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Draft Concept Note

Regional Expert Meeting on Climate Change and Enhanced Renewable Energy Deployment in West and Central Africa

29 February – 1 March, 2016 – Dakar, Senegal

Background

With over two thirds of global emissions coming from the energy sector, action to reduce carbon intensity in energy production and use has become critical in the fight against climate change. The role of renewable energy and energy efficiency is already widely acknowledged as key means for the de-carbonisation of energy systems.

The Paris Agreement that was adopted at the twenty first session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (“COP21”) heralds a new era of climate action involving all countries and taking into account their specific circumstances, priorities, responsibilities and respective capabilities. The pledges and plans for climate action through intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) that had been submitted in the lead up and during the conference will be inscribed in the Agreement after signature and form the basis for action to be undertaken towards the overall objective of limiting global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius.

Fifty two African countries submitted INDCs, which included aspirational targets across different sectors or in some cases, concrete and tangible packages of measures that would necessitate the development of new policies or the reform of existing ones. In many of the plans submitted, enhanced renewable energy deployment is highlighted as a key strategy to achieve de-carbonisation of the energy sector and thus, to enhance climate action. However, the level of detail complementing renewable energy strategies in INDCs varies from country to country. In some cases, there is specific information on the relevant targets envisaged while in others, countries allude to possible reform of the energy sector to increase the share of renewable energy in their respective national energy mix.

In the period after Paris, countries will start preparing for the implementation of their nationally determined contributions (NDCs). While many of the actions may already have commenced, the challenge is to define strategies to ensure accelerated scaled up and timely action noting the urgency to act on climate change. To do so, the departure point should draw upon and build on, or where relevant, reform existing strategies, policies and sector targets that have been defined in relevant national documents, and take into account the prevailing respective capacities and capabilities. In the case of renewable energy, there is a need to understand the technical potential for renewable energy in the countries, the institutional readiness and capacities and the opportunities for investment and finance to support the realisation of that potential. It will also be important to ensure full and engagement of the relevant authorities and stakeholders in planning the strategies for implementation. The new climate agreement calls for scaled up finance to support the implementation of INDCs. It recognises that finance may be mobilised from a variety of sources, instruments and channels. However, unlocking transformative financing from these various sources to unleash the renewable energy potential of Africa countries requires policy makers to put in place the right market signals through appropriate incentives, policies and regulatory framework.

The Africa Renewable Energy Initiative that was launched at COP21 in Paris provides a platform to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy to advance low carbon and climate resilient development on the continent. This initiative, which gained significant political attention, can play an important role in



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the implementation of the renewable energy provisions of the INDCs and could provide an important impetus to scale up and accelerate action and investment in this regard.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB), the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Regional Collaboration Centres in Lomé and Kampala with support from the government of Sweden will organise two 2-day regional expert meetings - one for East and Southern Africa and one for West and Central Africa. These meetings come as response to requests from African countries to support their efforts to enhance renewable energy as part of ambitious climate strategies. The meetings aim to bring together energy and climate change policy makers and planners to enable a coherent and coordinated approach to developing strategies to support the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the realisation of the investment opportunities presented by INDCs. All three organisations have been working with countries to assess their readiness for renewables and harness opportunities to develop their potential in the field. The support offered to countries ranges from providing advice on planning, policy and regulatory frameworks, facilitating the development of a sustainable markets for renewable energy technologies, as well supporting the establishment of enabling environments to enable project and programme development and investment.

In preparation for the meetings, a scoping paper will be prepared that will be further developed reflecting the deliberations and recommendations of the meeting and presented as output that could be used as a reference to climate and renewable energy experts. The outcome of the regional expert meetings could also feed into briefings for the political leadership as well as input to the technical expert meetings that will be continued under the UNFCCC process.

Objectives

The workshops aim to:

1. Contribute to the discussion and efforts on strategies to implement INDCS relating to renewable energy in the context of addressing climate change in the regions covered, including through strengthened dialogue and collaboration between climate and energy policy makers and planners;
 2. Highlight the high potential and opportunities for enhanced renewable energy deployment in Africa and its contribution to climate change mitigation, as well as the various co-benefits of renewables for social and economic development;
 3. Showcase examples of renewable energy strategies being developed or undertaken by countries, including opportunities for regional collaboration as countries prepare to move into a post-Paris implementation phase of climate actions;
 4. Provide information on potential financing tools for renewable energy in the region including opportunities for RE investments in climate finance.
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Preliminary programme

Welcome and introductory remarks

SESSION I

Setting the scene: existing efforts to accelerate renewable energy deployment in West and Central Africa

Session I will provide an overview of climate change and implications for Africa and in particular on the energy sector. It will assess current energy trends and potential for renewable energy to 2030 in West and Central Africa.

Presentation: An assessment of climate change in Africa: mitigation and adaptation strategies

Presentation: The energy sector in West and Central Africa: Barriers and opportunities

Presentation: Renewable energy potential and opportunities to 2030 drawing on IRENA's analysis "Africa REmap 2030"

Questions from the floor and open discussion

SESSION II

Renewable Energy and Climate Change Action: Advancing low-carbon development through renewables in West and Central Africa

Session II will provide an overview on the region's institutional landscape and readiness to advance low-carbon development and drive climate action through renewables. It will scope out the level of ambition and assess the preparedness to implement renewable energy strategies. It will also present an overview of the renewable energy actions and targets envisaged outcomes included in INDCs of the region and their implications on current national energy strategies, drawing on SE4All RE action agenda and synergies between national and regional policies.

To contextualise the discussion, the session will present some country case-studies, on how countries are approaching the objectives in INDCs, including what measures and steps they are taking to address institutional and regulatory frameworks, technological options and other incentives. It will examine existing and intended renewable energy strategies and discuss replication across the region and considerations in accelerating RE in the regional mix.

Presentation: The Paris Agreement and Renewable Energy: Presentation of key outcomes from COP21 and the African Renewable Energy Initiative

Presentation: Overview of renewable energy measures included in African INDCs

Moderated Panel: Case-studies from West and Central Africa

Discussion: Renewable energy as part of ambitious climate strategies



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SESSION III

Financing the energy transition

Featuring key public and private actors in climate and energy finance, session III will present an overview of potential financing tools for renewable energy in the region including opportunities for renewable energy investments in climate finance. The session will also discuss tools to mitigate financial risks and facilitate investment, for example the IRENA's Sustainable Energy Marketplace

Panel presentation: Overview of renewable energy financing instruments and tools: challenges and opportunities

Presentation: Mobilising domestic resources to support renewable energy deployment

Presentation: Potential to engage in the sustainable development mechanism to leverage low-carbon investments in the region

Discussion: Unlocking opportunities for renewable energy investments using climate finance

CLOSING SESSION

Recommendations on the way forward: strategies to promote and enhance renewable energy capacity