

COMPETE Participation at The First High-level Biofuels Seminar in Africa

by Dr. Rainer Janssen and Dominik Rutz, WIP – Renewable Energies, Germany (rainer.janssen@wip-munich.de, dominik.rutz@wip-munich.de)

From 30 July – 1 August 2007 the African Union Commission (AUC), the Government of Brazil and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) jointly organized The First High-level Biofuels Seminar in Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme '**Sustainable Bio-fuels Development in Africa**'.

This seminar was organised in the framework of the 2004-2007 Strategic Plan of the AUC in the field of new and renewable energies. The 8th Assembly of the African Union Commission meeting in Addis Ababa in January 2007, endorsing the measures adopted by the African Ministers in charge of Hydrocarbons (oil and gas) at their 1st Conference held in Cairo on 14 December 2006, requested the AUC to elaborate policies and strategies for the development of clean, new and renewable energies, particularly biofuels, as an alternative solution to hydrocarbons, in response to the rise in oil prices which has adverse effects on the economies of African countries.

In order to facilitate the elaboration of viable policies and strategies for the development of the African biofuels sector, the High-level Biofuels Seminar had the following main objectives:

- Briefing of policy makers, the private sector, regional institutions and other key stakeholders on the potential and risks and trade-offs of developing biofuels in Africa
- Sharing of experiences in developing biofuels among countries in Africa and between Africa and Brazil and other countries and regions
- Consulting of key stakeholders in developing a programme of action for sustainable biofuels development

Based on the large experience of the COMPETE partnership on land use for energy crop production, technologies for the production of various biofuels, sustainability criteria for biofuels, as well as on the exploitation of South-South cooperation in the field of biofuels, a close cooperation was established between the COMPETE project and the organizers of the High-level Biofuels Seminar.

The COMPETE project actively supported the High-level Biofuels Seminar through the participation of COMPETE members as speakers, experts and session chairs. Prof. Francis Yamba, CEEEZ, Zambia, gave an introductory presentation on the COMPETE project highlighting the following policy recommendations for the development of biofuel programmes in Africa.

1) Implementation of National Biofuel Strategies

African Governments should formulate strategies aimed at addressing critical issues such as to promote local demand for biofuels as a share of the fossil fuel market, determine blending ratios, establish biofuel standards, recommend production modalities, consider environmental and social concerns, and provide appropriate incentives.

2) Establishment of Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

African Governments should set up legal and regulatory frameworks aimed at guiding and regulating the biofuel industry and enforcing sustainable use of land and resources to avoid negative environmental impacts of the biofuel industry.

3) Promotion of Integrated Agro-industry Farming Policies

African Governments should take into account the interrelation of biofuel industries with livestock, farming, fisheries, and the conservation of forests and watershed areas to ensure maximised national benefits and sustainable development. This integrated approach is important for coherent and sustainable water and land management in African countries.

4) Support of ACP Biofuel Research

African Governments should support local and regional research into suitable feedstock, process and logistics optimisation, economic analysis for cost effective solutions, and the transfer of suitable biofuel technologies (including the conversion of ligno-cellulosic material).

Furthermore, the COMPETE partners Mamadou Dianka, UEMOA, Burkina Faso, Stanford Mwakasonda, ERC-UCT, South Africa, Dr. Ibrahim Togola, Mali-Folkecenter, Estomih Sawe, TaTEDO, Tanzania, Kingiri Senelwa, Moi University, Kenya, Dr. Rocio Diaz.Chavez, Imperial College, UK, Francis Johnson, SEI, Sweden and Dr. Rainer Janssen, WIP, Germany, acted as experts in various thematic sessions of the biofuels seminar. A concise summary report of The First High-level Biofuels Seminar in Africa published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is available at www.iisd.ca/africa/biofuels and at the COMPETE website www.compete-bioafrica.net.

Based on the plenary and thematic sessions and Ministerial Roundtable discussions of the First High-level Biofuels Seminar in Africa, the seminar participants agreed upon the following recommendations laid down in The Addis Ababa Declaration on Sustainable Biofuels Development in Africa.

The Addis Ababa Declaration on Sustainable Biofuels Development in Africa (Recommendations)

1. Develop enabling policy and regulatory frameworks for biofuels development as a matter of priority, taking into account the following aspects
 - a. Link to overall development policies;
 - b. Promote equity, including gender equity;
 - c. Ensure participation of all stakeholders;
 - d. Promote local consumption; and
 - e. Enhance energy security
2. Commit to include biofuels in broad energy related frameworks;
3. Take lead on those aspects on biofuels research and development along the biofuels value chain that have significant implications for Africa;
4. Harmonise national biofuels policies, strategies and standards through regional economic communities to ensure economies of scale and access to international markets;
5. Increase the capacity of key players along the biofuels value chain;
6. Participate in the global sustainability discussions and develop immediate guiding principles on biofuels development to enable Africa to compete internationally;
7. Call upon public financing institutions to support biofuels;
8. Call upon development partners to assist countries in keeping abreast with developments in the biofuels sector through North-South and South-South cooperation;
9. Minimise the risks associated with captive markets for small-scale producers;
10. Formalise the organization of similar high-level seminars at continental and regional levels;
11. Establish a forum to promote access to information and knowledge on biofuels related sector (e.g. best practices in policy development, technology-transfer, investment promotion, trade, capacity building etc); and
12. Commit themselves to implement the attached plan of action and call upon the African Union Commission to present the Addis Ababa declaration to the upcoming ministerial conferences on sectors relevant to biofuels.



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For more information on the COMPETE project, please consult the website www.compete-bioafrica.net.

The COMPETE project is co-funded by the European Commission in the 6th Framework Programme – Specific Measures in Support of International Cooperation (INCO-CT-2006-032448).