

THE EAST AFRICAN SUSWATCH E-BULLETIN

A Monthly from the East African Sustainability Watch Network founded by Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) and SusWatch Kenya

INFORSE Call: ‘Make Scenarios & Plans for National Transition 100% Renewable Energy with Local Solutions’ at the CAN International Festival of Ideas



The Climate Action Network International (CAN I) Festival of Ideas held on March 14, 2022 was a day full of exciting events hosted in parallel to one another. The Festival was an opportunity for CAN nodes members, allies and partners to run small workshops that allow collective brainstorming and diving into different themes that help us advance the collective implementation of our global CAN 2021-25 strategy whose overall slogan is: ‘Building Power and Action in a Climate Emergency’.

The Festival of Ideas offered a series of workshops that took place in parallel and via zoom. As a member of CAN, the International Network for Sustainable Energy (INFORSE) organised a workshop titled: ‘Make Scenarios & Plans for National Transition 100% Renewable Energy with Local Solutions’

The workshop featured short presentations on ideas on how CSOs would make scenarios and plans to national transition to 100% Renewable Energy with local solutions in the global South. These included the transition to renewable energy in Kenya; East African Perspective & Plans in Uganda, the need for local solutions; and the need for 100% renewable energy in Sri Lanka. This was followed by questions and answers from the audience.

INFORSE believes that CSOs should work on National Scenarios & Plans for transition to 100% renewable energy throughout the Global South, with No Fossils & No Nuclear in picture. This is based on its works over two decades in support of sustainable energy transition in the global north. Judit Szoleczky (INFORSE Secretariat) noted that, ‘The transition to sustainable use of renewable energy in the global South requires substantially different solutions, where focus must be on reducing overuse of biomass, reduction of poverty, and development’.

Kimbowa Richard, (Chair, INFORSE East Africa) highlighted the current CSOs engagement in support of the transition to sustainable energy in East Africa under the *East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action (EASE CA)* Project. He noted the challenge of unsustainable dependence on biomass as a major source of energy in East Africa. He added that, ‘This has resulted in a cycle of environmental degradation and poverty, while accelerating the impacts of climate change in the region’.

In Uganda, the demand for biomass has been accelerated by the wave of refugees (reported to be around 1.4 million in West Nile region alone). Kimbowa therefore noted that a sustainable energy transition at national level calls for embracing of decentralized solutions to boost development rather than over-centralised ones; putting sustainable energy as a main part of the ambition in the nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which should be wholly supported by (global) climate finance, and the need to prioritize cooking and lighting, transport and agricultural value chain sectors for sustainable energy

The discussions agreed on the importance of stakeholder engagement and dialogues on national transition to renewable energy with local solutions, cooperation amongst CSOs in the quest for 100% renewable energy promotion and exchange learning within countries of the global South.

The Festival of Ideas focused on: Climate Impacts (including Loss and Damage, Adaptation, World we Want campaign); Fossil Fuel (including fights, phase out, just transition, renewable energy, transnational campaigning, and international advocacy); national ambition and action (including revised NDC’s, domestic advocacy & campaigns); COP27 and CAN’s Institutional Transformation (Platform review, Language Accessibility, Decoloniality)

CSOs Dialogue with Ministry of Energy and Minerals in Tanzania on Renewables

As part of the *East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action* (EASE CA) Project meeting that took place 21-23 March 2022 in Dar es Salaam, 18 CSOs from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Denmark held a virtual meeting with Eng. Emillian Nyanda from the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Tanzania. The discussion centered on transformation to renewables and the role of NGOs in Tanzania and the East African region.

In his opening remarks, Eng. Nyanda noted that Tanzania is working to increase share of renewables in the country's energy mix apart. He added that apart from hydropower, the rest of the renewables remain unexplored, while biomass energy dependence remains high. He appreciated the role of CSOs in promoting renewables, and highlighted a number of renewable energy projects that are being implemented or planned across Tanzania. He added that Tanzania develop a renewable have input from stakeholders. 'In this will be involved international he emphasized. He meeting that Tanzania is at the start of developing a National Biomass Energy Strategy. He also noted that Tanzania has a National Energy Efficiency Action Plan with measures that are expected to make the energy industry more efficient, less polluting and gender inclusive, improving delivery of public services through reduced electricity costs, especially for large consumers.

'Women are a particularly important component of the clean cooking value chain as they are responsible for the cooking; therefore, their preferences around design, taste, cooking times, fuel supply challenges, and other cultural considerations must be taken into account'

is in final stages to energy strategy that will CSOs and other process, key stakeholders including regional and development partners', also informed that

Eng. Nyanda appreciated the need to review the Country's 100% Renewable Energy Report prepared about five years ago, in order to reflect the new and emerging challenges including climate change, technological advancement and innovations.

Participants made several inputs during the virtual dialogue. Eng. Sawe (TaTEDO) noted that for a successful transition from biomass to LPG and clean cooking options, stakeholder engagement is necessary. Judit Szoleczky (INFORSE Secretariat) urged for a need to promote local solutions in Tanzania's energy strategies and plans including at the local government levels. Eng. Nyanda welcomed the idea and requested TaTEDO to formally share the *Catalogue of Local Solutions – East Africa* with his Ministry as a follow up, so that options on how they can be taken up is explored.

