

UK and Zambia sign Energy Africa Partnership agreement

LUSAKA, Zambia – The UK and Zambia have signed an Energy Africa Partnership Agreement, announcing their commitment to accelerate the expansion of the household solar market across Zambia.



Image by 123RF

Speaking at the signing ceremony at the Ministry of Energy in Lusaka, Bruce Lawson-McDowall, head of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Zambia said: "The signing of the Energy Africa Partnership Agreement demonstrates the UK's willingness to support the Government of Zambia as it prioritises efforts to tackle the energy crisis. We recognise the challenges that Zambia is currently facing with the on-grid energy sector, and the opportunities this presents to unlock the potential of the household solar market.

"The Energy Africa campaign seeks to secure the policy commitments, technical assistance and financing needed to transform the energy access landscape. I believe that Achievement of Global Goal 7 (of access to affordable and clean energy), in Zambia and Africa more broadly, is essential to eliminating poverty and fostering sustainable and inclusive growth."

The decreasing cost of solar panels, improvements in battery technology and energy efficiency, and the spread of mobile payment systems have together created a new opportunity for the household solar market – as businesses are already showing across the continent. This Agreement commits both parties to work together to harness this opportunity to increase access to electricity for all Zambians.

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Lawson-McDowall said that the UK is also supporting access to affordable clean energy through hydroelectric power projects such as the Western Power Ngonye Falls project in Western Province. He also stressed the need to create the right environment for effective private sector participation in the energy sector.

[Energy Africa](#) is a campaign to accelerate the expansion of the household solar market in Africa, helping bring universal energy access in the continent forward from 2080 to 2030. It was launched by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in October 2015, and to date 11 countries have signed Partnership Agreements, including Zambia. The next step will be to agree on the specific areas of support that will be covered under the Partnership Agreement.

Two out of three people in sub-Saharan Africa (600 million) have no access to electricity at home, despite it being 150 years since Edison invented the lightbulb. On the current trajectory universal electricity access in Africa will not be achieved until 2080; the Global Goal 7 is for this goal to be met by 2030. Without affordable and reliable electricity, social and economic development is dramatically stifled.

The Energy Africa campaign will include the policy support, technical assistance and financing necessary to move off-grid solar in Africa – and in Zambia – from a nascent market to an industry that can help secure universal electricity access.

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