

Energy cooperation for regional integration, public-private partnerships

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African Union (AU) Infrastructure and Energy Commission Commissioner 2021 report indicates that access to electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa has decreased. Over 600 million people did not have electricity connections in the region.

Although the continent has abundant hydro, solar, wind and bioenergy resources, around five out of every 10 individuals below the Sahara lived in the dark. Hence, scholars in the field suggest the need to develop energy infrastructure and markets at the continental, regional and national levels to meet existent and forthcoming demands for access to energy.

They also proposed harmonization mechanisms of policies, legislation, and regulatory and institutional frameworks at continental levels to enhance coordination, and cooperation and remove barriers to access to energy. However, efforts have been made by various countries to ensure energy security, but generating electricity creates environmental pollution and affects this planet.

Unlike most countries, Ethiopia, regardless of the political ideology of the successive governments and the rainfall

that differs significantly from year to year, has given due attention to renewable energy sources which are dominated by large hydropower. However, much remains to be done; Ethiopia is generating over 90 percent of its electricity supply from renewable energy sources which could be a good experience for other African countries.

Accordingly, Ethiopian and Tanzanian energy authorities have organized a conference to discuss renewable energy prospects. They also said that they have opened the energy sector to private investors.

Ministry of Water and Energy Minister Dr. Engineer Habtamu Itefa said that Ethiopia's potential for generating renewable energy is still untapped. "We need to work with regional integration and public-private partnership. The Ethiopian government is integrating its renewable energy with

Neighboring countries and providing green energy."

Despite its potential, Africa is also named the darkest continent. So, regional integration and Public Private Partnerships are highly needed to exploit the untapped potential. In the Ethiopian context, the potential of hydro, wind, geothermal, and solar energy is large. Consequently, the government has allowed investors to bid on this opportunity in the provision of laws, the Minister added.

Exploiting renewable energy resources is instrumental in facilitating regional energy integration among neighboring countries. Therefore, Ethiopia is working towards becoming the hub of green energy development in the region, he explained.

Tanzanian General Manager of Geothermal Development Company Matthew Eng. Mwangomba on his part noted that African countries should develop renewable energy beyond traditional usage. Hence, the conference is an opportunity for sharing experiences on energy development and generation among actors in the energy sector.

Besides, the conference is imperative to facilitating cooperation between Ethiopian

and Tanzanian authorities responsible for energy projects and leading investors, international enterprises, financial institutions, and service providers to advance renewable projects in both countries.

"It is our primary task to create and enhance regional integration in the energy sector. Tanzania (like any other country), is working with a roadmap to build sustainable economic development while keeping environmental health," he note accepting with Ethiopia's regional integration and private sector investment in the energy sector.

Indeed, exchanging views and sharing experiences is important to explore the contemporary challenges and prospects of the sector. **Ethiopia's experience in generating electricity from renewable sources is important not only for Tanzania but also for the rest of the world to curb the negative effects of climate change. Plus, supporting Ethiopia's renewable energy potential to other countries is also important for international organizations, policymakers, and environmental analysts to take necessary measures that are worthwhile and harmless to the planet.**