

Position Paper

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Committee: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Country: The Federal Republic of Nigeria

Agenda: Promoting Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable, and Modern Energy for All

Nigeria's Energy Crisis

Nigeria, in theory, should be rich with energy. Situated near the equator, it receives plenty of solar energy throughout the year. In fact, recent studies credibly put concentrated solar thermal power potential in Nigeria at over 427,000 megawatts. Nigeria is also home to an abundance of rivers and water resources, perfect for the production of hydro-electricity. Not to mention the biomass or wind energy that could be produced in this country.

Yet, when you look at statistics, Nigeria has one of the lowest consumption rates of electricity per capita in the world. With the demand superseding the electricity generation, the power is distributed around the country unfairly, so there is very little access to electricity for the rural communities in Nigeria.

The sole national electricity transmission grid has crashed eight times this year; from wheeling 3,900 megawatts, it recently fell to as low as 3 megawatts! Battered by shortages and higher prices of diesel, lubricants and electricity tariff, the organised private sector warned of further impending factory closures and job losses.

Earlier, the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva, had said that about 62 per cent of citizens – over 120 million persons – lacked access to electricity.

Immediate measures must be taken to improve the situation and help the citizens live happy lives.

Why is this happening to Nigeria?

There are several reasons behind this.

- Lack of Natural Gas: Most generating plants rely on thermal power, making them vulnerable when gas supply is low. Recently, there have been shortages of natural gas, so the supply is very unstable.
- Privatisation of the Energy Sector: The privatisation of the sector in 2013 that could have revolutionised the power sector was bungled by corruption and cronyism.
- Low investment: The private sector which invested in these power assets have failed to deliver on the expected investment and service delivery.
- Poor Transmission Network: The transmission network is outdated and not maintained.

My proposition to solve these problems

We need localized solutions.

Instead of depending on power from the grid, solar power can be utilised for locally generating electricity. Each village can be made self-sustainable with power produced from solar panels.

The UN could dedicate a small group to helping this cause. These people will need to oversee the installation of power generators all around the country. Not gas or coal dependent ones, but sustainable solar power plants, augmented by wind, biomass and hydro power. This ensures that every district and every household can get electricity.

While Nigeria has lots of water sources, much of its land is dry and cannot be farmed. If we set up the solar panels in these areas, not only will the land be utilised, but it also allows us not to cut down forests or encroach on farm land or houses.

The group from the UN can also oversee that these energy sources will be properly connected to all homes and that the network will be maintained and updated.

This implementation will not be constricted to Nigeria – but it can be spread to other African countries struggling with energy distribution.

With these solutions implemented, Nigeria will definitely be able to 'power' through this crisis!