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Microgrids for community empowerment and rural transformation



The NEPAD Agency microgrid mission to Zimbabwe

Mutasa District, Zimbabwe, November 1, 2018 - The NEPAD Agency started the implementation phase of its microgrid programme by sending a mission (led by Prof Mosad Elmissiry, Prof Diran Makinde, Mr Tich Simbini and Mr Ben Akubundu) to Zimbabwe to establish the status quo of its Nydira microhydro project and to take the necessary steps to develop and implement the project.

The NEPAD microgrid programme aims at community empowerment and rural transformation through the provision of clean and modern energy through the setting up of smart microgrids.

Four projects in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Ghana and Mali were chosen for development and implementation as part of NEPAD Microgrid programme. The Zimbabwe project requires the installation of a dam and microhydro generation station on Nyadiri River, in Mutasa District in the eastern highlands, to generate about 94 Kw to power a clinic, primary and secondary schools, a business centre and the local community. The clinic services 10 villages, each consisting of an average 200 households and the estimated population size of 10 000 people. In addition, it will have a component of community and women empowerment through the use of the electricity produced by the project in productive and commercial activities.

The NEPAD Agency's team met with officials from the Ministry of Energy and Power Development; the Rural Electrification Agency; the Zimbabwe Transmission and Distribution Company; The Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority; the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development; the Environmental Management Agency, and; the Zimbabwe National Water. The outcomes of these meetings were very useful in establishing the following:

- The state of development of the project;
- Action to be taken next;
- Identification of the roles that will be played by each stake holders;
- Regulatory requirements regarding a microgrid project of this nature and the environmental requirements, and;
- Financial support that the Ministry of Finance will provide.

The team further travelled for four hours to inspect the site of the water fall, appreciate the quantity of water flow and the water fall head which are basic requirements for the amount of energy to be generated. They also inspected the site for the erection of the power plant and had the chance to meet with the project beneficiaries and establish how their need for electricity.

The outcome of the mission came was on clear action to be taken next in order to develop and implement the Nyadiri microhydro project.

Extraordinary session of the African Union Executive Council



Addis Ababa, November 14, 2018 - The 20th Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union (AU) on 14 November at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with calls highlighting the need for reform of the AU in order for the continental organization to achieve peace, development, and the Africa we want.

Addressing the Ministers in his opening remarks, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission, welcomed the Ministers to the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, and pointed out that the meeting is expected to lay the foundation for the success of the first Extraordinary Summit exclusively devoted to the issue of Institutional reforms of the Union.

“At the continental level, several initiatives are underway to speed up the economic integration efforts and the end of the multifaceted acts of violence that continue to ravage different regions of Africa. These developments demand that we enhance the efficiency of our Union,” said the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

The institutional reforms touch on all aspects of the functioning of the Union and all its organs. The outcomes of this meeting will have a lasting impact, as will be endorsed during the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments to be held on 17th and 18th, setting the path of continental renewal, said the Chairperson. (The complete speech of the AUC Chairperson is available on: www.au.int.)

H.E Dr. Richard Sezibera, Chairperson of the Executive Council in his opening remarks, stated that “Africa’s unity and Africa speaking in one voice has proven to be a positively disruptive force in the international scene. This should be the norm more than an exception, he added.

As the reforms take place there is need to recognise that self-financing of the Union in a sustainable manner will be a key determinant of our accomplishments said H.E Dr. Richard Sezibera. (The complete speech of the CP of the Executive Council on the AU Website: www.au.int.)

The opening ceremony of the Executive Council, took place in the presence of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of AU Member States, AU Commissioners, Heads of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AUC senior officials and other invited guests. The Extraordinary Session will prepare for the 11th AU Extraordinary Summit which will be held on 17-18 November 2018.

For two days, the AU Ministers of Foreign Affairs and External Relations will consider and deliberate on the draft agenda, decisions and declarations that came out of the meeting of the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) from 5 - 6 November 2018, and the outcomes of the 6th Retreat of the Executive Council’ held on 12 and 13 September 2018 on AU Institutional Reform.

The meeting will consider proposals on the reform of the structure and portfolio of the senior leadership of the AU Commission, selection of the senior leadership of the Commission, administrative and financial reforms, and the mandate of the AU Development Agency (AUDA) in line with Assembly decision Assembly/AU/Dec.691 (XXXI).

The Ministers will also consider division of labor between the AU, RECs, continental organizations and Member States, strengthening of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Financing of the Union, and AU Peace Fund.

Furthermore, the meeting will have a briefing on the Report of the Chairperson of the Executive Council to the Assembly on the Outcome of the 19th Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council on the ACP Post 2020, and will prepare draft decisions, draft agenda and draft work program of the 11th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly, scheduled to take place 17 – 18 November 2018. 45 African leaders are expected to attend the 11th African Union (AU) extraordinary summit of heads of state.

Infrastructure: Finding alternatives to State funding

by Dr Ibrahim Mayaki



On October 16 2018, the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo announced the signing of an Inga 3 project exclusive development agreement with two consortia (Chinese and Spanish). This is a milestone for Africa. After eight years of studies and discussions, this hydroelectric dam project on the Congo River will finally enter its operational phase.

