

Forum: Human Rights Committee

Agenda: On measures to promote access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa

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Introduction

Sub-Saharan African citizens are suffering from a lack of access to electricity. Roughly 600 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa lack access to electricity, about 48 percent of the total population of 1.24 billion. It is a grave issue since energy access is an important lifeline for people, enabling economic opportunities, boosting job creation, and improving education and health care services. To mitigate the damage, global organizations such as the World Bank Group are increasing interest and seeking sustainable solutions.

The number of Sub-Saharan African citizens without access to electricity has significantly increased. In 2010, the number of people with a lack of access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa was 33 percent and had risen to 46 percent in 2019. However, the overall population is decreasing. This phenomenon indicates that electrification is lagging behind population growth in various countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Malawi. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to ensure that everyone has access to energy by 2030. Moreover, the African Union Commission suggested that all businesses, industries, institutions, and homes in Africa have access to effective energy by 2063.

As access to electricity has become indispensable in life, restricted areas face various challenges. If a lack of access to energy continues, the region will not be able to achieve economic transformation and lift millions of poverty. A lack of electricity restricts job opportunities, and it will lead to increased running costs, reduced productivity, and profitability for businesses. If this issue is not fully solved, the number of people without access to electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa will increase incessantly. For example, Africa's economic growth rate has reduced by more than 2% per year due to the lack of electricity infrastructure. Electricity shortage has become an obstacle to sustainable economic and social development in SSA countries. The world society must prevent greater harm and educate the world population about the dangers of a lack of access to electricity.

Key Terms

Electricity – Electricity is energy generated by the flow of electrons, which is mainly transmitted through wires and devices. Electricity has many uses and is an essential energy

source in modern society, such as lighting, heating, industrial production, telecommunications, and home appliance operations.

Economic Opportunity – Economic opportunity refers to the potential for an individual or community to grow and thrive economically. It can be obtained through various channels, such as jobs, businesses, investments, and education, and provides opportunities for people to utilize resources and engage in production activities. Economic opportunities play an important role in increasing income and improving living standards.

Job Creation – Job creation is the process of creating new jobs or employment opportunities in the economy. This involves the activities of governments, businesses, or other organizations to create new jobs to promote economic growth and development. Job creation has significant implications for reducing unemployment, increasing income, and boosting the overall economy.

Education – Education is a process of transferring knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. It plays an important role in individual growth and social development. Education takes place through schools, universities, vocational training, and informal learning activities, providing people with opportunities to develop problem-solving skills and critical thinking. Education is an important factor in promoting economic opportunities and social equality.

Health Care Services – Health care services are various services provided to maintain and promote people's health. They include various medical activities such as prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation, and they are provided by hospitals, clinics, and health centers. Health care services play an important role in overall health care as well as prevention and treatment of diseases, and they contribute to raising the level of health in society.

Sustainable Solutions – Sustainable solutions mean how to effectively utilize resources with long-term positive effects on environmental, social, and economic aspects. They are solutions that meet current needs while ensuring that future generations can use them without running out of resources, and are applied in a variety of areas such as renewable energy, improved energy efficiency, and environmental protection. Sustainable solutions aim to minimize environmental destruction, reduce social inequality, and promote economic prosperity.

Economic Transformation – Economic transformation is the process by which a country or region fundamentally changes its economic structure and the way it operates. These include changes in industry, technology, productivity, and labor markets, and act as key factors driving economic growth and development. Economic transformation drives sustainable economic development through the development of new industries, technological innovation, job creation, and changes in income distribution.

Poverty – Poverty refers to a condition in which a person or family cannot obtain enough basic necessities of life. This includes a lack of economic resources as well as a lack of several social resources such as education, health, and employment opportunities, which can degrade people's quality of life. Poverty negatively affects not only individuals but also the development of communities or countries, and requires global efforts to resolve it.

Productivity – Productivity is an indicator of the amount of output created over a period of time. It represents the efficiency of economic activity, and the higher the productivity, the more results you can have with fewer resources. Improving productivity plays an important role in economic growth, strengthening corporate competitiveness, and achieving a better standard of living.

Profitability – Profitability refers to the ability of a company or business to make a profit beyond its cost. It is measured by the difference between income and cost and is an important indicator of whether a company can continue to make a profit. High profitability ensures a company's financial stability, gives positive signals to investors, and enables business expansion and sustainability.

General Overview

Sub-Saharan Africa still faces electricity shortages nowadays, which pose a major obstacle to the region's economic development and social welfare. Over 700 million people in the nation cannot have access to electricity, especially in rural areas.