Mary Swai (TaTEDO) raised the importance of clean cooking as part of Tanzania's renewable energy strategy and plans so as to address energy efficiency, health and other development issues. Eng Nyanda informed the meeting that Tanzania's Rural Energy Master plan includes a clean cooking component. However, according to the Tanzania Country Action Plan for Clean Cookstoves and Fuels (July 2014), formation of clusters on clean cooking technologies is considered an appropriate way to build an inclusive value chain for clean cookstoves and fuels. This process entails the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the development of new cookstove designs, local manufacturing projects, distribution efforts, marketing techniques, awareness campaigns, and other components of the value chain. Women are a particularly important component of the value chain as they are responsible for the cooking; therefore, their preferences around design, taste, cooking times, fuel supply challenges, and other cultural considerations must be taken into account.

Gunnar Olesen (INFORSE secretariat) inquired about the challenges faced by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals in promoting solar minigrids. Eng. Nyanda noted that geographical differences (including differing landscapes, access among others) in Tanzania is one factor. However, he quickly added that Tanzania's Rural Energy Agency is mapping out areas to be electrified with minigrids and those that can benefit from the main grid.

This Dialogue is part of a series that the EASE CA Project has organized. Read about the previous virtual Dialogues and other information about this Project from here: <https://www.inforse.org/africa/EASE.htm>

EarthDay 2022: To Invest in Our Planet, Democratize Environmental Actions



Action on energy
inefficiency key to
invest in our planet
(Photo: JEEP)

Every year on April 22, EarthDay marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970, with roots in the US. Today, environmental concerns like pollution, climate change, floods and droughts occur cross borders. This calls for more global coherent responses than before in order to act in time.

According to Earthday.org, ‘We need to act (boldly), innovate (broadly), and implement (equitably). It’s going to take all of us. All in. Businesses, governments, and citizens — everyone accounted for, and everyone accountable.

And while there is still time to solve the climate crisis, time to choose BOTH a prosperous and sustainable future, and time to restore nature and build a healthy planet for our children and their children, time is short’.

Hence the EarthDay 2022 Theme is *Invest In Our Planet*. For East Africa *investing in our planet* starts with ‘auditing’ the lifestyles that we lead. On one side, there are millions, who in the quest for basic needs like food, fuel and water, millions of people continue to *degrade rather than invest in our planet*. In the same region there is an increase in a ‘middle class’ (including the fast growing industries that have to be regularly reminded about responsibilities they have, to sustainable development commitments) that can afford to access the basics, access more resources, but sadly have unsustainable lifestyles. The challenges of poor single plastic disposal, pollution of water bodies, encroachment on wetlands and other fragile ecosystems are some examples arising from this.

Overall, the East African region continues to be susceptible to recurrent hazards such as droughts, floods, pests and diseases that affect agriculture and food production, threatening millions with hunger and starvation. For example, maize, a staple food crop in East Africa that is sensitive to even a few days of high temperatures continues to be affected due to extended droughts. Also, many people, who rely on biomass for cooking (especially women and children), continue to ‘live’ with smoke that contributes to a range of chronic and acute health impacts, as well as causing further depletion of forest resources.

Therefore in East Africa, the EarthDay 2022 theme: *Invest In Our Planet* calls for actions to squarely address the drivers of environmental degradation, vulnerability and poverty. Without this, the trends to degrade our planet will continue. One possibility for this is to democratize environmental actions so that citizens, citizen groups and leaders in all walks of life can do something at their respective levels to help offset the above negative trends as a way to *Invest In Our Planet*.

Getting everyone rich or poor, adult and children, young and old, urban and rural folks to do something is not an option any more but an obligation if we are to genuinely *Invest In Our Planet* to reverse the negative trends.

One sector that stands out for such action in East Africa is cooking. According to the 2021 edition of *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report* that monitors and assesses achievements in the global quest for universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy by 2030, continuing to rely on polluting fuels and inefficient technologies will have dramatic consequences for the environment, economic development, and most notably, on the health of women and children. The challenge in East Africa just like in other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa is to understand, first, how cultural, economic, and social factors combine to slow progress; and, second, how to expand acceptance of affordable and available solutions centered on cleaner fuels, cookstoves with very low emissions, and efficient electric appliances that can be plugged into the grid or run on solar photovoltaic (PV) panels connected to a battery.

The International Network for Sustainable Energy (INFORSE) through its NGO Cooperation Project: *East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy & Climate Action*, 2019 -22 has documented a collection of sustainable solutions in East Africa. We believe that these local solutions will contribute to democratization of environmental and climate action and is also handy for this year’s Earthday theme: *Invest In Our Planet*

Read more about EarthDay 2022: <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2022/> & The Catalogue of Local Sustainable Solutions-East Africa: <http://localsolutions.inforse.org/>