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# Uganda should Scale up Energy Efficiency to Secure Sustainable Energy for ALL and to Increase Local Climate Action

**Rural Uganda households are facing increasing energy costs or spend more time collecting firewood. Similarly, for the urban residents, a bag of charcoal (quality not withstanding) has skyrocketed to as high as Ugshs 100,000. *But how far is this charcoal being efficiently produced, and even used by households today?***

Energy efficiency simply means using less energy to perform the same task – that is, eliminating energy waste. Energy efficiency brings a variety of benefits: reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing demand for energy imports, and lowering our costs on a household and economy-wide level (Environmental and Energy Study Institute, 2019). While renewable energy technologies also help accomplish these objectives, improving energy efficiency is the cheapest – and often the most immediate – way to reduce the use of fossil fuels (Environment and Energy Study Institute, 2019). There are enormous opportunities for efficiency improvements and local level climate action in every sector of the economy, whether it is buildings, transportation, industry, or energy generation.

Uganda has abundant biomass, including large quantities of non-woody biomass, as well as peat and water resources. Water and biomass make the biggest contributions to the energy demands of Uganda's population. The inconsistent use of the available resources has, however, left the country with an inadequate supply of energy. This situation is aggravated by often inefficient use of energy. As a result, the country has one of the lowest rates of consumption of modern (clean) energy in the world (GIZ, 2017). Uganda is also a signatory to the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative which the United Nations Secretary General launched the SE4ALL Initiative in September 2010 to achieve three inter-related goals by 2030 including *doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency*

Wood fuels are heavily used for cooking in rural areas while charcoal mostly provides for the cooking needs of the urban population. The high demand for wood fuels used inefficiently results in overuse and depletion of forests. With time, the land available is becoming scarce and households prefer to use the land for food crops rather than planting trees, thus postponing the energy challenge. Production of charcoal is carried out under primitive conditions with an extremely low efficiency at 10 to 12% on weight-out to weigh-in basis. To produce 1 kilogramme of charcoal, 9 kilogrammes of wood are needed, which translates into 22% efficiency on an energy output to energy input basis (Energypedia, 2019). At the same time, biomass use by households is very inefficient as the three-stone fire is still widely spread.

Therefore, implementing energy efficiency in parallel with expanding both the electricity grid and new clean energy generation reduces electricity demand and helps optimize the power supply so that it can serve more Ugandan customers reliably at minimum cost.

## Energy Efficiency Issues in Uganda

According to the Energy Efficiency Roadmap for Uganda (2017), investment in Uganda's energy sector has focused mainly on increasing energy access by increasing supply. The links between energy efficiency and energy access, and the multiple benefits of energy efficiency for the level and quality of energy available, have been largely overlooked by many stakeholders in Uganda, including the international donor community.

Energy efficiency and energy access are sometimes viewed as competing priorities for funding rather than elements that can work together to achieve the goal of providing improved access to energy services. Moreover, energy efficiency is often perceived as a short-term solution to power outages and load shedding without taking into account that it is also a source of energy for future electricity planning.

The Road map points out the main barriers to energy efficiency investment in Uganda as being due to lack of access to affordable capital and financing, lack of confidence about energy efficiency investments, lack of enabling policies, a lack of enforcement of regulations, and lack of technical expertise. Uganda also drafted an Energy Efficiency Strategy (2010-2020) that categorized five main areas of intervention into 'Pillars' of Energy Efficiency that include: Awareness & Information; Training & Education; Research and Development; Financing and incentives; Legislation & Framework (MEMD, 2015). Unfortunately the energy efficiency law has not been enacted.

On the occasion of the **2019 Uganda National Energy and Minerals Week** (aimed at sensitizing Ugandans on the efficient utilization of energy) and **this week's UN Climate Action Summit 2019**, Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP) and INFORSE East Africa, would like to raise issues of energy efficiency to be taken up as part of sustainable energy development and climate action in Uganda.

**Our Call to Uganda Government and Global Climate Change and Energy development Partners**

1) Uganda Parliament should fast track the enactment of the Energy efficiency and Conservation bill into law, in order for the Energy Efficiency Strategy (2010-2020) to take effect in support of the much needed country-wide climate action and sustainable energy promotion.
2) Institutional support for urban and rural local authorities to heighten political attention and coordination amongst the key sectors in order to gradually scale up efforts on improving energy efficiency and access in rural areas
3) There is a need to scale up investment in Research, development and dissemination of efficient and modern biomass technologies in a more coherent way as current efforts are heavily relying on the private sector / individuals
4) Public information and education should be scaled up as a matter of urgency beyond the annual energy week events. For example, campaigns on use of energy saving devices like incandescent light bulbs that convert less than 5% of energy to visible light; water and energy saving tips including timely fixation of water leaks and breakages; power down; regular maintenance of electric equipment and tools; re-use of water and other resources that take energy to provide.
5) There is need for more support to Uganda National Bureau of Standards to execute its mandate in enforcing standards and quality control of electric equipment and energy saving devices on the market as some of it is obsolete technology or energy inefficient
6) Buildings and infrastructure need to incorporate renewable energy technologies, leading to the creation of zero-energy buildings through decreased consumption; appliance efficiency and promotion of new building materials

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