

The Energy Access Practitioner Network Celebrates its 3rd Anniversary; Hon. Eng. Minister Irene Muloni, Minister for Energy and Mineral Development, Uganda, delivers keynote address on the occasion.

Celebration highlights the power of innovation, knowledge sharing, and partnership, builds momentum to achieve universal energy access by 2030.

Kampala, July 22, 2014: On the occasion of the third anniversary of the launch of the United Nations Foundation's Energy Access Practitioner Network, more than 100 members of the network and other invited guests met today in Kampala to showcase the work of the off-grid clean energy sector to deliver the ecosystem of solutions and services needed to achieve universal access to modern energy services by 2030, one of the global goals of the UN's Sustainable Energy for All Initiative.

Uganda, one of Sustainable Energy for All's 14 African priority countries still faces challenges in providing access to energy for its entire population. Some 28 million Ugandans do not have the benefits of the electricity that powers homes, supports education, undergirds delivery of health care services, and supports economic development across commercial, agricultural and industrial sectors.

"Hosting our third anniversary celebrations in Uganda helps to highlight the work being done by so many great organizations within the Energy Access Practitioner Network to deliver energy services effectively, affordably and sustainably to households and communities around the world," said Richenda Van Leeuwen, Executive Director, Energy Access, UN Foundation. "The gathering also serves as a reminder of the challenges to effectively scaling energy access solutions and the resources required to help achieve the global goal of universal energy access by 2030," said Van Leeuwen.

Currently with more than 1,700 members in 191 countries, the Energy Access Practitioner Network includes a wide range of energy enterprises from start-ups to large corporations, as well as NGOs, investors and researchers. The network's approach is technology-agnostic in focusing on the delivery of off-grid and micro-grid energy solutions and services, and includes a range of approaches - from small-scale solar lanterns requiring less than a watt of power, to household-scale solar home systems, from biogas digesters to large community-level solar-wind-diesel hybrid micro-grids.

Energy Access Practitioner Network member companies outlined the ways in which the Network has helped their businesses. SolarNow has installed more than 4,800 solar systems in Uganda, using a unique franchise model to address distribution challenges in Uganda and broadly in the East African region.

"One of the great things about working in the clean energy sector, addressing the needs of off-grid customers, is that practitioners are still willing to share information with others, as they realize everyone benefits from the growth of the sector. The Energy Access Practitioner Network offers an effective

platform for the sharing of such information,” said Willem Nolens, Managing Director, SolarNow.

Network member Solar Sister has recruited, trained and mentored women entrepreneurs in Uganda, as well as Nigeria and Tanzania, who have, in turn, provided energy services for more than 115,000 people.

“The Energy Access Practitioner Network is an important partner in our efforts to advocate for gender-inclusive solutions across both the demand and supply side of the energy access value chain. It is a unique platform bringing together energy access practitioners worldwide to share best practices and to help us transition from an era of energy poverty to energy prosperity,” said Neha Misra, Chief Collaboration Officer, Solar Sister.