



## HIGH LEVEL INTERACTIVE PANEL DISCUSSION

### Advancing Low Carbon Development in the West African Region

On the occasion of

COP21 - "Paris 2015"

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015 Time: 14:00 -15:30am Venue: Salle 1 Africa Pavilion

#### 1. Abstract

The West Africa sub-region is characterized by interrelated challenges of energy access, energy security and climate change. This trio of challenges in turn considerably complicates the implementation of regional strategies aimed at fostering socio-economic development. The potentials for deployment of renewable energy as key means to de-carbonize the energy systems are already widely acknowledged especially due to high renewable energy potentials in the sub-region. ECREEE, as a specialized agency in the West African sub-region is mandated to promote the market penetration of renewable energy and energy efficiency and has the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHGs) as an overarching objective of its mandate. The High Level Interactive Panel Discussion is being organized to facilitate discussions and exchanges on how the region can mobilize its potentials in advancing Low Carbon Development. The specific objective is to determine and examine the imperatives, benefits and the way forward for Low-Carbon Development in the ECOWAS Region. The event will bring together policy and high level decision makers and individuals with technical expertise from environment and energy sectors, including CSOs, NGOs etc. to deliberate on the given topic and the key messages experiences and lessons learned and identified from the discussions will be summarized in a policy brief and circulated widely to facilitate regional understanding of the benefits of Low Carbon Development in the West African Region.

#### 2. Context

The ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency –ECREEE, is a specialized Agency of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). ECREEE was established to contribute to the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of West Africa by improving access to modern, reliable and affordable energy services, increasing energy security and reducing energy related GHG emissions and climate change impacts of the energy system. The main objective of center is to create favorable framework conditions and an enabling environment for renewable energy and energy efficiency markets by supporting activities directed at removing technical, legal, institutional, economic, financial, policy and capacity related barriers.



In view of the high vulnerability of the region to climate change and the urgent need for access to reliable and affordable energy supply, ECREEE is seeking to promote Low Carbon Development and foster investments in the region's renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors. This will in turn enable the twain objective of improving energy access and mitigating carbon emissions to be achieved simultaneously.

### 3. Background

The West African region comprises 15 sovereign states further united through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and in their desire to achieve regional integration in all sectors of economic activity, namely: industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources and trade as well as economic, social and cultural issues.

The region however is characterized by the interrelated challenges of energy access, energy security and climate change. This trio of challenges complicate the implementation of regional strategies aimed at fostering socio-economic development, attracting foreign investment, providing basic social services, and if unchecked will ultimately limit the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Confronted with a daunting challenge of ensuring the welfare of their population, ECOWAS governments recognize that access to energy is fundamental to eradicating widespread poverty and achieving development goals.

However, Climate Change is exacerbating development problems in the region and tends to affect energy development negatively. According to the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy Paper (2012), there are 176 million inhabitants out of the 300.7 million ECOWAS citizens, that lack access to electricity services. In addition, 80% of the population lacks access to modern clean and affordable cooking energy, relying mainly on biomass energy to meet their household energy needs. There is now a reliance on wood fuel (fire wood and charcoal) across the region which is unsustainable and a major contributor to climate change.

Given the region's vulnerability to climate change and the urgent need for reliable and affordable energy supply to sustain growth and development, policymakers face a dilemma because expansion of an energy supply based on inefficient, low-cost, fossil fuel based technologies will increase GHG emissions and its consequent negative impacts. Climate change impacts (temperature rise, extreme weather events and droughts) will challenge the energy security of West African countries and will limit a progress on closing the energy access gap and tackling poverty. In addition, rapid population growth, urbanization and socio-economic development in major countries in the region leading to increased demand for energy that is often met by unsustainable high carbon technologies.

The challenge therefore is to delink development from increased greenhouse gas emissions. The objective is no longer just development, but development that is low carbon and also resilient to climate change especially West African countries already facing difficulty sustaining economic growth. Nevertheless, it can be argued that there are unique opportunities to transform climate challenges into developmental opportunities. West African region can 'leapfrog' the carbon-intensive phase of development and move directly to cleaner and more advanced solutions.

