



## **IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON AFRICAN POWER UTILITIES**

**Speech of the Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy**

**H.E. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid**

**on the occasion of**

**Meeting of the African Union Commission and the Association of  
Power Utilities of Africa**

29 April 2020

- **The President of the Association of Power Utilities of Africa (APUA);**
- **Executive Committee Members of APUA;**
- **Chief Executive Officers of Power Utilities;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Colleagues;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

1. I welcome you all to this virtual meeting. I trust that you, your families and loved ones as well as the utilities you lead are all keeping safe in this difficult period when the world is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Power utilities are the centre piece of the electricity sector in any economy. All the players in the electricity sector depend on the successful operation of the power utility – generators, consumers, governments and even regulators.

3. Power utilities are responsible for collecting all the revenue that comes into the sector because of their customer-facing position. Any problem experienced by power utilities can easily escalate to all the stakeholders in the value chain.

4. Successful, well functioning, efficient and profitable power utilities on the continent are, therefore, crucial. It is with this in mind that I have convened this meeting in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, to consult with the power utilities, to understand the challenges they are facing, share experiences of how to cope and come up with ways of ensuring that they emerge successful after the pandemic.

5. It is important to note that power utilities will play an equally critical part in the recovery of the economy after the pandemic. At the same time, they have a major role to play in the fight against the spread of the coronavirus. The power utilities in Africa, thus, find themselves fighting two battles – one for their own survival and the other against the virus – and both battles are very important and ones that they must win.

6. The African Union Commission would like to assure you of our commitment to support you and ensure that you emerge victorious. The Commission is in the process of organising a meeting of the Bureau of Energy Ministers and the outcomes of this meeting will feed into the Ministers' meeting with a view to obtaining a decision on safeguarding the wellbeing of power utilities and to enable them to effectively play their part in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. I welcome the initiative of holding this meeting with APUA and its member utilities. It is important that these consultations are sustained beyond the pandemic. As the continent moves towards an integrated electricity market, the role of power utilities will be even more significant and having them on board will be essential. So I call for these consultations to be mainstreamed.

8. With these few remarks, I welcome you once again to the meeting and look forward to fruitful and engaging deliberations.

Thank you

**H.E. Amani Abou-Zeid**  
**Commissioner, Infrastructure and Energy**  
**African Union Commission**