As a result, several international organizations and private companies are pushing various programs and projects to address this issue. These organizations are expanding the continent's power grid

through financial support, policy development, and technological innovation, and presenting sustainable solutions utilizing renewable energy

Niger

Electricity access in Niger is very limited. Only 19.5% of the population could access to electricity in 2022. The major problem in Niger is the gap between rural and urban regions. Compared to rural areas, 60% of the population can access electricity in urban areas. Nowadays, the Nigerien Agency for the Promotion of Rural Electrification (ANPER) has developed targets to bring clean energy to rural households. The World Bank has also allocated funds to finance solar systems for health facilities, with the goal of improving access to healthcare services.

Ghana

Ghana has one of the highest electrification rates in SSA, with 85.1% of the population having access to electricity as of 2022. Ghana's electrification rate has increased steadily over the past 20 years, from 60.5% in 2008 to 86% in 2021. The government's goal is to achieve universal access to electricity. Ghana's electricity is produced from a variety of sources, including: fossil fuels, solar power, water, gas, and coal. Ghana also supplies electricity to neighboring countries, including Togo, Benin, and Mali.

Zambia

Zambia's electricity access has been increasing, but it remains unevenly distributed across the country. In 2022, 47.8% of the population in Zambia had access to electricity. This is below the Sub-Saharan Africa average of 47%. Over 75% of urban households have access to electricity, while less than 12% of rural households do. The Zambian government aims to triple access to electricity by 2030, reaching 70% of the population. The World Bank Electricity Service Access Project has helped improve electrification in rural areas. Private sector solar home system (SHS) companies are also expanding their reach to provide off-grid connections

South Africa

In 2022, 86.5% of South Africa's population had access to electricity. This is an increase from 34% in 1991, but there is still a gap between urban and rural areas, and not everyone has access to the grid. Rural areas have lower access to electricity than urban areas. The Department of Energy estimates that between a quarter and a fifth of South Africans still don't have access to the grid.

South Sudan

South Sudan has one of the lowest electricity access rates in the world, with only 8.4% of the population having access in 2022. In rural areas, 98.3% of rural households in South Sudan lack electricity. Also, 70% of households in urban areas lack electricity. Those connected to the power network experience frequent blackouts or forced load shedding.

Major parties involved

World Bank

The World Bank is in charge of improving energy access in the African region. In particular, it is expanding power access in sub-Saharan Africa through the 'Energy for All' program, which provides financial support, policy advice, and technical support to help governments improve their power infrastructure. In addition, the World Bank is promoting sustainable energy access through projects that utilize renewable energy such as solar and wind power.

African Development Bank (AfDB)

The African Development Bank is an important financial institution for improving energy access on the African continent, especially through the 'Light Up and Power Africa' project, which promotes the expansion of the electric grid and the development of renewable energy. This project provides important financial support for expanding the electric grid and modernizing the country-specific electricity infrastructure. The AfDB is also addressing power shortages through various programs to increase energy efficiency across Africa, and contributing to regional development by inducing private sector investment.

International Energy Agency (IEA)

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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) plays an important role in supporting sustainable development in Africa. The UNDP is contributing to the

improvement of energy access, especially through renewable energy projects, and in cooperation with governments, it supports the modernization of power grid infrastructure and the expansion of investment in renewable energy. The UNDP also helps develop and implement policies to solve energy access problems, and sets the stage for global cooperation to address energy poverty.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
2000	<p>In 2000, the gap in energy access was already evident globally. In developing Asia, only 67% of the population could access electricity, which means leaving a significant portion of the region without this critical resource. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, faced an even more challenging situation regarding access to clean cooking fuels and technologies, with only about 9% of the population having access to resources.</p>
2000-2010	<p>Over the past two decades, significant progress has been made in developing Asia, with nearly 1.2 billion people can access to electricity. This progress has resulted in 97% of the population having access to electricity by 2020, a remarkable improvement from the 67% recorded in 2000. Also, the percentage of the population with access to clean cooking fuels and technologies increased from 49% in 2000 to 69.7% globally in 2020. However, progress has been uneven in Sub-Saharan Africa. Over the same period, the region saw only slight improvements in access to clean cooking fuels and technologies, with the share increasing from 9% to just 18%. These statistics reflect the region's attempt to reach global trends in energy access and highlight the region's persistent energy challenges.</p>
2013	<p>By 2013, the lack of energy access crisis in sub-Saharan Africa became even more apparent. The number of people without access to electricity in the region peaked at 613 million and it was the highest recorded. This stark figure highlighted the immense scale of the issue and the urgent need for targeted</p>

solutions to address the lack of infrastructure and affordability challenges across the region.

