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Microgrids reach Malawian community



The NEPAD Agency's microgrid mission to the communities of Mwansambe in Malawi

Mwasambe, Malawi, November 15, 2018 - The NEPAD Agency's microgrid programme extended its reach to Mwansambe community in Ntcheu Central District region, some 350km from Lilongwe (including 30km of gravel road) along Lilongwe Blantyre Road in Malawi.

Led by Prof Mosad Elmissiry, Prof Diran Makinde and Mr Benjamin Acubondu, NEPAD Agency sent a mission to Malawi from 12 -15 November to establish the status quo of the solar/ hydro hybrid microgrid project on Mwansambe River, as well as to assess the suitability of the site for the project and the benefits of the project to the local communities. The mission also entailed the making of recommendations on the way forward to develop and implement the project as part of NEPAD microgrid programme.

The NEPAD microgrid programme aims at community empowerment and rural transformation through the provision of clean and modern energy from smart microgrids to power communities, their service centres and create opportunities for community engagement in industries and commercial activities.

Phase 1 of NEPAD microgrid programme focusses on four African countries: Zimbabwe, Malawi, Ghana and Mali. Following a successful mission to Zimbabwe last week, the NEPAD team went to Malawi and met with officials from of Department of Energy Affairs, in the Ministry of Energy and Mining; Rural Electrification Management Committee; Electricity Supply Corporation Malawi (responsible for transmission, operation and distribution of national grid to rural areas); the Electricity Generation Company of Malawi, whose mandate is to generate energy in Malawi; the Malawi Energy Regulator Authority; the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change; the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water and representatives of the private sector.

The Malawi microgrid project involves the setting up of solar pv station to generate 100 KW power and a dam with a microhydro station to generate 55KW on the Mwansambe River to power the community, which comprises nine villages, each consisting of about 1500 households in Ntcheu Central District region. The station will supply power to a clinic which receives about 200s patient a day, power the school, grinding mills and shops. It will also enable the community to set up agro businesses and small industries to add value to the community's various agriculture products.

"Currently the Malawian energy access is pretty low at about 2% in rural areas and 38% in urban areas. The energy supply is far below the energy demand, with the present energy supply being about 180MW while energy demand is about 400MW, leaving a huge energy gap resulting in regular load shedding," says Prof Elmissiry.

NEPAD Agency's intervention to assist in the development and implementation of the solar/micro hydro at Mwansambe River was appreciated by all stakeholders that the team met with, and in particular the community where the team, together with officials from the Ministry of Energy held engagements. During the engagements, the team explained the process of developing the project and the input required from the community. The NEPAD Agency team left the community with great sense of satisfaction at being able to reach communities at grassroots level through the Agency's mandate. Through this project, the assistance to be rendered to local communities will go a long way in uplifting their standard of living through its transformative nature.

Mainstreaming implementation instruments into CAADP



Johannesburg, November 9, 2018 - The African Union Commission (AUC), NEPAD Agency and FAO-Africa Investment Centre jointly held the project inception and task force meeting on “Mainstreaming Implementation Instruments into Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP),” in the Technical Cooperation Project (TCP). The meeting took place at the NEPAD Agency premises in Johannesburg and also brought together officials from the SADC and FANRPAN.

Ms Alberta Mascaretti, Director of the FAO-TCI, reminded participants of the importance of agriculture for the continent’s development agenda, while stressing the importance of a continental and regional approach as envisioned by CAADP. The platform to be created as a result of the TCP will equip policymakers at regional and national levels with relevant tools and practical solutions to foster CAADP implementation.

Mr Ernest Ruzindaza, CAADP team leader at the AUC Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, commended FAO for the opportunity provided by the TCP, through which stakeholders will endeavour to translate into successful and sustainable outcomes.

This was echoed by Dr Hamady Diop, Head of NEPAD Agency’s Natural Resource Governance programme. He reiterated that the objective of the TCP is to assist countries to better domesticate CAADP, by using policy instruments pertaining to the various thematic areas under the Malabo Declaration. “This is therefore relevant to the CAADP process, as it addresses the missing link on the ‘how,’ during the past decade of implementation, and also presents opportunities for synergies, with the existing “CAADP knowledge compendium” funded by GIZ,” Dr Diop said.

