

Climate Parliament

Parliamentary Action on Renewable Energy



Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

-

12-13 April 2017



Climate Parliament
Legislators working worldwide to combat climate change

Parliamentary Action on Renewable Energy (PARE)

Report of the regional meeting in Abidjan *On:*

**The role and responsibilities of parliamentarians in the growth
of public and private investments in renewable energy**

Radisson Blu Hotel Abidjan Airport, Boulevard de l'Aéroport
Abidjan – Port Bouet – 03 BP 2176 – Abidjan 03

12 - 13 April 2017

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Regional Hearing in Abidjan, April 2017

Overview

A total of 26 elected Members of Parliament from Benin, Ivory Coast and Senegal in West Africa, and Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda in East Africa met at the Abidjan regional parliamentary hearing on 12-13 April 2017 to discuss ways in which their countries and regions could promote electricity from renewable sources in an accelerated manner. Their participation in the hearing was one of their many efforts to address the twin challenges of ensuring universal energy access and making available enough quality power for the rapid economic development requirements of their respective countries and region. The MPs were united in a common goal of combating climate change by shifting away from fossil fuels.

The hearing acknowledged that countries in both East and West Africa are poised for rapid economic development in the coming decades because of their rich natural resources, favorable demographics and overall scope for development compared to other parts of the world. The hearing also recognised that much of that growth will hinge on the availability of the power and electricity needed to catalyse industrial growth and enable everyday business activity throughout the region, and took note of the various alliances and initiatives that have been set up in the recent years to address the energy challenge of Africa.

The hearing looked into ways in which parliamentary action could unite a range of national institutions and organisations from government, business and civil society, including international development organisations that are working with a common objective of reducing poverty and enhancing growth in an inclusive manner.

These alliances and initiatives range from global alliances such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA) with which Climate Parliament has signed a Joint Declaration of cooperation, as well as Africa-specific initiatives such as the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), the US-led Power Africa programme or Scaling Solar of



the World Bank Group. They also include regional initiatives by organisations such as the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) or regional interconnections being promoted by West Africa Power Pool/ East Africa Power Pool, or country specific initiatives by development partners such as the French Development Agency (AFD), the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) or USAID.

The Abidjan Parliamentary hearing provided a unique opportunity for the legislators to interact with key officials and experts of those alliances and initiatives, as well as representatives from the national governments and businesses. After two days of intense discussions in the plenary sessions and in the regional groups roundtables, MPs decided to pursue four main themes in their home countries. These were: joining and ratifying the International Solar Alliance and availing assistance under its “Solar for Agriculture” programme (solar pumps), joining Scaling Solar programme, launching the Community Grid Initiative of the Climate Parliament supplemented by the mini grid programme of the African Development Bank, and bringing about reforms of the VAT and import duty regimes on renewable energy equipment to make them affordable for wider and accelerated uptake. MPs have all the levers to succeed in all of these areas. They vote on legislations, taxes and budgets. They could push for new programmes and maintain oversight on budgets and programmes. Furthermore, they have direct access to the head of governments and ministers, who are accountable to them.

Climate Parliament secretariat staff will continue to support MPs in East and West Africa in their follow-up of actions agreed at the Abidjan Roundtable. Please visit www.climateparl.net or contact info@climateparl.net for more information or support.



List of Participants

Hon. Members of Parliament

BENIN

DAFIA Abiba, MP, Benin
TOGNI Cyprien, MP, Benin
BAKO Idrissou, MP, Benin
ABIMBOLA Jean Michel, MP, Benin
ADOMAHOU Jérémie, MP, Benin

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

ANIGO Affoué épouse ATTOUNGBRE, MP, Côte d'Ivoire
BONI Tano N'guessan Marie Noëlle épouse EKPONON, MP, Côte d'Ivoire
COULIBALY Famoussa, MP, Côte d'Ivoire
DIABY Nassalatou, MP, Côte d'Ivoire
KAHIBA Lambert, MP, Côte d'Ivoire
LOBOGNON AGNIMA, Alain Michel, MP, Côte d'Ivoire
SANGARÉ Yacouba, MP, Côte d'Ivoire
SORO Tiohona, MP, Côte d'Ivoire
TRAORE Adjaratou épouse COULIBALY, MP, Côte d'Ivoire
YEO Fozilé, MP, Côte d'Ivoire