Inga 3 is a project designed to lead to an extra production of 11,000 megawatts (MW) of clean renewable, permanently available energy that will benefit the entire power grid in the region. The benefits of this project will be felt as far as in South Africa. The China Inga 3, a consortium including Chinese and European companies, plans to invest \$14 billion. If all goes well, Inga 3 will be the largest hydroelectric project ever built on the continent. It will also showcase opportunities offered by public partnerships for infrastructure development in Africa, as well as regional integration.

Infrastructure deficit is one of the most serious problems our continent faces. It is most obvious in the energy sector – although 145 million people on the African continent have been able to connect to electricity since the beginning of the millennium, 645 million Africans are still deprived of it. How can we expect to start a virtuous circle of industrialization if the most basic prerequisite – access to affordable energy – is not fulfilled?

We estimate that the annual investment threshold for Africa's infrastructure deficit is \$120 billion. As of now, annual investment stands at about fifty billion only. The continent now devotes a little more than 4% of its GDP to infrastructure equipment. This is better than ten years ago when it dropped to 2%. But it is still less than in China, where this proportion is up to 14%. There are also major differences between countries and the structure of their economies, depending on their exposure to commodity prices in particular.

This lack of infrastructure carries big costs. When economies are isolated, they become less attractive, since unified markets on a regional scale are difficult to create. Inadequate infrastructure increases production costs, weighs on business's competitiveness and negatively impacts foreign direct investment. Still, Africa must create 450 million jobs over the next twenty years to absorb its population growth. World Bank studies have shown that infrastructure deficit costs the continent two points of annual growth and generates a 40% shortfall in competitiveness gains for its enterprises.

Having stated the fact, we need to think about solutions. Be it in energy or communication corridors, the regional dimension is essential and must receive the greatest attention. Infrastructure covering several countries in the same region is more attractive to investors (both public and private) because it allows the pooling of costs and promotes integration. In 2012, the African Union set up an African Infrastructure Development Program (PIDA) managed jointly by the NEPAD Agency and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Its roadmap focuses on structuring cross-border projects, numbering 51, for a total package of \$360 billion. They are the pivot of the continent's real economic takeoff.

The approach chosen by PIDA is highly original in that it anchors the projects exclusively on Public Private Partnerships (PPP). Indeed, the real question is not whether to invest more, but rather, who should invest more? Again we say, 'Africa must first rely on its own means and resources to carry out its development.' But is this true in the infrastructure domain? The answer is 'yes,' but with some reservations. Investment in infrastructure is an absolute necessity, but it must not be to the detriment of other equally important programs such as investment in education, health or agriculture. Therefore, association with the private sector on the one hand, and international cooperation on the other hand, are credible alternatives to state funding. This is the solution that, as the NEPAD Agency, we never stop recommending, and this is the solution DRC authorities have chosen to adopt with the Inga 3 project.

Biosafety awareness for lawyers in Malawi



Lilongwe, Malawi, November 6, 2018 - The NEPAD Agency's African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE), in collaboration with the National Biosafety Regulatory Agency of Malawi, organised a sensitisation and awareness workshop on biosafety for lawyers on 6 November in Lilongwe, Malawi.

This capacity building initiative follows a visit by ABNE's technical team in the country in September, 2018, during which members of the Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, requested NEPAD Agency ABNE to support the country in the creation of sensitisation and awareness for targeted stakeholders who matter as the country gets along the process of de-regularisation of the Bt cotton. Bt Cotton is a modified pest resistant plant cotton variety.

The objective of this activity was to sensitise the lawyers on a broad range of issues on biosafety and to raise awareness on agricultural biotechnology and its safe application as guided by international legal instruments. It was also the objective of the meeting to introduce the lawyers to the biosafety regulatory landscape in Africa and the biosafety regulatory approaches and system in Malawi, as well as aspects of intellectual property and technology transfer in relation to agricultural biotechnology.

Twenty attorneys who participated in the workshop were drawn from government ministries and national agencies such as the Attorney General's Chambers and the Department of Justice; Directorates of civil litigation and Public Prosecution; Environmental Agency, Agriculture Department, Customs, Standard Setting Agency, Human Rights Department, the first Parliamentary Counsel and legislative drafting office.

During the meeting, presentations were made on the basics of biotechnology and biosafety. The lawyers were also introduced to GMO associated litigations from some African countries and elsewhere. Intellectual Property issues regarding the technology were also introduced to the participants to enable them to appreciate aspects of technology transfer. Participants were also made aware of the shortfalls in most countries of the required IP management capacity and resources to perform product clearance analyses and evaluations that facilitate the legitimate import, use and/or export of products from these technologies.

Participants and Government officials who attended the workshop expressed their appreciation and made a call for more training opportunities in biosafety regulation for lawyers. As the country enters the last phase of de-regularisation of the Bt Cotton, the lawyers' constituency in Malawi is being considered as critical in facilitating that process and to even play an important post the de-regularisation stage. This is in order to ensure that Malawi safely harnesses this technology opportunity for its socio-economic development.

