

Energy, Democracy Development: The Case of Africa

An international seminar organised by FRIDE in the framework of the “European Development Co-operation to 2020 [EDC 2020]” project

Madrid, March 12th 2009

Conference Summary:

Agenda follows

Conference proceedings began with participants outlining the vast extent of Africa’s energy wealth, its emergence of a major oil and gas producer in recent years. The advent of emerging donors has precipitated a shift in EU and member state policies towards Africa with a tendency to return to ‘energy realism’. The debate over exerting influence to promote governance reform versus energy security has not been resolved but many participants concluded that it is often futile for the EU to try and impose governance standards on unwilling governments in Africa. The EU needs to develop bi-lateral partnerships rather than opting for the old unilateral ‘carrot and stick’ approach of tying aid to governance reform.

The misuse of energy resources in Africa is evident from the disparity that exists between an exponential increase in energy exports and the lack of progress in providing access to energy domestically. This is even more frustrating given the current wastage of energy resources due to gas flaring and other industry malpractices. Access to energy can only be secured in the long-term by the adoption of improved standards of governance and accountability not by hand-outs. Thankfully this is becoming more appreciated by traditional donor countries but is still not reflected in overall levels of assistance. Nevertheless, the Paris declaration is a major step in improving donor harmonisation of assistance to Africa.

Participants praised the development of European Partnership Agreements, regarding them as a potential stepping stone to eventual free trade agreements with African countries. This is an important catalyst for economic diversification although major energy exporting countries have not yet signed up to EPAs. It will take far-sighted African leadership prompted by a robust civil society for these countries do so. There is currently a grave deficit in African research into the energy sector which makes it difficult for civil society to combat corruption. The EU should play a deeper role in promoting such home-grown research.

While the EU has an ostensibly common approach to governance in energy producing states, at the member state level this is simply not the case. This was obvious in the case of Angola where some member states have highly contrasting bi-lateral relations.

The financial crisis will have a profound effect upon European policies towards Africa. Development assistance is being cut and more reductions should be expected in the future. A fall in energy prices and a global economic downturn will also further impoverish Africa. Participants concluded that Europe should consider the destabilising



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impact to global markets arising from an economic crisis in Africa – especially with regard to vital energy imports - and reverse the current trend of cutting development assistance.

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Energy, Democracy and Development: the case of Africa

Casa de Galicia, Casado del Alisal, 8 – Pasaje 2^a
12 March 2009

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An international seminar organised by the Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE) in the framework of the “European Development Co-operation to 2020 [EDC 2020]” project

AGENDA

09.30 – 10.00 Registration

10.00 – 10.15 **Introduction**

- **Richard Youngs**, Director, Democratisation, FRIDE, Spain

An outline of the project: The aim to examine the links within EU policies between development cooperation, energy security and the promotion of good governance

10.15 – 11.45 **EU energy cooperation with sub-Saharan Africa**

Chair:

- **Richard Youngs**, Director, Democratisation, FRIDE, Spain

Keynote Speakers

- **Antonio García-Fragio**, Head of Unit, Economic Development and Communication Networks, trade and regional integration, DG Development, European Commission, Belgium
- **Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi**, Executive Director, Centre for Democratic Development, Ghana

The EU has in recent years launched a number of new energy initiatives in Africa, mostly promising to support better access to energy for poor communities. This session will analyse the relationship between these projects, EU energy trade and governance reform in the region.

11.45 – 12.15 Coffee break



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12.15 – 14.00

Case studies: Nigeria and Angola

Chair:

- **Manuel Sanchez-Montero**, Director, Humanitarian Action and Development, FRIDE, Spain

Speakers

- **Humphrey Assisi Asobie**, Chairman, NEITI, Nigeria
- **Alex Vines**, Head of the Africa Programme, Chatham House, UK

Nigeria and Angola are the two biggest oil producers in the region. Both have a complex relationship with the energy trade which has ostensibly strengthened the government but also led to regional tensions and conflict over the distribution of revenues. This session will examine evolving trends of energy governance in both countries and make recommendation on integrating EU energy and development in these countries.

14.00 – 15.00

Lunch

15.00 – 17.00

Policy Implications: How to make European Energy Policies more Development-sensitive

Chair: Chair:

- **Richard Youngs**, Director, Democratisation, FRIDE, Spain

Speakers

- **Amelia Hadfield**, Convenor, Energy Analysis Group, The University of Kent, UK
- **Vanessa Pouget**, Energy Counsellor, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, France
- **Kojo Pumpuni Asante**, Research Officer, Governance and Legal Policy, Centre for Democratic Development, Ghana

Drawing on the day's discussions, this session will suggest practical ways in which the EU can better meet its commitment to ensure that development, energy security and democracy promotion are pursued as mutually-enhancing policy objectives.

21.00 –

Dinner