KENYA

BIRDI Sunjeev Kaur, MP, Kenya
OTTICHILO Wilber, MP, Kenya

SENEGAL

CISSE Ndeye Lucie, MP, Senegal
DIENG Penda Seck, MP, Senegal
THIAM Mamadou Lamine, MP, Senegal
TOURE Papa Biram, MP, Senegal

TANZANIA

PENEZA Upendo Furaha, MP, Tanzania
SONI Jitu Vrajlal, MP, Tanzania

UGANDA

AYEBAZIBWE Justine Kasaija, MP, Uganda
BIYIKA, Lawrence Songa, MP, Uganda
AKAMBA, Paul, MP, Uganda

Analysts, Experts, Officials and Observers

Mrs. DOGO LOGBO Myss Belmonde, Representative of the President of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire;
Dr Joseph EZOUA, Representative of the Director Country of UNDP
His Excellence M. Ragutahalli RAVINDRA, Ambassador of India in Côte d'Ivoire ;
His Excellence, M. Thomas Litscher, Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation in Côte d'Ivoire;
Mr. Upendra TRIPATHY, Director General of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) ;
Mr. Youba SOKONA, Vice-Chairman of the IPCC and Head of the Implementation Unit of the Africa Renewable Energies Initiative (IAER) ;
Mr. Daniel SCHROTH, Senior Energy Specialist and SE4ALL Hub Coordinator for Africa, African Development Bank (AfDB) ;
Mr. Mohamed YUBA SOKONA, Renewable Energy Advisor, GIZ and CEREEC (ECREEE) ;
Mr. Abdoulaye BA, Head of Mission and Technical Officer, COSEER ENERGY
Mr. Dinesh PATIDAR, President of Shakti Pumps ;
Mrs. Odette KABAYA, Regional Adviser & Team Leader / UNDP for Africa
Mrs. Bénédicte COMLAN, Project Leader, Gender and Social Inclusion (CIGIS), MCA-Benin II ;
Mrs. Monica MADUEKWE, Program Coordinator at CEREEC (ECREEE)
Dr. Souleymane BERTHÉ, Director General of the Renewable Energies Agency of Mali (AER-Mali)
Mr. David ACHI, Director of AD Solar
Mrs. Cassandra COLBERT, Country Director of International Finance Corporation Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone;
Mr. Nicholas DUNLOP, Secretary-General of Climate Parliament
Sanjay KUMAR, Executive Director of Climate Parliament
James CORRÉ, Programme Manager of Climate Parliament
Sandra POINTEL, West Africa Project Coordinator of Climate Parliament
Caroline GENTRY, Benin Project Consultant Project Consultant of Climate Parliament
Prudence DAHODEKOU, West Africa Project Assistant of Climate Parliament
Mohamed Kerfala KOMARA, West Africa Project Assistant of Climate Parliament

Opening Session

While most countries acknowledge the threat of climate change and are taking some action, the current pace and scale of the development of renewable energy (RE) is not adequate to stop carbon dioxide emissions rising beyond the level which scientists predict will cause a devastating temperature increase. The melting of polar ice in the Arctic and Antarctic, sea level rise, coastal erosion, drought in Africa and North America and famine are just some of the possible outcomes.

This was the message from Nicholas DUNLOP, Secretary General of Climate Parliament, in his opening address to the regional hearing participants. Despite this potentially catastrophic climate situation, there is an opportunity for MPs and others to respond. It is imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by retiring fossil fuels and accelerating renewable energy projects. This includes, for example putting solar panels on roofs of companies, building solar parks, mini-grids and using biomass.

Africa has the best assets for such initiatives: a high rate of solar irradiation, an advantageous wind potential, and strong hydroelectric resources in certain countries. Mr DUNLOP said Africa should learn from India's example with regards to electrification projects using RE. Climate Parliament is building a Green Grid partnership which will capitalise on the renewable energy resources from around the world to supply high demand areas with clean electricity by strengthening capacity links between countries. Mr DUNLOP explained how projects envisaged by the Green Grid Alliance could be developed in Africa.