The rich discussions which followed included a presentation on the TCP by Dr Augustin Wambo Yamdjeu, NEPAD Agency’s Head of CAADP. The project is pursuing the establishment of an online platform to encapsulate a menu of policy instruments on CAADP implementation for policymakers. As at now, a draft website has been developed (to be hosted on the existing CAADP platform), with the participants advocating for the dissemination of the instruments using other means as well, for effective outreach to the intended beneficiaries.

Ms Mascaretti from FAO, also emphasised the fact that the policy instruments should be viewed as guidelines, which the policymakers could consult and customise to their contexts and specific sectors as they implement their National Agriculture Investment Plans. Mr Alain Onibon, Senior Officer at the FAO Investment Centre further elaborated on the background of the development of the policy tools which are defined as courses of action chosen by a government towards an object such as food security.

In the current TCP, the menu of policy tools has been developed to address three categories of public investment, including the building of the systems, the development of critical infrastructures and smart subsidies for farmers and other value chain players. They have been built from global practices, further refined through various tests in African countries.

One of the key messages is that governments should mobilise public resources to finance the implementation of the policy tools proposed by CAADP. Furthermore, the use of such tools will enhance budgeting for National Agriculture Investment Plan implementation.

Having gone through the policy tools, SADC shared its experience which consisted of customising the tools to the region’s context through a Food Support Nutrition Programme in partnership. In addition, SADC identified regional priorities including agriculture lending, risk sharing mechanisms, agriculture insurance, among others, as being of utmost value to its constituency. To assist with the implementation of the tools, the commission also established the Agriculture Development Fund which will provide the required resources to roll-out the policies instruments developed.

The meeting in Johannesburg was instrumental in bringing the participants on the same level with regards their understanding of the TCP in the CAADP context and charting the way forward for its implementation. As an interim step, a consultative drafting retreat from 26-28 November in South Africa, will provide the opportunity for NEPAD Agency, AUC, FAO and all other stakeholders to review the proposed structure and content of the menu and its platform.

Convention on Biological Diversity held in Africa



Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, November 22, 2018 - Egypt is hosting the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 14) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) from 17 - 29 November 2018 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. The conference brings together all parties to the convention, nearly 200 countries and nations around the world, and also many observers from regional organisations, NGOs, industry, university and research institutions.

In his opening remarks, H.E Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, President of Egypt, stated that, “Ancient Egyptians respected nature and the land as we can see in their holy texts.” He further stated that, “The Government of Egypt government launched its initiative for integrating biodiversity in the developmental sectors, exerting more efforts to reach an approach to integrate the three environmental agreements on climate change, desertification and biodiversity.”

Cristiana Pasca Palmer, the UN Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Secretary on the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, thanked Egypt for its efforts in supporting biodiversity. She stressed that, “We are all here to fight for nature, and to fight for us as well because we are part of nature.”

The African Union and NEPAD Agency have sponsored the participation of a large number of country delegates to make sure the maximum of the African countries are represented and to contribute to making Africa’s voice heard in the negotiations. Prior to the start of the CBD meeting, the African group had a two-day meeting in Sharm El Sheikh to finalise views and come up with a common position on the various biodiversity issues to be addressed during the CBD meeting. These issues include enhancing the integration of the Convention and its Protocols with respect to access and benefit sharing (ABS) and biosafety; capacity-building and technical and scientific cooperation; resource mobilisation and financial mechanism; digital sequence information on genetic resources; synthetic biology; risk assessment and risk management; unintentional transboundary movements and emergency measures; transit and contained use of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) et cetera.

Addressing the African group of Negotiators during the preparatory meeting on 12 November, Mr Hamhani Masheleni, AU Senior Policy Officer, Human Resources, Science and Technology Department affirmed that “The AU Agenda 2063, enables us as a continent, to remain focused and committed to the ideals envisaged in the context of a rapidly changing world, and hold ourselves accountable to address the socio-economic challenges facing our continent, and deliver on the aspirations of African citizens and the world beyond. We are expected to collectively address the Sustainable Development Goals on global development challenges.”

Dr Jeremy Ouedraogo, Director of NEPAD Agency’s Regional West Africa Office said that AU-NEPAD is ready to provide the African delegates with the technical support they may need during the negotiations meetings.

