

Use Renewable Energy

Nairobi – Kenyan Energy Minister Ochillo Ayacko on Tuesday urged East African nations to step up their use of renewable energy to bridge the gap caused by high demand and low supply.

“The growing imbalance in energy supply and demand in our countries means that the current consumption cannot be sustained unless the alternative sources of energy are made available at cost effective and affordable rates.” Ayacko said on Tuesday.

“Eastern Africa is endowed with abundant sources of energy that occur naturally and are well distributed, but in the field of geothermal energy, the potential is more than 7,000 Megawatts,” Ayacko told the opening session of a two day conference of African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN) in Nairobi.

Delegates from Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania and Uganda are attending the conference, as are officials from the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), diplomats and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the region.

Ayacko urged participating nations to formulate efficient energy policies to satisfy increasing energy demand and attract financial support.

He also called on East African countries to offer incentives to the sector, notably by relaxing taxes and creating a good legal climate in order to create room for generation of electricity from renewable resources, such as wind.

“Some of these include allowing electricity generated from renewable sources at tariffs that are not competitive with other conventional sources access into the grid,” he said.

“Kenya is currently consulting with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to release about \$60m to be used to strengthen the energy sector,” energy ministry’s spokesperson Wangari Gathii said.

She noted that poverty stricken East African nations spend a huge amount of their meagre revenue to import crude oil, while they leave renewable sources of energy unexplored.

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