Dunlop challenged participants to take on or get involved in RE projects and initiatives presented by experts at the hearing and not fear the threats of the oil lobby groups against the promotion of RE and the energy transition. Dr Joseph EZOUA, Country Director of co-host UNDP, emphasized

the importance of parliamentarians at a meeting of this type for the promotion of renewable energy. The lack of affordable energy in Africa makes renewables vital for the sustainable development of its countries. Mse Myss Belmonde Dogo Logbo, Representative for the President of the National Assembly of Ivory Coast, having thanked the MPs for their attendance and declaring the hearing open, stressed to them that, as well as mitigating climate change, RE offer real opportunities for the development of the local economy in the form of job creation Africa is fortunate to possess enormous RE resources but in order to really promote investment



in them Ms Logbo said her parliamentary colleagues should create or strengthen relevant legal frameworks. The speaker also invited the participants, mostly MPs, to help identify innovative investment strategies, to advocate for obstacles to be overcome and to communicate with the nation to ensure they are on board. This regional hearing gave MPs

the opportunity to learn more about renewable energy developments in Africa and innovations around the world, but also to participate in small workshops to discuss what practical actions could be taken in each of their countries. MPs set out a series of action plans they will pursue in response to the recommendations made at the hearing. Solar pump manufacturers pledged to scale up their installation of pumps in the represented countries.

THE INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE

With US commitment to international climate control treaties in doubt under the Presidency of Donald Trump, voluntary agreements between countries and states seeking to establish collaborative approaches to leverage political will and private investment have become more important. The International Solar Alliance is one such agreement, a coalition of 121 solar resource rich countries located between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn to address their special energy needs and provide a platform to collaborate on addressing the identified gaps through a common, agreed approach. It has a goal of mobilizing \$1 trillion in investments by 2030.

In the first session of the regional hearing moderated by Honorable Upendo Peneza, MP from the Tanzanian parliament, Climate Parliament invited ISA's acting head to present MPs the history of the alliance so far with a view to encouraging them to persuade their countries to join or ratify (Senegal, Tanzania) their participation. Acting Director General Upendra Tripathy described the formation of ISA, listed the countries that have already signed the accord and which countries will probably sign it. Then he outlined the operation of the ISA, the next key actions,, the budget, the funding sources for ISA projects, strategic partners (especially the European Union, EU), financial partners (especially the World Bank) and the location of focal points. Fifteen countries need to ratify it for the alliance to come into force.

Mr Tripathy also reviewed certain milestones in the work of the Alliance, which is headquartered in Delhi, India. These include the launch of the ISA at the Climate Summit in Paris on 30th November 2015, the joint declaration between the interim administrative unit of the ISA and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). the World Bank and the Climate Parliament. Among actions already undertaken by the ISA: a \$1 billion loan from the World Bank to support India's ambitious initiatives to expand solar through investments in solar generation; the creation of a joint programme between India and France to make financing affordable, securing a 300 million euro loan for solar projects in Africa, the engagement of India for US\$ 2 billion for solar energy in such countries of Africa which have signed and ratified the ISA Agreement.

Mr Tripathy finished his communication by mentioning the advantages and implications that a solar programme could have for the agricultural, employment and communication sectors.

The Indian Ambassador in Ivory Coast his Excellence Ragutahalli Ravindra called on MPs to emulate the Indian renewable energy initiative in



their countries. The Ambassador said the question of climate change should be taken into account when trying to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. This is how India has engaged keenly in climate change mitigation: increasing domestic financing and targeting 40 % renewable energy (RE) in its energy mix. He also emphasised the important role of MPs in reforms and actions for the development of RE.

SCALING SOLAR

Another important project that the Climate Parliament MPs decided to actively pursue is the International Finance Corporation (IFC)'s Scaling Solar initiative. Ms Cassandra Colbert, Country Director for the IFC (Ivory Coast, Guinea, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone) said that the rapid decline in the cost of solar panels is a boon for countries that have enormous RE potential. But unfortunately this opportunity is hampered by slow financing, increasing transaction costs, poor familiarity or misinformation by technical operators and financiers about Africa, and a lack of technological capacity in African countries. The Scaling Solar programme presents one-stop solution to these obstacles.



