

Society of Greens for Sustainable Development Forum

Kenya Policy Seminar/Environment Forum

The Stanley Hotel, Nairobi – Kenya, 27th February 2004

What are the benefits of renewables? An East and Horn of Africa Perspective

The Heinrich Boll Foundation (Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa) and the African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN) launched a study to assess the potential of renewable energy technologies in eastern and horn of Africa in May 2003. The study's main objectives are to assess the benefits of renewables, and the contribution they can make to the energy sector in the region. The findings of the study will be disseminated to a wide range of stakeholders in each of the countries participating in the study (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia). As part of the above study, a seminar was held on the 27th February 2004 in Nairobi. This national event was organized in conjunction with a regular monthly Environment Forum organized by HBF. The seminar aimed at disseminating the interim findings of the study to stakeholders in Kenya and the region.

The objectives of the seminar were to:

- Disseminate some of the key interim findings from the study
- Consult with key stakeholders on the major issues facing renewables in the country
- Develop common consensus on renewables at a national level

The seminar brought together 73 participants from different institutions. The participants were drawn from various sectors including government, civil society, NGOs, industry, electricity utilities (KPLC, KENGEN, IPPs), universities, research institutes, as well as the general public. To provide a regional perspective, participants from Uganda and Tanzania were invited to the Kenya seminar.

Presentation items:

Six presentations on renewable energy were made at the seminar. The first presentation provided an overview of renewable energy technologies and their potential benefit to countries in the region. This was followed by a presentation on the AFREPREN/HBF project, which acquainted participants with the scope and methodology of the project, as well as its intended impact and dissemination.

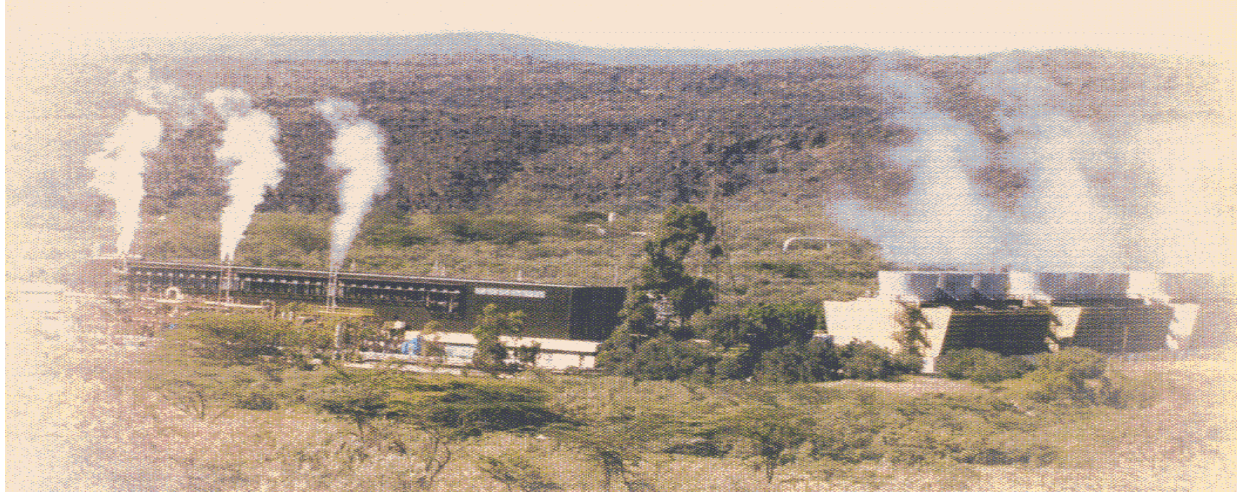
With this in place, the presentation of country study findings commenced. The role of geothermal energy in Kenya's power supply was presented, followed by a presentation on the potential for power generation from biomass wastes in Kenya. Thereafter, 2 presentations from neighbouring countries were made, one covering the status of cogeneration in Tanzania, and the other providing the status of renewables in Uganda.

Discussion Issues:

The following issues were discussed during the plenary sessions:

- The role of renewable energy technologies in the economic development of countries in the region.
- The adequacy of the current legal and regulatory framework in promoting the development of cogeneration and geothermal, especially for decentralized and independent power systems to supply isolated areas.
- The need to consider other RETs e.g. wind and bio-diesel for electricity generation, which are viable in Kenya.
- The importance of assessing small scale renewable energy technologies e.g. small and pico hydro and other mechanical technologies that directly impact on poverty alleviation.
- The integration of RETs in the poverty reduction strategy papers, and in particular how RETs can expedite poverty reduction.

- The economic viability in terms of payback period of the selected RETs (cogeneration and geothermal)
- Incentives for development of RETs in the region
- The need to develop institutional capacity for RETs promotion, and for the various lobby groups to consolidate their efforts.



Olkaria I power plant in Kenya

Recommendations/ Way forward:

- Renewable energy technologies have an important and complimentary role to play in development of the energy sector in the country.
- The 10% target proposed at WSSD is feasible, and in some cases has already been achieved e.g. in Kenya 10% of electricity is already generated from geothermal energy.
- Formal and small-scale renewable energy technologies manufacturers and assemblers should work together in order to complement each other achieve higher dissemination of RETs.
- Geothermal exploration and development in countries in the region should be expedited. Kenya's success in geothermal should be advertised as a success story that could be emulated by other countries.
- The legal and regulatory framework should be reviewed to provide incentives for co-generators and geothermal energy developers.
- Active and sustained lobbying of policy makers on the potential and benefits of RETs should be undertaken.
- Phase 2 of the study will focus on a wider range of renewable energy technologies that have a more direct impact on poverty alleviation.
- A clear and detailed follow-up RETs action plans for presentation at international forums e.g. Bonn Conference is necessary, in order to ensure the study achieves maximum impact.



Unutilized bagasse in an open field dumping site in Uganda

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