

CONCEPT NOTE

LAUNCH OF

**AFRICAN WOMEN ENERGY ENTREPRENEURS FRAMEWORK (AWEEF) AND
PANEL SESSION ON INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO EMPOWER WOMEN
ENTREPREUNERS IN ENERGY SECTOR**



Under the Auspices of the Science Policy Business Forum

in the

Third Session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA 3)

2-3 December 2017

Nairobi, Kenya

1. Introduction

UN Environment in collaboration with UN Women, Africa Union commission, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance and other partners is organizing the launch of the Africa Women Energy Entrepreneurs Framework (AWEEF) and panel session on “Innovative Solutions to empower women entrepreneurs” in energy sector . The Launch and panel session will be held under the auspices of the Science Policy Business Forum in the third United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 3) on 2-3 December 2017 at the UN Gigiri Complex, Nairobi-Kenya.

The United Nations Environment Assembly will gather for its third edition at the UN Environment Headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya on 4-6 December 2017 under the over-arching theme of pollution (“**Towards a Pollution-Free Planet**”), especially in its different dimensions, including costs and other measures that can be adopted to tackle it.

The Launch of AWEEF is aimed at establishing a vehicle and/or platform to start implementation and operationalization of the tasks indicated in the “Libreville outcome statement” and the “Africa Environment Ministerial Declaration” titled “Innovative Environmental Solution to implement the SDGs and AU Agenda 2063”. This statement was developed as an outcome of the Workshop on “Women Entrepreneurs and Sustainable Energy in Africa” that was held at the time of the 16th session of the African Ministerial on Environment Conference (AMCEN-16) in Libreville, Gabon in June 2017 . The workshop, adopted “Agreed Conclusions” on bringing women entrepreneurs - as change agents and main stakeholders. This included a comprehensive set of policy recommendations, creating access to finance and market as well as developing technical and business skills to enhance women’s empowerment and promote gender equality in situations of sustainable energy development.

In this context, the Africa Women Energy Entrepreneurs Framework (AWEEF) is expected to serve as a vehicle and platform to enable African women play a role as a change agent and main stakeholders across the energy value chain to expand economic opportunities and alleviate poverty through entrepreneurship in clean and renewable energy.

At the launching of the AWEEF, women entrepreneurs and other participants will have panel discussions on “Innovative Solutions to empower women entrepreneurs” in energy sector. These representatives will discuss at the panel session: (i) the intensive use of charcoal, firewood and kerosene as the main sources of energy in Africa (especially for cooking), that significantly contribute to deforestation, soil degradation and air pollution, (ii) the impact of this deforestation and exposure to pollution that affect more women and children, (iii) innovative environment solutions to empower African women energy entrepreneurs to play a key role in protection of the environment in energy sector and end of pollution. These participants are also expected to participate and contribute to the parallel sessions of the two-day Science Policy-Business Forum leading up to the third UN Environment Assembly meeting (UNEA-3) which addresses ending of pollution.

The science-policy-business forum will bring together policy-makers and advisors, the scientific and research community including citizen scientists, representatives of Member States; media and communication specialists; and major Groups and Stakeholders engaged in addressing ending of pollution. .

UN Environment will also convene an afternoon session on 2 December 2017 (14:30-17:00) to discuss the modality and mechanism of implementation of the Libreville outcome statement through AWEEF. Draft Agenda is enclosed.

Subsequent to this session, there will be a global parallel session on “Accelerating Clean Energy Innovation” where the outcome of the AWEEF session will be reported. The session will be held on 2 December 2017 from 17:30-18:30.

2. Background

Affordable, clean, sustainable, reliable modern energy services, as well as gender equality are a critical development-enabler for Africa by creating solutions to climate crisis and are essential for ensuring the global Sustainable Development Goals 2030, in general, and “the AU Agenda 2063- The Africa We Want”.

However, the continent continues to face formidable nexus of challenges affecting negatively on its socio-economic development progress. The latest findings on SDGs progress (as documented in the 2016 report) indicate the slow progress. Food insecurity, high women and youth unemployment, energy poverty, low health standards and climate change continue to compound all these challenges. Women in Sub Saharan Africa are over 50 % more unemployed than men reflecting that Africa’s actualization of SDG 5 remains a distant reach. Young people (including girls) are 60% unemployed and over 70% live on less than \$2 per day. This entrenches inequalities and increases conflicts, threatening actualization of SDGs 5, 10 and 16.

