

Consult Local Experts on Renewable Energy Policy

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The recent announcement by Energy Ministry that a draft policy document on renewable energy will be ready in the next two months is most welcome (DN, June 12).

The draft, it was mentioned, will boost sustainable energy according to recommendations from the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, a UK – based initiative launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa.

In the past, our ministries have not adequately consulted local expertise while formulating policies. A typical example is the Water Act 2002, which is increasingly difficult to implement. The growth of the power sector has been slow due to lack of enabling policies. The Electricity Power Act of 1997 liberalised the sector just a bit. Even then, renewable energy resources did not receive much attention. It is therefore commendable that the ministry is coming up with a policy on renewable energy. It will be even more commendable if the ministry

made the draft available to as many interested parties as possible, including local universities and research and development institutions for comments.

For example, Moi University, which currently offers postgraduate Programmes in energy studies and whose School of Environmental Studies is internationally recognized may want to give some useful tips on the draft policy.

Personally, I would be glad if the draft policy addresses the limitation imposed by the Electricity Power Act of 1997 on the development of renewable energy resources and recommends the removal of the monopoly of Kenya Power and Lighting Company Ltd. as the sole retailer of electricity.

This would attract investments on decentralized mini - grid systems based on renewable energy. There should also be incentives to large public institutions like colleges, universities and hospitals to use renewable energy for power generation.

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