Low Carbon Development and can generate significant benefits. There are strong grounds to exploit the benefits which are **Productivity, Technology and Responsibility**. For instance in terms of productivity LCD can significantly increase output directly and enhance growth potential. It can also help make a shift from brown growth to green growth thus making development more environmentally sustainable. In addition countries can benefit from the technological progress of adopting LCD strategies. Action to reduce emissions is also likely to generate other valuable co-benefits, for example, developing renewable energy sources can produce co-benefits such as reduced air pollution, greater energy

security, reduced foreign exchange needs and an improved quality of life. The potential for renewable energy as a key means for the de-carbonization is already widely acknowledged and West Africa has huge renewable energy resources so far unexploited. Harnessing these renewable energy resources will not only put the region on a path towards sustainable energy access but also on a path towards low carbon climate resilient future.

#### 4. Objectives and Outputs

The High Level Interactive Panel Discussion is organized to highlight the synergies between development and climate change mitigation. The specific objective is to highlight the imperatives and benefits of Low Carbon Development in the West African region and to determine how the region can catalyze the benefits of Low Carbon Development.

The event will bring together policy makers, Key decision Makers, financiers, including CSOs, ENGOs, BINGOs etc. The key messages experiences and lessons will be summarized in a policy brief and circulated widely.

#### 5. Key Questions

1. What are the developmental challenges in the West African region in the face of a changing climate?
2. What are the Imperatives and benefits for Low-Carbon Development? And why should countries, especially LDC already having difficulty sustaining economic growth adopt Low Carbon Development.
3. What is needed to harness or catalyze the benefits in the West African region?
4. What are the main elements of Low Carbon Development and in what sectors can the impacts be most visible?
5. What synergies can be achieved with other policies, strategies and mechanisms that seek to minimize carbon emissions?
6. What are the necessary tools than can drive low carbon development processes in the region?
7. What is the status of re the trends and lessons that can be learnt from within the region and experiences from other regions?
8. What are some of the challenges of Low-Carbon Development Strategy development in the West African region? And Recommendations moving forward

#### 6. Key Panelist

	Panelist Name	Organization/Position	Responsibility	Confirmation
1.	Abdoulaye Baldé	Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development Senegal	Moderator	Confirmed
2.	Honorable Pa Ousman Jarju	Minster of Environment, Climate Change, Water and Wildlife The Gambia	Co Moderator	Confirmed
3.	Pradeep Monga	Director and Special Representative of the Director-General on Energy, UNIDO NIDO	Panelist	Confirmed
4.	ALEXANDER OCHS	Director of Climate and Energy Worldwatch Institute	Panelist	Confirmed
5.	Dr. Youba Sokona	Special Advisor on sustainable development at the South Centre		Confirmed
6.	Ron Benioff	Director of the LEDS GP Secretariat	Panelist	Confirmed

		NREL, USA		
7.	Edward Awafo	Head, Africa Low Emission Development Partnership AfLP Secretariat	Panelist	Confirmed

## VI. Draft Agenda – Final to be circulated at venue

- Welcome remarks and introduction of Panelists-**Panel Chair Abdoulaye Baldé Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development Senegal**
- Overview of the West African Region, focus on ECOWAS countries- **Mahama Kappiah, Executive Director ECREEE.**
- **Statements by panelist (2min)**

### Panel Discussions:

**KEY Question 1:** What are the developmental challenges in the West African region in the face of a changing climate?

**Key question 2:** What are the Imperatives and benefits for Low-Carbon Development? And why should countries, especially LDC already having difficulty sustaining economic growth adopt Low Carbon Development?

**Key question 3:** What is needed to harness or catalyze the benefits in the West African region?

**Key question 4:** What are the main elements of Low Carbon Development and in what sectors can the impacts be most visible?

**Key question 5:** What synergies can be achieved with other policies, strategies and mechanisms that seek to minimize carbon emissions?

**Key question 6:** What are the necessary tools than can drive low carbon development processes in the region?

**Key question 7:** What is the status of re the trends and lessons that can be learnt from within the region and experiences from other regions?

**Key question 8:** What are some of the challenges of Low-Carbon Development Strategy development in the West African region? And Recommendations moving forward

- Q&A-Audience
- Closing Remarks
- Group Picture Panelist and Organizers

