



Launch of the Sustainable Energy for All Decade (2014-2024) in Portuguese-speaking countries

25 June 2015, Estoril, Portugal

On June 23, the Energy Ministers of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) met for the first time to discuss the key energy issues in Portuguese-speaking countries.

In the following days, June 24 and 25, more than 500 participants from all the CPLP region and beyond, including representatives of governments, the civil society, the private sector, the academy and international organizations, gathered in Estoril, Portugal at the I Conference Energy for Development of CPLP.

At the end of the first day of the conference the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014-2024) was launched, with the support of CPLP and ALER – the Lusophone Renewable Energy Association.

During the Ministerial meeting, it was recalled that the Rio + 20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development asked Governments to concentrate efforts to implement concrete actions that contribute to sustainable energy development and the generation of wealth and welfare to people. Concretely they have stated that "We are all determined to act to make sustainable energy for all a reality and, through this, help to eradicate poverty and lead to sustainable development and global prosperity".

Additionally, the importance of the construction process for the future post-2015 development agenda and definition of the future Sustainable Development Goals was also stressed during the CPLP Energy Council. The proposed Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7), including with its proposed targets on renewable energy, energy access and energy efficiency, can constitute an important part of the post-2015 development agenda. SE4All, including its Global Tracking Framework, provides a useful framework for implementation and follow-up of SDG 7 on energy.

Moreover, Energy Ministers have recognized the heterogeneity existing within CPLP Member States, which constitutes an asset that should be explored and that can enhance new forms of cooperation in the energy sector. Moreover, it was taken in consideration the interest of CPLP to play an active and constructive role in strengthening coordination and inter-sectoral dialogue.

Accordingly, it was decided to strengthen the cooperation between Portuguese-speaking countries in the field of energy and to encourage the sustainable and inclusive development of the energy sector in CPLP countries in order to improve energy security and ensure minimum access to sustainable energy services in rural and urban areas.

Ministers have decided that this should be done by promoting partnerships and investments within the energy sector between institutional and economic agents of CPLP, by setting



priority areas of energy policies that should be the subject of a common CPLP strategy, by investing in innovation to promote energy efficiency and renewable energies' solutions and finally by a greater involvement of CPLP countries in international cooperation organizations.

These general intents are very much in line with SE4ALL objectives and can be further implemented through a greater involvement of CPLP countries in this global initiative.

Currently there are nearly 33 Million people in CPLP countries with no access to electricity. But the reality differs significantly within the Portuguese-speaking community. If on the one hand Brazil has made great progress and managed to achieve an electrification rate of 99.5%, in Guinea-Bissau this number amounts only to 20% and in Angola and Mozambique together 30 million people do not have access to electricity.

A transition towards sustainable energy for all is possible in the CPLP region. New innovations and developments make new and renewable sources of energy affordable and available, which can help broaden the energy mix, build more stable economies, improve energy security, ensure more equity, and help curbing of climate change. Localized, mini-grid or off-grid energy solutions will also benefit these 3e million people who still do not have no access to electricity, the vast majority of which are living in rural areas off the grid.

There is a need for clear leadership, new partnerships, planning and financing in order to ensure sustainable energy for all by 2030. Together, participants from governments, the civil society, private sector and international organizations can help support the needed planning and financing of the achievement of sustainable energy for all in CPLP. Necessary resources are often available, but need to be stimulated and brought about by policy incentives and clear leadership as regards longer-term direction.

The second Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) Forum, convened from 18-21 May 2015 in New York, under the overarching theme of 'Financing Sustainable Energy for All,' was very important to provide financing opportunities for renewable energies and energy efficiency projects, currently one of the biggest bottlenecks. The commitments announced at the Forum were very relevant, including a €3.5 billion European Union grant to leverage private sector investments of up to €30 billion for electricity generation, transmission and access, under a new facility, the Electrification Financing Initiative (ElectriFI); a new US\$150 million Global Environment Facility Sustainable Cities programme to leverage private funding for sustainable urban development planning in 11 countries; an OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) commitment to turn an earlier one-time pledge of US\$1 billion to alleviate energy poverty into a revolving fund; and the earmarking of €13 million of donor funding for the International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy (ENERGIA) to energy-related activities.

It is very important that CPLP Governments work together with SE4ALL and ensure enabling conditions together with a favourable regulatory framework to guarantee that some of these funds are channelled to projects in Portuguese-speaking countries. And it is also important that the community fosters cooperating within its Member States to make use of the



knowledge and experience gained in countries with more developed sustainable energy policies and implement it in sustainable energy developing countries.

ALER – the Lusophone Renewable Energy Association, as the entity with the thematic and geographical scope correspondent to CPLP and SE4ALL objectives, is happy to work as a focal point to stimulate the achievement of SE4ALL goals and actions in Portuguese-speaking countries. In this role, it will support SE4ALL implementation in the region by interacting with all the main stakeholders, collecting and sharing information, capacity building, disseminate good practices and lessons learned, and help to attract financing and investment in sustainable energy, mainly renewable energies.

The work promoted by SE4ALL, namely on country level actions and high impact opportunities can play a very important role. The United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014-2024) is a unique opportunity for everyone to come together to act.