Further, the energy reality is bleak throughout Africa today. Our energy supplies are not meeting the needs and expectations of our nation. About 600 million people in Africa still do not have access to electricity and approximately 730 million people rely on traditional uses of biomass (Wood fuel and Charcoal). Energy combustion is mostly inefficient and toxic; about 600,000 people in Africa die each year as a result of household air pollution and approximately 60% of these victims are women. Further, Dependence on biomass (Wood fuel and charcoal) for household energy contributes to environmental degradation and climate change, as it exacerbates air pollution in general as well as deforestation, land degradation and desertification. A better system would promote economic diversification, raise productivity, and improve the health and well-being of citizens.

African women’s current participation in decision-making and policy processes as well as in the labour force in the energy sector is low. Women disproportionately bear the burden of energy poverty. They face significant health and safety risks from household air pollution, from carrying heavy fuel loads, and from the lack of lighting. At the same time women can be powerful agents of change in the transition to clean energy, for instance as sustainable energy entrepreneurs. Indeed, women can be essential drivers in avoiding future emissions and thereby actively contribute to climate change mitigation. However, the potential of women as entrepreneurs is underutilized. They face a range of barriers: (i) limited participation in the formal employment sector; (ii) more difficulty accessing land, financing for launching and scaling up a business as well as accessing markets; and (iii) fewer opportunities for technical and business training and education.

In order to commit the inclusion of Women and play a role as change-agents” and as “decision-makers” in energy development and utilization, developing countries should deviate from “Business as Usual Scenario” and get a paradigm shift by providing an “Innovative Environmental Solutions”. These solutions include: (i) investing and promoting in such as clean energy, Resource efficiency, (ii) Innovative financing schemes, education, research and development, PPP, Policy harmonization: (iii) technology development and transfer (iv) Partnership opportunities to finance innovation, and (v) institutional and legal measures and reforms. These solutions would address issues such as land and environment degradation, pollution, social inequality or changes in legislation

It is against this backdrop that UN Environment in collaboration with Africa government institutions, private sectors, civil societies and key partners is launching the Africa Women Energy Entrepreneurs Framework (AWEEF) in order to use it as a vehicle and platform to address the challenges and barriers that hinder women economic empowerment in the energy value chain and implement the “innovative environmental solutions” indicated above. The programme contributes towards the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 13 (take urgent action to combat climate change), SDG 7 (ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all) and SDG 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls).

3. Objective(s) of event:

The main objectives of Launching of AWEEF and its follow up panel discussions are acquiring further political will and commitment from governments and development partners, and attracting the needed investment in universal access to energy that will help women to play a significant role to achieve sustainable energy development in Africa.

The specific objectives are to : (i) update and report the progress made so far in implementation of the Libreville outcome statement on “women entrepreneurs and sustainable Energy in Africa”; (ii) discuss and define modality and mechanisms of implementation of these tasks through AWEEF; (iii) develop Partnership and networking; (iv) identify resource mobilization and communication strategies; and (v) showcase the products and services of women entrepreneurs that contributes to end pollution.

4. Expected Output (s):

The output of the launching of AWEEF and its follow up panel discussions will serve as a basis for effective and efficient implementation of the tasks indicated in the Libreville outcome statement and the decisions made the African Environment Ministers in the their declaration on “Innovative Environment Solutions to implement the SDGs and AU Agenda 2063”.

The specific output will be: (i) AWEEF launched and become operational, (ii) Modality and mechanisms of implementation of tasks, through AWEEF, endorsed, (iii) Partnership and networking developed, (iii) Resource Mobilization and communication strategy identified, and (iv) Products and services of Women entrepreneurs that contributes to end pollution showcased.

5. Date, Venue and Agenda

The Launch of AWEEF will take place on Sunday 3 December 2017 during the Closing plenary session of the science policy business forum in conference room 1. A panel discussion will take place on 2 December 2017 in Conference room 11, UN Environment Headquarter, Nairobi, Kenya. A key note presentation and panel discussion will be held in Conference room 11 from 9:00 AM -11:00 AM focusing on issues of sustainable energy, gender and potential integrated solutions from various perspectives with specific policy instruments and gender differentiated risks to end pollution. Detailed agenda of the Launch is enclosed.