2019

There were signs of progress by 2019, as the number of people without access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa decreased slightly to approximately 572 million. While this decline was encouraging, it was a still slow improvement compared to the rest of the world. Furthermore, the modest gains achieved this year demonstrated the region's continued struggle to keep up with the global shift toward universal energy access.

2020

The COVID-19 pandemic brought setbacks again in 2020, reversing some of the progress made in previous years. In sub-Saharan Africa, the share of the global population without access to electricity increased from 74% before the pandemic to 77%. This was primarily due to pandemic-related factors such as job losses and reduced income levels, which slowed the rate of new grid and off-grid connections. Affordability issues became a significant barrier for households, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged communities. This problem has persisted partially until this day.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- Through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the United Nations aims to ensure that affordable and reliable sustainable energy is available to everyone in the world by 2030. This goal emphasizes that modern energy services are at the heart of economic development and poverty reduction, especially by targeting the region with the lowest access to electricity, sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). SDG 7 aims to go beyond simply supplying electricity to achieve environmentally sustainable development by strengthening renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- The United Nations is implementing a detailed plan to expand access to electricity through the 'Sustainable Energy for All' (SE4ALL). SE4ALL is strengthening investment in electricity infrastructure and policy support in SSA countries, stating that "expanding access to energy is essential for addressing poverty and creating economic opportunities." Through this, it aims to

improve power accessibility in local communities and address power shortages by introducing various energy technologies, including small distributed energy systems.

- The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is introducing a mini-grid solution based on renewable energy to the community through the African Mini-Grid Program (AMP). The program aims to provide power services to more than 370 million residents by establishing a small electric grid in areas where SSA's power access is low. "We need to provide technology and financial support to enable local communities to operate and manage energy systems independently, and promote sustainable energy development," the UN says through the AMP.
- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) pointed to the SSA's energy access as a key challenge in sustainability and economic development. UNCTAD recommended that the SSA's power access should be expanded by strengthening its renewable energy policy and improving its energy infrastructure by attracting international investment. The report analyzes the negative impact of the SSA's limited energy access on its residents' economic activities and quality of life, and highlights the need for international cooperation to address them.

Possible Solutions

In 2021, greenhouse gas concentrations, rising sea levels, ocean heat, and ocean acidification reached unprecedented levels, indicating that human activity is driving large-scale changes on the planet's scale. These changes affect land, oceans, and atmosphere, with widespread and lasting consequences. The crisis must be effectively addressed by replacing fossil fuels, which are the main causes of climate change.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres emphasizes that renewable energy technologies, such as wind and solar power, are often cheaper than fossil fuels. He argues that these technologies are mankind's best opportunity to tackle climate change and should be implemented quickly and on a large scale.

Construction of renewable energy technology a global public good Content

For renewable energy technology to benefit all, it must be made into a global public good that is accessible beyond rich countries. This requires overcoming barriers such as intellectual property restrictions that limit knowledge sharing and technology transfer. Advanced technologies such as battery storage systems allow renewable energy to be stored and used when needed. These systems improve energy flexibility and provide reliable power to off-grid and isolated communities, reducing costs and increasing access.

Improvement of global access to components and raw materials

Expanding access to critical materials and components, from minerals for wind turbines to resources for electric vehicles, is essential to expanding renewable energy. This requires international coordination to diversify and expand manufacturing capacity. It also requires significant investment in technology education, research, innovation, and sustainable practices to build supply chains that respect ecosystems and cultures while ensuring a fair energy transition.

Acknowledgement of the playing field for renewable energy technologies

Domestic policies should prioritize renewable energy projects, simplify regulations, and reconfigure them to attract private sector investment. Efficient planning, licensing procedures, and renewable energy zones can remove barriers and accelerate development. Countries should set ambitious renewable energy targets to align their climate action plans with the 1.5 Degree Celsius target. By 2030, the share of renewable energy in electricity generation must be increased from 29% to 60%, supported by transparent policies and modern infrastructure.

Reorientation energy subsidies from fossil fuels to renewable energy

Fossil fuel subsidies, which reached \$5.9 trillion in 2020, are hindering the introduction of renewable energy. These subsidies disproportionately benefit the wealthy and lead to inefficiency and inequality. Converting these financial supports to renewable energy can reduce emissions, stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and improve public health. This transition is critical to supporting the vulnerable, especially, and to building a more equitable global energy system.

Expansion investments in renewables

Reaching net zero emissions by 2050 requires investing at least \$4 trillion a year in renewable energy technologies and infrastructure by 2030. While this figure is less than the current fossil fuel subsidies, it is expected to save \$4.2 trillion a year by 2030, providing huge benefits such as pollution reduction and climate-related cost savings. The United Nations urges financial institutions to prioritize renewable energy because it is the only way to achieve energy security, stable prices, and sustainable economic growth.

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