



PRESS STATEMENT

Third Policy Dialogue Meeting on Sustainable Energy in Kenya

After two successful policy dialogue meetings on sustainable energy in Kenya, Energy Alternatives Africa will be holding its third meeting on the **29th August, 2002** at the Serena Hotel. **Dr. Kevin Kariuki**, the Chief Power Engineer/Consumer Affairs Manager at Electricity Regulatory Board (ERB), will present a dialogue paper entitled **“Enhancing Electrification in Kenya --- The Role of New Renewable Technologies”**. The aim of this paper will be to discuss the role of biomass, wind, solar energy, etc in the enhancement of electricity power potential. Wind, solar and biomass are a sustainable source of energy as opposed to the use of petroleum and large hydro electricity, which are a cause of pollution and environmental degradation.

This meeting fittingly coincides with the world summit on sustainable development (WSSD) being held in South Africa. Whereas WSSD will be discussing global issues including renewable energy development, we in Kenya will be discussing domestic electricity issues and development pathways. Energy development, distribution and consumption, is one of the chief determinants of sustainable development.

Kenya has a great potential to accelerate its use and commercialization of renewable energy resources, and to substantially reduce its dependency on petroleum imports. Through intelligent exploitation of sustainable energy sources it can rapidly increase electricity access for its population, improving rural and peri-urban economic productivity as well as people's livelihoods.

Demand for electricity is outgrowing available supplies in Kenya and the region. Though Kenya presently has the largest installed hydro-electricity power resource base in East Africa, future implementation of large-scale hydro projects will not be as simple as it was in the past. First, there are few appropriate large scale hydro sites. Secondly, modern hydropower projects require much greater attention to environmental questions --- and significantly higher financial investments than in the past. As well, much attention must be paid to the social impacts ---Sondur Miru's slow progress has shown how “social impacts” of large projects can affect implementation timetables. Finally, as the experience of the last few years has shown, hydropower availability is greatly decreased during extended periods of low rainfall.

Therefore in order to meet future demand while ensuring adequacy and security of supply, sources of generation must be diversified. To date this diversification

has been realised through “thermal” and “geothermal” generation. In the past five years the government has licensed four Independent Power Producers (IPPs) namely Westmont, Tsavo Power, Iberafrica and Orpower 4. The first three generate electricity through the burning of imported petroleum fuels, while Or, a geothermal plant, converts underground steam energy to electricity. The increasing reliance on thermal generated electricity is manifest in electricity bills through the fuel oil costs adjustment and to a lesser extent foreign exchange fluctuations.

The increasing dependence on thermal generation can be stemmed if we conserve our watersheds and resources, expand our use of geothermal energy, and increase exploitation of our wind and solar energy potential. Additionally, the country has significant power production potential from smaller scale mini and micro-hydro sites and also from biomass sources such as sugar mill wastes (bagasse). Given the proper policy environment, exploitation of these resources can be done on a commercial and sustainable basis.

The presentation will examine the technology and policy gaps in the existing energy sector set-up which hinder development of the above described technologies.

It is our belief that grid electricity can be enhanced through a well-defined, consensus-built national policy framework.

Attendance to the meetings is by invitation.

For further information Contact:

Stephen Mutimba
Project Manager
Energy Alternatives AFRICA Ltd.
P.O Box 76406 – 00508 Nairobi
Tel/Fax: ++254 2 560654; 571027; 569171