UN Environment will also convene an afternoon session on 2 December 2017 in the afternoon (1430-1700hrs) in Conference room 11 to discuss and agree on modality as well as mechanism of implementation of tasks, reflected in the Libreville outcome statement developed as a result of the Workshop on “Women Entrepreneurs and Sustainable Energy in Africa. The draft agenda is enclosed for ready reference.

There will be a parallel session of the science policy business forum on “Accelerating Innovative Clean Energy” (17:30-18:30hrs) to discuss about various innovate solutions to accelerate Clean energy globally with particular focus in Africa. Further, women entrepreneurs and other participants will also take part in the parallel sessions of the Science-Policy-Business forum on 3 December 2017.

Selected women energy entrepreneurs will also showcase their products and services in the Sustainable Innovation Expo of UNEA 3 that will be held from 3-5 December 2017. This will be organized in close collaboration with the team of UN Environment Switch Africa Green project.

6. Expected Participants

- Selected Women Entrepreneurs from various geographical locations of Africa countries who are the main change agents and stakeholders.
- Representatives of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN)
- Representatives of the Africa Ministerial conference on Energy , Representatives from Regional Centers for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE, SACREEE, EACREEE, RCREEE, CAREEE)
- UN Agencies such as UN Women, UNDP, UNESCO, UNIDO etc.
- Development partners, financiers and stakeholders working with gender and sustainable energy issues –
- Major stakeholders and Civil Societies Participants from the scientific and academic organizations
- Representatives from support organizations
- Representatives from private sector
- Other WESE partners

Draft Agenda

EVENT 1		
Saturday 2 December 2017:		
Launch of AWEEF and Panel Discussion on “Innovative Solutions to Empower Africa Women in Energy Sector”		
Conference Room 11		
TIME	AREA/TITLE	
SESSION MODERATOR: TBD- John Bideri		
8:30-9:00 AM	Arrival and registration of Delegates	All
9:00- 9:15 AM	Introductions	All
9:15-9:45AM	Remarks	UN Environment, UN Women
9:45-10:15	Key note Presentation: Economic Growth, Sustainable development and Gender in an energy constrained context: The Case of Africa	African Center Technology Studies
10:15-10:45	Panel Discussion 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy: Global Environmental Outlook • Renewable Energy Investment and Finance: AfDB/ Christian Aid • Market: MKOPA • Technology/innovation: Intel/ Solar Sisters • Capacity building: Energia/Practical Action 	Panelists are currently being selected and will include speakers from Women entrepreneurs, public and private sectors and civil society.
GROUP PHOTO		
11:00-12:30 OPENING PLENARY OF SCIENCE POLICY BUSINESS FORUM (CR 1):		
12:30-14:00 Lunch		
EVENT 2: Implementation of Libreville outcome statement, Conference Room 11		
TIME	AREA/TITLE	
SESSION MODERATOR- Mitheka Mwenda		
14:00-14:30	Summary of Panel Discussion 1	All
14:30-15:00	Road map and Implementation plan of tasks reflected in the Libreville outcome statement through AWEEF	UN Environment
15:00-15:45	Perspectives from RECs: Panel discussion on Women Entrepreneurs and Sustainable Energy in various Regional Centers of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency	RCREEE, ECREEE, EACREEE, SACREEE
15:45-16:30	Perspectives from Development Partners: Panel discussion on Role of key RE Initiatives in supporting women energy enterprises	Power Africa (Sweden), African Renewable Energy Initiative (Donor views, IDU), New Deal for Africa Energy (AfDB), Canadian Global Affairs, WB
16:30-17:00	Discussion and the way forward	All participants
End of the Programme		
17:30-18:30 Panel Discussion- Accelerating Clean Energy Innovation: Phillips, Africa Women Energy Entrepreneur Framework, Global CEO Alliance, China Energy Conservation and Environment		

**DAY 2: Sunday 3 December
Science Policy Business Forum**

TIME	AREA/TITLE
9:00-12:00	Attend parallel sessions of the Science policy, Business forum
12:00-13:30	LUNCH
13:30-15:15	Closing Plenary of the Science Policy Business Forum- AWEEF LAUNCH –
15:30	Opening of Sustainable Innovation Expo
17:30	Cocktail Reception
Women Entrepreneurs -Sustainable Innovation Expo- UNEA 3 (3-5 December 2017) In Collaboration with SWITCH AFRICA GREEN PROJECT	

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