This programme will redress the weakness of countries in negotiating agreements, reduce negotiation time (as in the case of Zambia) and cut out intermediaries. It does so by setting out standard conditions in a contract where the only element to negotiate is the tariff. Governments are free to amend the contracts to suit their needs. The contract mitigates risk, as governments deal with the World Bank group directly, minimizing political risk. The IFC funds the project.

Ms Colbert listed which countries have initiated Scaling Solar projects. These include Ethiopia, Madagascar, Senegal, and Zambia. She described the process starting from the initial request, to the financing closure and finally up to the installation of the solar plant in the country, and listed out direct benefits in terms of lowering of the tariff (project cost), reduction in project development time, strengthening transparency and building local capacity in negotiating complex contracts as the key advantages of the programme.



Climate Parliament Secretary General Nicholas Dunlop endorsed what was said by Mr Tripathy and Ms Colbert. He emphasised governments need to act at the necessary scale so that the fossil economy transitions to a clean economy in the fastest possible manner. To this end, he emphatically made three calls to action:

- Advocate for countries to sign up to Scaling Solar and join and/or ratify ISA;
- Encourage their governments to join the Scaling Solar programme;
- Sign up to initiatives to promote solar pumps.

Interesting comments were made by Hon. LOBOGNON, Hon. KAHIBA, Hon. BAKO, Hon. SONI, M. BOREAU and Mr BA) on all the presentations. The following recommendations were made:

- Ensure that the grid has the capacity to handle the intermittency of RE. As it seems most countries do not have capacity strong enough to support this kind of intermittency.
- Diversify RE options with support from the World Bank while taking into account the specific characteristics of each country.
- Identify how to limit and stabilise production costs for RE;
- Find ways to encourage countries from the North to become more involved in the promotion of renewable energy projects in Africa;
- Consider the notion of energy efficiency in RE projects;
- Initiate and replicate information, awareness and opportunities in RE to again reanimate the MPs;
- Think about a citizen awareness programme so that they have a full understanding of the climate change question;
- Involve the private sector in all key RE projects.



The next session was a panel discussion dedicated to off-grid applications and mini grid solutions for energy access. Keeping in view the high agriculture sector growth in Africa in order to mitigate widespread hunger and poverty, the focus of discussion on off-grid application was limited to solar pumping systems.

SOLAR PUMPS

ISA and Climate Parliament issued joint calls to organisations to present their commitments on installing solar pumping systems in ISA member countries in Africa as per IEC technical standards as well as with proper service guarantee. Several solar pumping systems manufacturers responded to this call, and in total commitments for installing over 99,000 solar pumps between 2017 and 2019 were presented to the Interim DG, ISA and Secretary General, Climate Parliament.



In a short presentation, thereafter, Dinesh Pattidar, President, Shakti Pumps compared the benefits of solar pumps with those running on diesel or connected to mini-grids. Solar pumps have several advantages, he said: a global efficiency close to 75-80%, an average efficiency of 80 to 90 optimized for energy efficiency, and an independence from climate-related disasters. From the point of view of life cycle costs, solar pumps are less expensive than diesel pumps. In addition, the source of generation is located at the point of demand, minimizing transmission losses.

Mr Patidar presented case studies from Uganda, India, Bangladesh and Morocco. He also identified some of the challenges of the African situation, such as the feeble quality and efficiency of products on the market, the lack of financing for RE, poor security, lack of awareness about solar systems, etc. He also highlighted opportunities and ways to meet these challenges: the high level of irradiation in Africa; ease of fixing anti-theft devices; training of the local people by local distributors, etc. Local support is important for the building, leasing and training of local distributors and partners.

COMMUNITY GRID INITIATIVES

The rate of electrification in West Africa is very poor. The mini-grid sector will be very important to achieve sustainable development goals there, because conventional national grids take so much time to reach villages and rural communities. Thanks to declining costs, renewable energy mini-grids are now an attractive option for policy makers across Asia and Africa, experts on this panel told hearing participants: Dr. Sanjay Kumar of Climate Parliament, Dr. Daniel Schroth of African Development Bank, and Mr Abdoulaye Ba of COSEER.

Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Executive Director, Climate Parliament, outlined some of the obstacles to the development of mini-grids and offered very practical solutions the MPs should consider. He presented the outlines of a Model Concession Agreement developed by Climate Parliament and how the Model Agreement will address many of the challenges standing in the way of a wider roll-out of community grids in Africa. A key highlight of the Model Agreement is that it does not replace any existing laws, but works in parallel with the current legal framework to bridge any gaps in the required policy infrastructure for private investors to have the confidence to embark on projects with a more certain outlook for return on investment. Adoption of the Model Agreement by a national government could, therefore, be quite quick as it will be within the domain of the executive government to approve the text of the Agreement and the procedure for its implementation.

Dr. Kumar outlined how the problems of poor financial return on mini grids emanating from low demand and low financial capacity of rural households can be addressed by creating supplementary services, identifying anchor customers such as refrigeration or cold-storage operators, e-service providers, etc. who have large, stable demand for power and can pay a higher commercial tariff. Those high paying anchor customers are mostly absent at present, but the governments could support them or their services to create a large demand for mini grids.

Mini-grids can be very expensive, as usually 100 % of upfront investment has to be funded by governments or other agencies, and sometimes consumers cannot even bear the full operational costs through a fixed tariff. In view of these weaknesses, the Model Concession Agreement being proposed by Climate Parliament is based on a more efficient Viability Gap Funding (VGF)

mechanism which has proved to be successful in many countries. In the VGF model, the investors ask the Government to provide only that much grant which is necessary to establish and run the mini-grid for the whole concession period (usually 25 years for solar mini grid) which is over and above the full cost revenues that the investor/operator is able to potentially mobilise from all types of consumers. The cost to the government is, thus, reduced significantly thereby enabling the government to use the available financial resources to fund many more mini grids.



The Model Agreement also proposes the creation of a single window in the national utility that has all the requisite technical knowledge

to avoid the operator having to go to multiple agencies or departments and deal with delays and bureaucracy.

One of the biggest concerns for private investors in mini-grids is what happens to the asset when the national grid reaches the village. The Model Agreement presents several options in this regard, and the contracting parties could agree to choose any or a combination of them.

Maintenance of mini grids is often a problem as skilled mechanics and spare parts are not readily available in remote areas. Dr. Kumar proposed inspiration from an Indian example where the integration of V-SAT based communication technology with power electronics of the mini grid has enabled remote monitoring of the system for any fault in a precise manner and on a 24x7 basis. Dr. Kumar urged MPs to adopt the model Concession Agreement and explain it to their respective governments.

Next, Dr Daniel Schroth, Principal Energy Specialist and Coordinator for SE4ALL Hub for the African Development Bank (ADB), outlined the bank's green mini-grid programme and the Africa mini-grid strategy. Among the barriers are a fragmented market, a lack of proven economic models, inadequate regulation, weak policies or uncertainty.



To address these barriers some strategic tools have been put in place, such as raising market awareness, supporting the development of companies, political and regulatory support, and establishing some quality assurance. The expert listed the following lessons that were learned during the programme for the development of the green mini-grid market: a lack of information to conduct large studies; weaknesses in policies, a lack of political framework for the development of a green mini-grid market, and a lack of examples of specific policy instruments. In order to stimulate the market, Dr Schroth proposed some action points: finding political will for policies, regulations and support for a legal framework favourable to private investment and finding mutual agreement for a favourable environment for green mini-grids. In the African context the panelist identified five essential elements for a legal framework for mini-grids: adopting clear rules and simple licence procedures; communicating plans to enlarge the main grid network, establish laws that allow flexible tariffs, ensure an integrated energy plan, and increasing the capacity of operators and suppliers of services to roll out green mini-grids.

Dr. Schroth concluded by giving some examples of working policy frameworks for green mini-grids in Nigeria, Mali, Rwanda and Tanzania.

The next panelist, Mr Abdoulaye Ba, CEO and Expert in Renewable Energy and Rural Electrification at COSEER, gave participants an overview of his experience as a private operator in renewable energy in Senegal. Senegal has created ten large concession agreements in two or three regions instigated by requests for proposals. These concessions are for a period of 25 years. Private operators can install mini-grids in the rest of the country. Rural electrification projects are agreed after an administrative procedure. Once the project is approved, the private operator benefits from a tax and import duty exemption.

