MARSABIT COUNTY: A CASE OF POOR BILLIONAIR

Dakar, Senegal

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OVERVIEW

- According to energy and petroleum regulatory authority *(Jan 2023)*, 86% of electricity generated in Kenya comes from renewable source
- Solar energy is the most ubiquitous across Kenya, both at utility scale and through solar home systems
- Marsabit is the largest County in Kenya Geographically covering 12% of Kenya (Approx. 70,000km^2) *(Census, 2019)*
- Marsabit is endowed with a corridor of one of the fastest low jets in the world
- Marsabit hosts Chalbi Desert that is the hottest and most arid area in Kenya with average daytime temperature range from 109 F (43 °c) to 115 F (46 °c) and covers 1,000km^2
- Yet, these potentials notwithsatnding, Marsabit is amongst the ten most poor Counties with a poverty rate of 63.7% *(KNBS 2019)*

MARSABIT AND SDG 7 AGENDA

Cities and Municipalities like Marsabit have a crucial role to play in advancing SDG 7, which aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. Here are some ways in which Marsabit is helping achieve SDG 7:

- On-going discussions on public private partnerships for investment in renewable energy and energy efficient technologies in addition to the Loiyangalani wind power that already contributes 310 Megawatts to the main grid
- Prioritise energy efficiency and renewable projects in the CIDP
- Push for regional adoption of best practises and policies amongst the economic blocks like FCDC to accelerate the transition to sustainable energy system
- Adoption of off-grid decentralized energy systems micro-grids to far flunked rural areas together with development partners

SOURCES OF AFFORDABLE CLEAN ENERGY

- Marsabit is endowed with a corridor of one of the fastest low jets in the world (both on land and offshore in Lake Turkana). Areas like Bubisa and the corridors thereof have even better potential to produce more wind power.

- Marsabit hosts Chalbi Desert that is the hottest and most arid area in Kenya with average daytime temperature range from (43 °c) to (46 °c) and covers 1,000km^2

- The transnational powerline that connects the hydro-power from Ethiopia to Kenya traverses through Marsabit

CASE: LOIYANGALANI WIND POWER

- Loiyangalani Wind farm in Marsabit was completed in 2018
- Consists of 365 wind turbines with a total capacity of 310 megawatts making it the largest wind power project in Africa *(Yet no single household in Marsabit is connected and powered by this source of energy)*
- Generates clean, renewable energy – reduces dependency on fossil fuels, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and help mitigate climate change
- Economic benefit – Job creation, land lease *(Biased one)* and other benefits
- Technological advancement – Thanks to this initiative, other renewable energy generation projects will soon follow suit on the continent

LIMITATIONS

Some of the challenges associated with transitioning to affordable clean energy include but not limited to;

- High upfront costs/Capital Intensive venture
- Capacity related challenges – Technical, infrastructural, Institutional etc
- Lack of proper consultative platform for the main actors – That led to protracted litigations in Marsabit
- Kenya took a wrong turn on the Coal and nuclear energy but we are hopeful that this effort will be replaced by more investment in the renewable energy, energy transmission, technology and innovation

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Need for government to incentivise PPP to attract investors
- Energy efficiency measures
- Technological innovation
- Energy storage solutions
- Involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the venture
- Investment in the solar energy sector
- Need for stable long-term policy framework for clean energy, carbon pricing initiatives, removing fossil fuel subsidies, funding research in green technologies, removing barriers to energy efficiency and reforming electricity markets

CONCLUSION

The related challenges notwithstanding, Marsabit has huge potential to contribute to Kenya's journey of transitioning to affordable clean energy *(SDG 7)* and address climate change with a view of achieving sustainable development through; generation of much cleaner solar and wind energy that is cost effective, environmentally friendly with no emission hence very low carbon footprint.

THANK YOU