

February 21 – 22, 2024

Brief Report on the Launch of Women in Energy Network-Africa (WEN-Africa)

2024

Kigali, Rwanda

The launch event for Women in Energy Network Africa (WEN-Africa) was held on February 21-22, 2024, in Kigali, Rwanda with the presence of 140 representatives from 24 countries in Africa and four countries representing Middle East and North Africa and South Asia. The objective of the WEN-Africa launch workshop was to highlight the need for solidarity in closing the gender gap in the African energy sector and provide a unique opportunity for interdisciplinary advocacy, knowledge sharing, policy dialogue, and capacity development among energy sector stakeholders across the region.

The objective of WEN-Africa is increasing the overall female professional's participation in the energy sector with special focus on technical and leadership roles in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields.



Panel Discussion on Institutional Level Programs/Initiative to close the gender gap | PC: World Bank

Aligned with the World Bank Gender Strategy 2024 – 2030, the launch of WEN-Africa marks a transformative step toward integrating gender considerations across the energy sector in Africa. The event fostered policy discussions, knowledge, and best practice sharing, initiated partnerships, and set actionable goals that lay a foundational framework for ongoing gender-inclusive initiatives in the African energy sector.



Participants of WEN-Africa Launch Workshop | PC: World Bank

Four Pillars of WEN-Africa

The network operates on four foundational pillars:

1

Hiring More Women:

Focused on increasing job awareness and opportunities for women in the energy sector.

2

Increase Women Professional Development and Retention:

Aims to provide career growth opportunities and improving workplace environments for women.

3

Strengthening STEM Education for Girls:

Encourages young girls to pursue education in science, technology, engineering, and math.

4

Policy and Institutional Change:

Advocates for systemic changes that facilitate gender inclusivity at both educational and professional levels.

Discussions on the Table

Key topics addressed during the event included:

Vision & Strategy for WEN-Africa:

Presented by leaders from the World Bank and the Africa Gender and Energy Team outlining the network's mission, goals and strategic direction.

Enhancing Female Employment:

Panels discussed on existing good practices and approaches to increase the share of women participation in the energy sector, as well as outlined key barriers and strategic actions needed for improvement. e.g., elementary, and secondary education curriculum revision to attract girls to science fields (case of Eswatini).

Inclusive Workplace Environment:

Sessions highlighted successful case studies that create supportive workplace environments for women, emphasizing on gender responsive policies that promote gender inclusivity. e.g., establishing workplace childcare facility (case of Ethiopian Electric Utility)

Benefits of Women in Energy Network:

Sessions highlighted the advantages and contributions of women in energy networks based on the experiences of sister networks WePOWER in South Asia Region and RENEW-MENA in Middle East and North Africa Region.

Commitments from Partners:

Eight partners from the energy sectors in Africa region joined WEN-Africa as a founding partner and presented their two years gender equality commitments that are aligned with the network's goals, presenting planned activities and targets.



WEN-Africa Launch Workshop participants reflecting their opinions | PC: World Bank

Upon its launch WEN-Africa introduced the following three governance structure to operate in the first three years.:



Fowzia Hassan, Senior Energy Operations Officer of WB, presenting overview of WEN-Africa | PC: World Bank

Interim Secretariat (IE):

The World Bank Africa Gender and Energy Team will serve as the Interim Secretariat for WEN-Africa. Its principal responsibilities include but are not limited to: (1) Engaging Partners and identifying initial members of the Steering Committee; (2) ensuring the mission and objectives of WEN-Africa are being fulfilled; and (3) there is appropriate coordination and convening of the network. The activities of the Interim Secretariat, subject to availability, will be funded by the World Bank and various trust funds administered by the World Bank.



Some of the members of WEN-Africa Interim Secretariat | PC: World Bank

Steering Committee (SC):

The Steering Committee will authorise policies, procedures, and key decisions of the WEN-Africa Secretariat as well as facilitate the transition from the Interim Secretariat to the Secretariat and define its functions. It will provide timely guidance to the WEN-Africa Secretariat and partners. The Steering Committee will be composed of a diverse group of stakeholders including but not limited to multilateral financing organisations, professional associations, along with institutional, strategic, and academic partners. It may establish such advisory groups and committees as necessary to carry out its functions.

Partner Administrative Staff:

All partners will have their respective focal points assigned to WEN-Africa. These administrative WEN-Africa Focal Points are responsible for working closely with the Interim Secretariat.

Partners of WEN-Africa

WEN-Africa collaborates with a wide range of partners, including institutional partners like energy sector utilities and professional associations, strategic partners such as international organizations and multilateral financing organizations, and academic partners from universities and technical institutes. These partnerships are pivotal for achieving the network's goals and ensuring the implementation of its activities. The following are the founding partners of WEN-Africa:

- Kenya Electricity Generating Company PLC (KenGen)
- Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP)
- Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited (TANESCO)
- Zanzibar Electricity Corporation (ZECO)
- Eswatini Electricity Company
- Energy Development Corporation Limited, Rwanda
- Kenya Electricity Transmission Company (KETRACO)
- Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC)



These partners are crucial in achieving the network's objectives by implementing activities aligned with WEN-Africa's key pillars.

Conclusion

The launch of WEN-Africa signifies remarkable milestone in efforts to enhance gender equality and women empowerment in the African energy sector. The event not only spotlighted the challenges but also celebrated strides towards a more inclusive industry. With robust partnerships and strategic direction, WEN-Africa is poised to drive substantial change, setting a model for similar global initiatives.

Three Immediate Next Actions

- ✓ Whole rounded and continuous advocacy and promotion campaign using WEN-Africa social media platform and virtual events.
- ✓ Recruiting more partners to join WEN-Africa.
- ✓ Nomination and election of WEN-Africa steering committee members.



Distinguished guests of honors, WB senior management members and participants | PC: World Bank

Distinguished Participants Were

Distinguished guests including the World Bank senior management, Energy sector ministers from multiple African countries, and leaders from the energy sector institutes attended the launch workshop. Some of them were including.

HRH Lonkhokhela Dlamini

Minister – Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (Eswatini)

H.E Ms. Eng. Patricie Uwase

Minister of State - Ministry of Infrastructure, Rwanda

Ms. Mwanajuma M. Abdullah

Deputy Principal Secretary,
Ministry of Water, Energy and Minerals, Zanzibar

Demetrios Papathanasiou

Global Director,
World Bank

Wendy E. Hughes

Regional Director for Infrastructure,
Eastern and Southern Africa Region
World Bank

Sahr Kpundeh

Country Manager – Rwanda,
World Bank

Ms. Aissa Toure Sarr

Country Manager, African Development Bank

Mr. Felix Gakuba

Managing Director, Energy Development Corporation Limited (EDCL)

Eng. Ziria Tibalwa WAAKO

CEO - Electricity Regulatory Authority, Uganda

Eng. Gissima Nyamo-Hanga

Managing Director, Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited (TANESCO), United Republic of Tanzania

Khamis Abdakkah Fajug

Acting Managing Director, Zanzibar Electricity Corporation (ZECO), Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania

Erik Magnus Fernstrom

Practice Manager,
World Bank

Yadviga Viktorivna Semikolenova

Practice Manager, World Bank

Fowzia Hassan

WEN-Africa Lead & Senior Energy Operations Officer, World Bank