

## Seminar on “African Electrical Interconnections”

### Conclusions

1. The representatives of government ministries, national and sub-regional power utilities, regional economic communities, regional and international organizations and the private sector, meeting on the occasion of the Seminar on “African Electrical Interconnections” held in Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt from 19 to 21 June 2005, reaffirm the need for regional cooperation and advancing electricity interconnection in Africa, which will promote national and regional sustainable development goals, as well as the sustainable development goals and targets contained in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, in 2002.
2. Noting the very low rate of electrification in sub-Saharan Africa, the participants stress the need to work in concert to deliver energy services to all in a reliable, affordable and economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound manner. The participants emphasise that improving access to energy will generate opportunities for economic growth, enhanced education, better health care, more training and employment, as well as higher productivity in business, thereby contributing to sustained poverty reduction.
3. Participants recall that the JPOI:
  - Urges Governments as well as relevant regional and international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to “[s]trengthen and facilitate, as appropriate, regional cooperation arrangements for promoting cross-border energy trade, including the interconnection of electricity grids ...” and
  - Underlines the need for countries and sub-regional and regional organizations to “[d]eal effectively with energy problems in Africa, including through initiatives to... establish programmes, partnerships and initiatives to support Africa’s efforts to implement NEPAD objectives on energy...”
4. Participants also recall that NEPAD states that Africa should integrate transmission grids and gas pipelines so as to facilitate cross-border energy trade.
5. Participants underline that Africa is endowed with abundant energy resources, which are unevenly distributed, thereby calling for regional energy cooperation and integration, including electricity interconnection. They therefore emphasise:
  - The need for building trust and confidence among neighbouring countries for the successful development of interconnection projects;
  - The importance of a sound and predictable legal and regulatory framework, both at the inter-governmental and inter-utility level; and
  - The challenge of financing interconnection projects and the need for a comprehensive approach in structuring the required financing and that support is required for all phases of interconnection projects in Africa.

6. With respect to capacity building, participants:
  - Underline the importance of capacity building, both institutional and human, including the strengthening of technical personnel in the areas of demand analysis, planning and control technologies;
  - Emphasize the importance of capacity building programmes for negotiators of contracts and power purchase agreements (PPAs) governing cross-border electricity trade, which will require access to appropriate international legal expertise, for example, innovative mechanisms such as *pro bono* arrangements;
  - Express appreciation for the role and contribution in the area of capacity building of the United Nations, and its Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, and other financial institutions; and
  - Welcome the partnership approach underpinning the Seminar on “African Electrical Interconnections”, bringing together the complementary expertise and contributions of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and the e7, and express the hope that further such initiatives could be undertaken in the future.
7. Participants express their appreciation to the Government of Egypt for sharing its experience and expertise in the area of planning, design and operation of electricity interconnection projects, and in this context look forward to further opportunities to benefit from an exchange of experiences.
8. Participants invite the Governments and relevant regional and international organizations to report to the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14) in 2006 on progress made and barriers faced in developing interconnection projects and their contribution to achieving sustainable development in Africa.

The participants express their gratitude to the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for successfully organising the Seminar and for the generous hospitality and warm welcome extended to them.