

## Call to strengthen global action on renewable energy at Marrakech climate conference



*Climate negotiators make strong call for renewable energy*

**New Delhi, 15 June (Indrajit Bose)** — Key developing country negotiating blocs at a press conference on the sidelines of the May climate talks in Bonn, Germany, called for strengthening global action on renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Senior negotiators said that this must be done at the twenty-second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP22) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), scheduled to be held in Marrakech, Morocco, in November this year.

The call was made by Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, Chair of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group, Ambassador Hussein Alfa Nafu, Chair of the African Group of negotiators, Amjad Abdulla, chief negotiator of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and Ambassador Anna Lindstedt of Sweden at a press conference on the final day of the climate talks in Bonn on 26 May. Also present at the press conference was Ayman Cherkaoui of Morocco (representing the in-coming COP22 Presidency).

**Mpanu Mpanu** from the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** said that the time between Bonn and Marrakech must be used to put renewable energy on the agenda of international meetings and for fund raising. He announced that the LDCs are planning to launch a major initiative on renewable energy at COP22, where a tremendous opportunity exists to strengthen support on renewables to the LDCs, as part of a global programme of support, and to move forward with concrete actions that can make the vision of the Paris Agreement a reality.

“In COP 22, we hope to formally launch this initiative, which will be a global one, and which will play a catalytic role to get into the low emissions pathway,” said Mpanu Mpanu.

“Paramount among the immediate actions we need to take is a massive scaling up of renewable energy and energy efficiency worldwide,” he stressed. “New energy needs to be clean energy, and clean efficiency of energy will lie at the core of responding to climate change and our sustainable development future,” said Mpanu Mpanu.

“The Marrakech COP will be an action and implementation COP,” he said further, adding that, “with the LDC renewable energy and energy efficiency initiative we are following up on (the agreements reached in) Paris and will begin to deliver concrete solutions vital to addressing climate change.”

Elaborating on the initiative to be launched, Mpanu Mpanu said the initiative would scale up provision of renewable energy to LDCs, while promoting energy efficiency in the context of a wider global effort to provide energy access, promote renewable energy and tackle climate change.

“The initiative will recognize that new energy capacity should be clean and low carbon as well as the importance of moderating the demand for consumption through efficient use of resources, reducing pollution and enabling energy to be channeled to areas of greatest need,” he said.

The initiative, the LDC group Chair elaborated, will also address special challenges facing the LDCs, the relationships between access to energy, poverty reduction and sustainable development, and the crucial role that energy plays in rural development, industrialization and the provision of services.

He also said that the initiative will enable the LDCs to avoid locking into fossil fuel-based energy systems, while putting in place more clean renewable energy systems, and ensuring they are built towards people-centred renewable energy societies.

**Ambassador Nafo (Mali)** highlighted the launch of the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) at COP21 in Paris last year, with the transformational goal of ensuring universal energy access to all Africans. He stressed that the AREI was launched in Paris with two targets to be achieved: renewable energy of 10 giga watts (GW) by 2020, and at least 300 GW by 2030. He added that this means doubling current electricity generation through renewables by 2030.

Nafo said further that the initiative received unprecedented support in Paris. “All of Africa’s partners ... have signed a declaration of support, which made a financial pledge of at least USD 10 billion to support the first target of 10 GW. More than that, it was a declaration to establish a platform of the existing initiatives and actions in the continent to work together. This for us is more important than any financial pledge. This is significant and transformative,” emphasized the African Group Chair.

(According to the AREI [joint statement](#) issued on behalf of the French government on 8 December 2015 during COP21 in Paris, “We welcome the significant financial commitments that have already been made by a number of countries to accelerate efforts to harness Africa’s renewable energy potential and expand energy access across the continent, and we commit to mobilizing at least 10 billion USD cumulatively from 2015 to 2020.” The partners to the joint statement included Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the USA, the United Kingdom, the EU, Sweden and the Netherlands.)

Nafo also said that this was the first time an initiative had been led, owned and driven by Africans and 54 African Heads of State. “By Marrakech we should have a full pipeline, not just of projects, but we will also address all the barriers too (for the deployment of the initiative),” he added.

Recalling how the AREI started, Nafo said that when the idea was initially discussed within the African Group in 2013, it was meant to be a global programme, but they realized that it might be more practical to start with Africa. “There are six small island developing states and 34 LDCs in Africa. We had the African initiative launched in COP21 as the first round. At COP22 we will have Africa and the LDCs and the others,” explained Nafo, adding that the Group is building on lessons learned.

“COP22 in Marrakech can deliver new voluntary cooperation that enables the UNFCCC process to accelerate action and deliver results for people, communities and productive sectors in our countries,” he said.

Responding to a question on the cost of such initiatives, Nafo said catalytic financing is required to address gaps and about using incremental finance to blend, leverage and mobilise what is needed. “The economic model or the business case for renewable energy in most regions is established, but you need some incremental concessional finance to mobilise and catalyse the finance,” he said.

Mpanu Mpanu, also in response to the question, added that there were different national circumstances, depending on the continent or constituency they were in.

“Each of us have different costs when it comes to capital because of the risk, the enabling environment, the capacity, and this discussion is one about trying to level the playing field so that you can ensure the money is best used. In a country, you may invest USD 1 million of public money and be able to leverage USD 9 million. This may not be possible in other countries and could even be the contrary. Also in some of the countries, energy access needs are high; so in some countries it will be about investing in energy access, and in some countries we will invest in energy efficiency. This is to ensure we can channel all the technical, financial resources, all the political will, and try to have in Marrakech an initiative which will help us be better off when it comes to energy,” said Mpanu Mpanu.

**Abdulla (Maldives)** said while it was a major accomplishment to include limiting temperature rise to below 1.5°C goal in the Paris, the goal would remain unachievable without massive action in all countries, both developed and developing, especially in the energy sector. “Moving towards renewable energy is a priority and must happen in a very short time. AOSIS is fully committed to implementing renewable energy,” said Abdulla.

He also added that the AOSIS had a number of ongoing programmes on renewable energy and that the Group is working to launch a new programme. “We see tremendous potential to scale up renewable energy and improving energy access, while providing jobs, energy security and preventing locking in of fossil fuel-based energy systems,” said Abdulla.

Pointing to some of the challenges, Abdulla said that the small island developing states (SIDs) lack access to resources and infrastructure, and face real threats from the adverse impact of climate change, and therefore any effort to scale up renewable energy initiative must take into account the special situation of the SIDs.

The Marrakech global renewable energy support initiative, said Abdulla, would support action in each major group and regions of the world, while enabling stronger international cooperation to achieve the 1.5°C goal. “Without such efforts, the prospect of achieving 1.5°C are low and the risks to small islands and other vulnerable countries are great. With such an effort, we can strengthen the global transition to renewable energy and ensure a better and safe future for all of us,” emphasised Abdulla.

**Ambassador Lindstedt (Sweden)** said that such initiatives are needed to shift the focus to implementation of the Paris Agreement and spur higher ambition from developed and developing countries. She added that COP22 would be important for providing the tool countries need to move ahead in this regard. Sweden, she said, was heavily dependent on fossil fuels but had since moved to “almost 100 per cent clean energy” and that the country was cleaner and people, happier. “We want to assist countries with the mistakes made and transform and leapfrog to renewable energy, and where dirty energy is used, to assist such countries in the transformation,” said Lindstedt.

Speaking at the event, **Cherkaoui** said that Morocco would like to see action and implementation and concrete solutions emerging at COP22. “There is a strong drive for energy to be an enabler.”