

A brief report of the Homa Bay County energy policy and advocacy workshop held on Friday, 9th March 2018 at the Royal City Garden Hotel, Kisumu

Present

1. Maryline Agwa, Chief Officer, Energy and Mining
2. Collins Owegi & Daniel Asher, CUTS Nairobi
3. Members of County Assembly (MCAs), Energy and Mining Committee, Homa Bay County Assembly
4. Energy sub-sector partners- Nyalore Impact, Energy4Impact, GIZ, Dream EP Global Energy, World Vision and Renewvia

Master of Ceremony

Daniel Asher, CUTS

Agenda

To lobby MCAs in the Energy and Mining Committee to legislate county laws that would fast track the uptake and use of renewable energy (RE) in Homa Bay County as well as to increase budgetary allocations to the energy department.

The meeting began a prayer followed by introductions.

1.1. Opening remarks: Maryline Agwa

1.1.1 The county is well endowed with RE sources- solar, wind, biogas, and some traces of geothermal- yet it is still heavily dependent on electricity. The use of kerosene for lighting is not only expensive but also poses serious health conditions. Likewise, exposure of women to smoke while using firewood for cooking is not healthy. Additionally, the high rate of deforestation as a result of biomass extraction has depleted most of the forests in the county, thus, making it vulnerable to drought and climate change effects.

1.1.2 Going forward, with proper legislation, planning and political goodwill, there are hopes of adopting RE technologies in the county. As a county government department, her ministry had identified several priority areas including solar street lighting; solar power availed to all dispensaries, trial of biogas in selected schools as well as investment in wind energy through strategic partnerships.

1.1.3 Realizing these goals however remain a mirage as the allocation for energy in the county's budget for the next financial years works out to approximately KES 100 per head per annum. There is therefore, need for the MCAs to lobby the assembly and push for more funding to the department as energy is used in all aspects of life.

1.2. Stakeholder presentations

1.2.1 Collins Owegi of CUTS made a presentation on the current state of energy in Homa Bay County. The presentation, based on CUTS baseline study recommended the need for a domesticated RE policy for the devolved unit. The proposed policy would provide a legal backstopping for initiatives being implemented by the county as well as private sector partners and CSOs. CUTS, made a commitment to immediately initiate the process of drafting the policy.

1.2.2 Pam Onyanyo and Brian Simiyu from Renewvia Energy presented their organization's works in Remba Island which has been suffering tremendous post-harvest loss of fish due to lack of preservation facilities. Through its efforts, Renewvia is setting up solar powered fish cooling plants within the island.

1.2.3. Arnold Ayoma, Dream EP Global Energy followed by showcasing their efforts in connecting households and businesses within Remba Island with off-grid solar generated electricity. The island has never been connected to KPLC and this intervention has transformed livelihoods of the local community members.

1.2.4. Ms. Dorothy Otieno, Nyalore Impact- a social enterprise dealing in assembly and fabrication of improved cook stoves as well as energy saving briquettes then took the stage and displayed their innovations to the participants.

1.2.5. Mr. William, World Vision, followed with an advocacy presentation on the county's fiscal policy with respect to several sectors including energy. In his analysis, it emerged that the current budgetary allocation was not sufficient to implement meaningful interventions especially in RE and emphasized the need for the provision of more funds.

1.3. Capacity building

1.3.1. Salome Omamo (An expert consultant in gender issues) gave a 45 min presentation on gender capturing its definition (what it is and what it's not), keys aspects, mainstreaming as well as the role of gender in energy within the household. She went further to explain ways through which gender issue could be included in energy issues at the household and community level.

1.3.2. Maxwell Musoka from GIZ gave a talk on his organization's interventions in the county with respect to adoption of RE by displaying the available technologies, existing opportunities and strategies to help promote RE in the county.

1.4. The Declaration

1.4.1. This session was led by Collins Owegi who summarized the day's highlights and engaged the MCAs on their support of the meeting's outcomes. Hon. Peter Kaula, Energy and Mining Committee, led his Members in committing to the following;

- i. Supporting and actively engaging in RE awareness creation campaigns in their respective Wards
- ii. Taking the lead in buying and installing RE technologies in their homes and act as demonstration sites
- iii. Adopting and passing the energy section on RE as contained in the CIDP
- iv. Supporting the RE policymaking processing by speedily discussing it and drafting the related bill once the draft is handed over to them

1.5. Closure

1.5.1. The closing remarks were delivered by the Chair, Energy and Mining Committee. In his address, he thanked the Chief Officer, together with the partners for hosting them in Kisumu for two days, and for engaging them in the important issue of moving the county towards the uptake and use of RE. The Chair assured all participants that he would be taking a personal initiative to whip his Members whenever there was an issue to be addressed at the Assembly with respect to RE.