Electricity supply arrangements and payment mechanisms need to be devised. Mr Ba insisted that it is necessary for governments to encourage a public private partnership which could compensate for the lack of resources for rural electrification.

He agreed with previous speakers that mini-grids do not necessarily need a law. Existing legal frameworks already exist.

The presentations on solar pumps and community grid initiatives were well received by the MPs, who asked several questions and put forward suggestions, notably Hon SANGARÉ, Hon. TOURÉ, Hon. LOBOGNON, Hon. ADOMAHOU. These included:

- Working towards combining efforts to reduce costs or equipment intended for the production of renewable energy.
- Adequately consider and find sustainable solutions to the deficits in the legal and regulatory environment and the standardization of products in the sector.
- Ensure the support of states in mini-grid projects and recognise the profitability of mini-grids while taking account of the risks.
- Request the governments take steps to control the import of goods that are not reliable to ensure community development.
- Institute a clear and precise system of billing customers served by mini-grid providers in zones not covered by national franchises.

MPs were given updates on the current status of renewable energy development around the world, focussing on the sub-Saharan Africa region.

Keynote sessions were moderated by Yacouba Sangaré, MP at the Ivory Coast National Assembly, and M. Mohamed Youba SOKONA, Renewable Energy Adviser, seconded by GIZ to the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE).

Mr Sokona gave some background on the creation of ECREEE and outlined the energy situation in the ECOWAS region in terms of population, installed capacity and electricity potential. He then gave an overview of statistics on access to electricity in West Africa, and different tariffs in each ECOWAS country. Mr Sokona set out the ECOWAS goals to promote renewable energy from 2020-2030. He emphasized projects and actions from the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy (EREP), and the ECOWAS Energy Efficiency Policy (EEEP).

The second presentation in this introductory session was titled 'Parliamentary Action on Renewable Energy (PARE)'. It was given by Sandra Pointel, West Africa Coordinator, Climate Parliament. She introduced Climate Parliament, the only global network of legislators focussed on RE. Its Secretariat is based in the UK with a strong network of national parliamentarians and representatives in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. This network has links with international institutions and platforms on renewable energy and climate.



Sandra Pointel

Ms Pointel set out Climate Parliament's vision on RE. There are three parts to the potential contribution of RE: energy access, energy security and climate change mitigation.

Where progress has been made throughout the world, it is because governments have forged better energy policies, set up a mechanism of fiscal incentives and public finance and increased the budget or the promotion of RE. Further, the question of RE has been included in the political parties' manifestos. Thanks to the collaboration between Climate Parliament and national members of parliament, the factors which lead to real success are: strengthening the capacity and awareness of the need for RE; providing information and facts, support and research using expert studies, advocacy on different issues and exchange of know-how.

Ms Pointel then described the Parliamentary Action on Renewable Energy (PARE) project phase 1 and 2. She pointed out the most favourable regional and international framework for this programme as well as the tools and procedures made available for parliamentarians to support them in their roles and activities.

Finally, Ms Pointel outlined the role of Climate Parliament and UNDP in relation to the parliamentarians of West Africa. The action plan is primarily as follows: fiscal and import duty incentives for solar products, community mini-grids, gender and energy, the Scaling Solar programme and large scale RE. These actions cannot be realised without taking into account the national and local context, while benefiting from regional and international exchanges (joint actions, sharing of expertise, development of action plans, etc). Interesting comments were made by the Honorables Hon BIYIKA, Hon. BAKO, Hon. ADOMAHOU et Hon. YÉO on the two presentations, with the following recommendations:

- Familiarise countries (governments, parliaments and experts) on the types of financing for RE in African countries;
- Create a link or a relationship with other types of organisations to appreciate the impact of actions in the ECOWAS region;
- Develop a law specifically for grid-connected RE. For off-grid, it is sufficient to envisage steps to integrate these resources in the grid-connected RE law;
- Work towards the sustainability of achievements of MPs associated with Climate Parliament so that national elections do not render them obsolete;
- Create parliamentary groups that span all the issues;
- Find the political will for RE projects.

