

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

African women's current participation in decision-making and policy processes as well as in the labor 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.

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 include: (i) investing and promoting clean energy, energy efficiency, (ii) Innovative financing schemes, (iii) education, research and development, (iii) technology development and transfer (iv) Partnership opportunities to finance innovation, and (v) Policy harmonization, 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 its key partners is launching the Africa Women Energy Entrepreneurs Framework (AWEEF). AWEEF will be used as a vehicle and platform to enable African women play a role as a change agent and main stakeholders across the energy value chain, address the challenges and barriers that hinder women economic empowerment and implement the "innovative environmental solutions" indicated above.

Subsequent to the Launch, a panel discussion that focusses on "Innovative Solutions to empower women entrepreneurs in energy sector "will be held. Panelists include: Policy makers, Women Entrepreneurs, Financing institutions, Private sectors, and industries involved in energy innovative technology.

A side event will also be held to discuss and agree on road map, modality as well as mechanism of implementation of solution action plans, reflected in the Libreville outcome statement developed in Libreville, Gabon in June 2017.

More than 100 Participants that includes Women Entrepreneurs, African energy specialized institutions, government institutions, financiers, scientists and academicians, Private sectors, Business personalities and CEOs, civil societies etc. are expected to attend the event.

Contacts: Meseret Zemedkun: meseret.zemedkun@unep.org; Ryan Ndombi: ryan.ndombi@unep.org

Sessions and Key themes: See provisional programme attached

The Issue: Increasing Women's Access to Sustainable, affordable and clean Energy is a critical development enabler and opportunities for women's economic empowerment in Africa.

Facts and Figures: (Atlas of Africa Energy Resources 2017)

- 600 M people in Africa still do not have electricity
- 730 M people rely in traditional biomass (Wood fuel and charcoal)
- About 600,000 people in Africa die each year as a result of household air pollution and 60 % of these victims are women.
- Based on the current trends, it will take until 2080 to achieve universal access to electricity and mid 22 century for access to non-polluting energy for cooking.

Addressing the above challenges will unleash the potential of women entrepreneurs in sustainable energy and contribute to the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

Our Strategy for change: UN Environment, in collaboration with its partners is setting up the African Women Energy Entrepreneurs Framework (AWEEF) as per the mandate given by the African Ministers of Environment (AMCEN) in their Libreville Declaration on investing in "Innovative Environment Solutions " in Libreville, Gabon, June 2017.

AWEEF will serve as a vehicle and ensure that implementation of the Solution action plans reflected in the Libreville outcome statement tackle the global (SDG 2030 and Paris agreement 2015) and continental (AU Agenda 2063) sustainable development challenges and gaps in coordinated and synergized manner. For detail see:

<http://aweef.theargeo.org/>