

Exploiting renewable energy potential of landlocked developing countries

Zambia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Dr Mwaba Kasese-Bota, who chairs the landlocked developing countries group, suggests exploiting the renewable energy potential of landlocked developing countries.



Image by 123RF

She was speaking at the just-concluded high-level Seminar in Vienna, Austria focusing on “Accelerating Sustainable Energy for all in Landlocked Developing Countries through Innovative Partnerships”.

The chairperson of the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC) says the 15-nation group holds great potential for the production of renewable energy, and called for more investment in the sector.

“The energy access for LLDCs remains very low. The average population access to electricity of 44% lags way behind the average for all developing countries which stands at 81%. We have been undertaking efforts to improve access to clean fuel and energy technologies,” Kasese-Bota said.

“Yet, the share of population in our countries with access to these is only around 25%, less than half of the world average. Our energy efficiency is also much lower than in developing countries as a whole. Our countries hold great potential for the production of renewable energy, in particular that derived from hydropower, wind, sun and geothermal sources, yet energy investment in our countries continues to be low.

She said LLDCs had for a long time now been totally dependent on raw material exports such as the minerals and oil.

She said the mono-commodity dependence has perpetuated the high poverty levels. The Zambian envoy said Governments in LLDCs have embraced diversification and value addition that have high energy requirements.

“Two years ago, we gathered here for the second UN Conference on Land Locked Developing Countries and adopted the ambitious Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDCs for the decade 2014-2024. The

Vienna Programme of Action for the first time recognised the importance of energy infrastructure for the LLDCs,” Kasese-Bota said.

“The Vienna Programme of Action stresses that access to affordable, reliable and renewable energy and related technologies is critically important in not only modernizing information and communications technology and transit systems to reducing delays but also its vital importance in enhancing productive capacity of our countries to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development.”

She said the importance of the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative was well recognised in the Vienna Programme. Kasese-Bota said the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals were premised on adequate supply and access to clean energy by all, enough to meet the needs of every individual and sufficient to drive our individual national development aspirations.

The Ambassador said there was need for Governments to work with all key stakeholders to create an enabling environment that promotes investment in renewable energies to meet the demand and drive economic agenda towards the 2030 aspirations.

She said there was need to revisit some of the long-term Development Agreements on energy where Governments subsidies the multinational corporates was an urgent undertaking.

“These archaic development undertaking are not in any way promoting the energy industry but rather stifling Government’s capacities to attract the much needed investment in renewable energy,” said Kasese-Bota. “The move to revisit the Development Agreements and make them respond to the current geopolitical and development demands of the 2030 agenda should be supported by all development partners including the Bretton Woods Institutions, as clearly we will be left behind in energy development if we cannot invite new investments that break even and make profits on their energy investments.”

The Government of Austria, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (UN OHRLLS), the United Nations Industry Development Organization (UNIDO) and Sustainable Energy 4 All (SE4ALL) co-organised the seminar.

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