MPs were given a frank assessment of the feasibility of running on 100 % renewable electricity by Mr Upendra Tripathy of ISA and an overview of Africa's renewable energy programmes from Dr Youba Sokona, head of the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), in the opening session of Day 2, chaired by Honorable Sunjeev Kaur BIRDI, MP of the parliament of Kenya.

Mr Tripathy said the real obstacle to achieving 100 % renewable power is the intermittency of resources: the unreliability of wind; problems with storage and balancing the grid. This target can only be reached if there is a change in perception at the policy and decision-making level. Careful planning and strategy will also be required.

Dr Sokona gave an overview of the AREI and presented general information on the African energy situation. Energy demand for the agricultural sector is growing, but both large and small enterprises have problems with their energy supplies. If the energy dilemma is solved, 50 % of

Africa's development problems are solved. AREI has ambitious goals: it aims to add another 10GW of renewable capacity by 2020 and 300GW by 2030.

To achieve the objectives of universal access to clean energy, AREI works on these principles and concepts:

- To contribute to sustainable development, any initiative must benefit African countries, and act as a tool of integration and cooperation.
- Installations resulting from publicly funded initiatives are the property of the state, the system put in place is transformative, the initiative envisages a multi-party participation and social and environmental safeguards. (concepts)

Private sector Investment in RE

One of the most pressing concerns for the development of RE in African nations is how to attract and protect private investment. Three experts gave their insights: Mr David Achi, Director of solar developer AD Solar, Dr Souleymane Berthé Director General, Renewable Energy Agency of Mali (REA- Mali), Ministry of Energy and Water, Mali and Honorable Jitu Soni, Tanzanian MP.

Mr Achi explained how the tax regime in Ivory Coast had benefitted the development of solar power companies there. There is a zero import duty on solar photovoltaic equipment, Value Added Tax (VAT) potentially reduced to 9 % on PV solar panels (in reality, this reduction remains quite elusive and it takes considerable time and effort to obtain), a new electricity code but no specific decree to implement RE and energy efficiency is planned.

Mali is perhaps the best example for other African nations to follow, as despite being part of the ECOWAS common tax and customs treaty, the country has found a way to make some exemptions on VAT and import duties that have proven very beneficial for RE. Mr Berthé explained how tax and VAT on imports of RE equipment were suspended in decree N°2014-816 /P-RM of 27th October 2014. He showed how this led to a decrease in the cost of RE equipment which then stimulated the installation of several RE projects in rural areas.

Honorable Jitu Soni presented a case study of tax exemption for renewables development in his country, Tanzania. MPs should facilitate the import of equipment into their countries by making concessions to private operators in terms of customs and taxes so that RE becomes accessible at a reduced cost, and opening training centres to improve the skills of local people to maintain RE products.



Gender and energy

Any programme designed to addressing the impacts of climate change should include a gender aspect, as women are disproportionately affected by climate change and their valuable knowledge and practical experience are often overlooked in policy development.

Women and girls are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change because they tend to be more dependent on agriculture, they are more prone to poverty and food scarcity and are less educated. In Africa cultural norms leave them underrepresented in decision-making, making it difficult for them to secure better opportunities.

Policy frameworks are not sufficiently gender-responsive currently, but parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to promote gender-responsive legislation on climate change and energy.

Three speakers at the Abidjan hearing gave their views on the topic of gender in energy in West Africa: Ms Bénédicte COMLAN, gender expert at Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) II in Benin, Ms Odette Kabaya, Regional adviser on Gender, Central Africa, UNDP, and Ms Monica MADUEKWE, Program Coordinator, ECOWAS Programme on Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access.

Ms Comlan gave an overview of the gender in energy situation in Benin, where like many African countries the different needs of men and women are not taken into account in laws, policies and development strategies. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) pact with the Benin government has a project to amend the country's gender policy document, as well as to reform policies on the production and distribution of energy, and access to off-grid electricity. Comlan said that gender and social inclusion needs to be integrated into energy policy, positive discrimination is needed to reduce inequality, and different stakeholders should collaborate to ensure better coordination and sharing of experiences.

