

Zimbabwe committed to use of renewable energy

ZIMBABWE remains committed to implementing the global initiative on making use of renewable energy, a government official has said.

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The United Nations initiative brings all sectors of society to the table including business, governments, investors, community groups and academia.

This comes at a time when leaders at the UN on Tuesday committed to expanding the use of renewable energy with the objective of aiming to mobilise resources and generate actions that will reduce emissions and build resilience to climate change.

Speaking at a Women and Energy meeting in the capital, director in the ministry of Science and Technology Development, Rungano Karimanzira said government welcomed the global initiative launched by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon targeted at increasing the use of renewable energy.

“There is an urgent need to address the adverse impact of climate change becoming evident the world over. This can be reached if all communities participate,” she said.

Karimanzira said the country’s productive sector depends on reliable energy supplies.

“However, women who are at the interface of domestic energy demand side are the least consulted (in policy issues),” she said, adding that empowering women in energy issues was imperative as they are development catalysts.

The event was themed ‘Closing the gender gap in energy policy.’

Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority (Zera) chief executive Gloria Magombo urged more women to be proactively engaged in power development projects as they largely bear the burden of power usage in households.

“The main reasons why we are not having more women participation in the electricity sector are primarily due to a number of barriers.

These include gender socialisation, fear of failure and paralysis of analysis in some instances,” she said.

She said electricity the coverage rate of Zimbabwe was on average at 40% with 85% electrification in urban areas, 15% for new development areas yet to be electrified.

“Only 13% of the population has access to electricity in rural areas, while 5% use electricity for purposes more than lighting. Women must make more use of technology in researching the abundant opportunities available in the country’s energy sector,” Magombo said.

Zimbabwe is currently facing a huge power deficit, a situation that has adversely affected all facets of the economy.

However, Zera has since introduced net metering regulations which allow small-scale renewable energy generators such as rooftop solar photovoltaic systems to feed excess energy into the national grid.

Net metering is meant to promote small-scale renewable energy generators such as rooftop PV generators to be connected to the grid and provide ability to export or feed in surplus energy into the grid.

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The UN initiative aims to double the rate of improvement in energy efficiency as well as double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

Action commitments will be transparent and monitored while companies can make their operations and supply chains more energy efficient and form public-private partnerships to expand sustainable energy products and services.

Investors can provide seed money for clean technologies and invest in both on- and off-grid energy solutions.