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was signed by 150 government leaders at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The CBD is dedicated to promoting sustainable development. Conceived as a practical tool for translating the principles of Agenda 21 into reality, the Convention recognises that biological diversity is about more than plants, animals and micro-organisms and their ecosystems. It is about people and their need for food security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment in which to live. The CBD holds a conference of parties every two years to address issues arising from the application of the convention and its protocols (the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Liability and Redress) taking into consideration evolving human practices and emerging technologies.

Labour Market Information Systems



Experts from AU TVET Group

Nairobi, Kenya, November 14, 2018 - Experts from the AU TVET Expert group met on 14 November in Nairobi Kenya to formulate a Technical Policy Brief on Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS).

Many of the African Union Member States have identified the establishment of functional and relevant LMIS as a priority to address and match gaps in the job market as a key transformational objective under Agenda 2063.

Ms Unami Mpfu, Senior Programme Officer in the Skills and Employment for Africa Programme, noted that, “Understanding the supply and demand issues will help Member States to identify clear pathways for labour participation of young people.”

Experts deliberated on the fundamental importance of LMIS to generate value-added information on the labour market for different strata of a country's active workforce.

FHI 360 shared outcomes from a study which pointed out the need for an integrated systems approach with multisectoral stakeholder participation driving the use of the market intelligence generated. Obed Diener from FHI 360 pointed out that LMIS is composed of several, most often interconnected, subsidiary information systems; underpinned by effective partnerships.

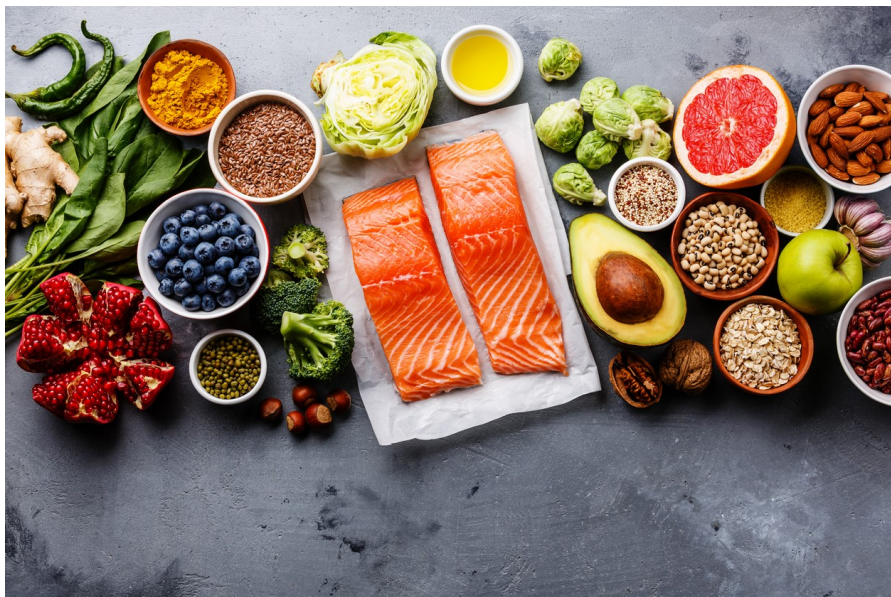
The ‘write-shop’ built on the lessons and insights shared during an online Webinar which was hosted on the African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (www.nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth).

George Afeti, Chairperson of the TVET Expert Group, stressed the importance of understanding and using reliable labour market information and trends to design and draft appropriate policy; that is responsive to relevant applicable labour market issues, such as youth unemployment.

The technical policy brief will assist Member States to address issues such as how to set up an LMIS which meets basic foundational elements to organise country systems to meet job creation and matching strategies, with strong participation of private sector and TVET sector.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Africa in 10 minutes - Anaemia awareness



Ms Bibi Giyose, Senior Officer for Nutrition and Food Systems at the NEPAD Agency was interviewed by Saziso Dlamini on Khwezi FM on anaemia, expounding on the condition.

Please download the link below to listen to the radio interview:

<https://wetransfer.com/downloads/ea16680a6bf3529def-b38a21ca0ece0e20181121183107/362d9885df57d10591aea4cc1b7f2c9320181121183107/e1e164>

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