Ms Odette Kabaya summarized the latest UNDP report on human development and gave examples of how women are held back from the energy sector. In many societies electricity is considered dangerous and so only boys and men should handle this danger. At the same time women and girls are not given training in the subject. Women are the primary users of energy in rural communities as most energy comes from traditional biomass sources such as wood, coal and agricultural waste. The following elements should be considered necessary: an analysis of men's and women's needs should precede a new technology being introduced; energy planning should take into account other aspects of human development; putting policies into practice should consider different roles; establishing a mechanism to increase and mobilise financing.

Ms Kabaya invited MPs present at the hearing to take certain actions: provide and promote political leadership required to take action; propose or modify a law to reinforce the legal framework and relative policies for the development of RE; oversee the implementation by the government of policies and defined goals.

Ms Monica Maduekwe of ECREEE gave an overview of the ECOWAS mainstreaming gender in energy project. Among the challenges are a lack of access to modern energy services, energy insecurity, the question of gender and energy poverty, climate change impacts. She also indicated some gender inequalities in access to energy in such domains as electrification, transport, availability of

resources etc). ECREEE proposes the following solutions: Develop innovative development policy instruments; create a critical mass of political decision-makers and female entrepreneurs aware of gender issues, fill knowledge gaps among people working in the gender and energy sector. All levels of society should be given a general understanding of energy considerations; Initiatives and investments in energy should be non-discriminatory; integrating gender and balanced among the sexes; increasing the participation of the women in the public sector in energy and decision-making posts.

MPs representing their respective countries but especially the West African countries forming the PARE project teamed up to devise action plans based on the discussions of the two-day hearing. Of particular interest were the following themes:

- Community grids initiative
- Financing investments in RE, gender and energy
- The green grid initiative and large-scale renewables
- Gender and energy

Benin

Benin's commitments:

- To participate in drafting the law on renewable energy with two MPs from the Network of parliamentarian partners of the Climate Parliament.
- To consider the separation/division between the law on renewable energy connected to the network and the policy document regarding off-grid.
- To ask the Minister of Energy a parliamentary question about the Scaling Solar Programme.
- To draft and send a letter to the Minister of Energy to advocate the need for Benin to follow and join the Scaling Solar programme. (The Climate Parliament, through its focal point in Benin, intends to draft the letter itself)
- To draft and send a letter to the Minister of Energy to advocate the need for Benin to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) programme (The Climate Parliament, through its focal point in Benin, intends to draft the letter itself).
- To agree to attend the workshop that the Climate Parliament is organising for May 2017 on mini-grids with the collaboration of the Consortium Practical Actions and Innovation Energie Développement (PA-IED).



Ivory Coast

The Ivorian parliamentarians have agreed, with technical support from the Climate Parliament, to address certain actions with the government:

- Membership of the Scaling Solar programme (and all renewable energy programmes);
- Ask a parliamentary question about the need for the construction of a coal-fired power station;
- Lobby for incentives to invest in renewable energy;
- Propose tax exemption laws for renewable energy equipment;
- Ask a parliamentary question about feed-in tariffs;
- Lobby to get the government to guarantee the purchase price for the mini-networks;
- Lobby to push the government to integrate the International Solar Alliance programme;
- Lobby to push the government to have a clear policy on solar pumps.



Senegal

- Initiate a meeting with Mr Thierno Alassane SALL, Ministry of Energy and Renewable Energy Development, before the end of June 2017 to discuss the various initiatives in place to promote the growth of the sector and the current legislative framework.
- Ask a parliamentary question about what stage the government of Senegal is at in terms of taking steps to ratify the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement and advocate for ratification of the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement.
- Draft and ask a parliamentary question to clarify the current context of application of the third Decree implementing the Renewable Energy Policy Law no. 2010-21 (Article 8 regarding tax and customs incentives on renewable energy materials and equipment).
- Work for the issues of renewable energy, access to energy, drinking water (solar pumps, mini-networks for renewable energy) to be included political party manifestos
- Write a letter to the Minister of Energy highlighting the possibilities of solar pumps (for example, in the context of access to water and development).
- Get the Senegalese government to commit to initiatives relating to solar pumps with government incentives for developing the private sector.
- Facilitate commitment to 10,000 solar pumps for Senegal (in collaboration with COSEER for the private sector and the Senegalese Rural Electrification Agency (ASER) for clarification on regulatory issues with the support of parliamentarians regarding the government's commitment to public incentive and bilateral support issues).