the key challenges in providing energy access to rural communities in West Africa, particularly in Mali, such as:

- Financing;
- Affordability: Tariff dispute over electricity from the grid and DRE projects;
- Energy Security;
- Reliance on traditional biomass;
- Lack of technical expertise/education/capacity building; and
- Climate change and insecurities – Conflict zones.

In addition, he also shared some experiences from successful DRE projects focusing on sustainable rural electrification using solar hybrid systems that ACCESS have been implementing in Mali to address some of the above-mentioned challenges.

The final contribution was done by Ms. Mukabanji Mutanuka, Head of Mini-Grids, ENGIE Energy Access, Zambia, who provided insights on ENGIE Energy Access' mini-grid strategy. In particular, she highlighted how the company is working to provide 360-degree support with its technology and services when it comes to energy access such as generation & storage, distribution, and remote monitoring & analysis. She also outlined that with access to energy, the consumption profile of the communities will rise over time. To support this uptake in demand, she presented the following key enablers for the ENGIE Mini-Grid model:

- Operational reliability & scale up of mini-grids;
- Selling appliances;
- Developing productive use; and
- Developing New Services.

Thereafter an engaging moderation panel discussion took place where the audience also had the opportunity to actively interact with the panellists by asking questions via the chat.

The discussion highlighted that COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an unprecedented economic crisis as shown by the collapse of stock markets, slump in air travels, and major disruptions to global production and supply chain. The DRE sector has shown tremendous resilience and has once again proven its worth by providing uninterrupted power supply in remote areas e.g. remote healthcare facilities and also opens many prospects for life-saving vaccines and delivery to geographically challenging locations.

So, all in all, it is well established from the interventions and moderated panel discussion that the DRE sector is essential and can play a pivotal role in the way towards clean energy transition. There are a plethora of applications ranging from crops and food produce processing, cold storage, e-mobility, access to water, healthcare, education and the list goes on. The PWCET Series is an honest effort by the Partners to display that the means to achieve the clean energy transition are present, all it needs now are four elements:

- Leadership
- Innovation
- Cooperation
- Funding

It requires a fresh approach characterised by voluntarism and optimism, the two ingredients that Europe and Africa together have in abundance.

After the panel discussion, Mrs. Otremba thanked the panellists for their contribution and the audience for their active involvement.

To close the session, Mr. Mohapatra once again thanked everyone for the successful proceeding of the launch event. He also called for the audience to get in touch with ARE and GBE to learn more about how they can be assisted with their journey in the DRE sector.

Annex 1: Session Programme

Opening and Welcome	Mr. David Lecoque , CEO, ARE
Keynote Speech	Mrs. Bärbel Höhn , Special Representative for Energy in Africa, The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development (BMZ) and former member of the German Bundestag
Intervention 1	Mr. Jens Jaeger , Policy & Business Development Manager, ARE
Intervention 2	Mr. Ibrahim Togola , Chairman and Co-Founder, ACCESS SA, Mali
Intervention 3	Ms. Mukabanji Mutanuka , Head of Mini-grids, ENGIE Energy Access, Zambia
Moderated Panel Discussion and Audience Q&A	Moderator: Mrs. Dorothea Otremba , Senior Advisor, GIZ Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bärbel Höhn• Jens Jaeger• Ibrahim Togola• Mukabanji Mutanuka
Closing Remarks by Mr. David Lecoque , CEO, ARE	

Annex 2: Partners' description

About GBE

Dr. Gerd Müller, the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, announced a new initiative, named Green People's Energy for Africa (GBE) in June 2017. This initiative aims to enable, expand and secure the supply of sustainable energy in rural Africa. It is part of the Marshall Plan with Africa and relies on the broad participation of small and medium-sized enterprises, municipalities, cooperatives, public associations and citizens.

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About ARE

Established in 2006, Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE) is the global business association representing the whole decentralised renewable energy sector for rural electrification in developing and emerging countries.

With more than 175 Members, ARE aims to promote a sustainable decentralised renewable energy industry for the 21st century, activating markets for affordable energy services, and creating local jobs and inclusive green economies. ARE enables improved energy access through advocacy and business development support for its Membership comprising the whole value chain of off-grid technologies.

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