Health and safety for NEPAD staff

Johannesburg, November 14, 2018 - How do you perform CPR, Cardio (heart) Pulmonary (lungs) Resuscitation (revival), on people whose heart has stopped? These and other lifesaving procedures formed part of a brownbag on health and safety, held on November 14.

Health and safety programmes are an important part of preventing injury and illness and are prerequisites for adequately responding to emergency situations in the workplace. These programmes help employers and employees not only to better understand but also identify potential hazards they are exposed to on a daily basis.

A brownbag session was organised by the NEPAD Administration Unit in partnership with Knowledge Management, and drew expertise from Industrialisation, Science, Technology and Innovation (ISTI) staff.

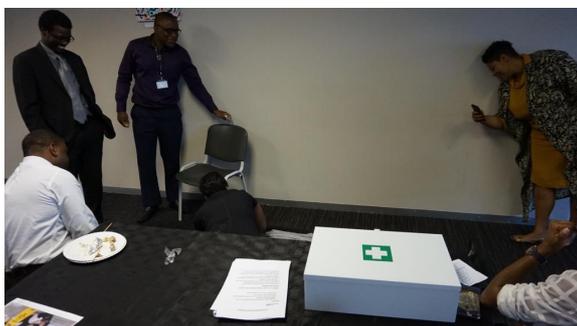
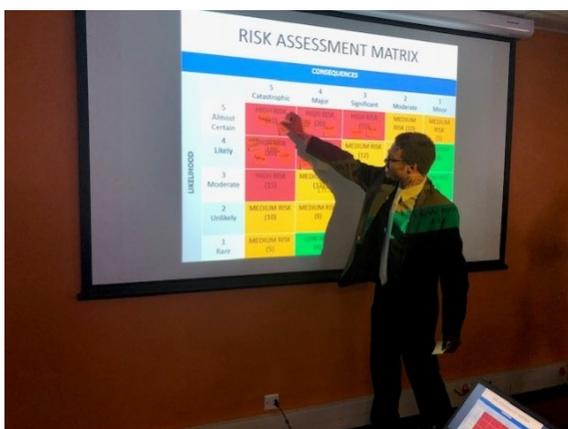
The objective of the training was to equip staff with basic knowledge on how to deal with emergencies, including practical exercises on first aid and occupational hygiene. It also provided a platform to solicit suggestions for improving internal processes and systems that pertain to health and safety.

The brownbag started with a short performance, in which Rose-mary Nndanganeni, Mogomotsi Seboko, Mkhanyeli Mabhena, Duduzile Mkumla, and Hlengiwe Ginindza simulated the collapsing of a colleague and the different responses to that situation. The exceptionally well performed skit drew attention that in the case of an emergency, every second may count and how one reacts is vitally important.

In her welcoming remarks, Rebecca Oloo highlighted that there was a key message in the skit as it highlighted realistic situations of emergency. It is a top priority of the NEPAD Agency to ensure that we work in a safe and secure environment as anchored in the AU rules and regulations, she emphasised.

Patrick Mbajjana gave an introduction to health and safety, and highlighted the tripartite responsibility between employer's duties, staff rights and responsibilities and policy, to ensure a conducive, healthy and safe work environment for all staff and guests without discrimination. He also took staff through the NEPAD Agency's emergency services and shared important information such as contact numbers, and the location of emergency and fire exits.

In practical exercises, staff rated and assessed risks related to health and safety, and performed CPR exercises.



The clinics provided a platform for interactive discussions in which staff members shared ideas on how to strengthen NEPAD's current health and safety processes and policies. It was emphasised that a series of trainings was required to equip staff with important life skills and hands-on knowledge on how to respond to emergencies such as choking, arresting bleeding treating burns and fractures, wounds and bleeding.

NEPAD Agency in pictures...



Dr Mayaki paid a courtesy visit on the Hon. Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, in order to brief the Minister on current developments pertaining to NEPAD. The Minister pledged South Africa's continuous support to NEPAD and requested regular consultations between her office and that of the NEPAD Agency. Minister Sisulu re-iterated South Africa's commitment to the implementation role of NEPAD and commended the NEPAD Agency for its outstanding work.

Ms Jennifer Chiriga, Partnerships Advisor, recently hosted Yvonne Chaka Chaka, NEPAD Agency's Goodwill Ambassador for TB and Nutrition .



Ms Fati N'zi Hassane, NEPAD Agency's Head of Skills and Employment for Youth attended the Youth Entrepreneurship and Self-employment (YES) Forum in Dakar, Senegal. By 2030, 440 million young Africans will enter the job market. Partnerships are therefore vital to provide skills and employment for Africa's youthful and emerging workforce to deliver on Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

The NEPAD Agency's Move Africa initiative aims to improve transport corridors for economic activities and movement of humanitarian goods. Project Manager for MoveAfrica, Ms Kisa Nkhoma visited the Chirundu border post between Zambia and Zimbabwe, one of the One-Stop Border Posts which will be monitored in Move Africa's Traffic Light System.



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