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Welcome Remarks

By

H.E. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid

Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy

African Union Commission (AUC)

Addressing Clean Cooking Challenges in Africa: Call for African Leadership

Venue: Africa Pavilion, Baku, Azerbaijan

Date: 12th November 2024

Time: 15:30 to 17:00 pm

- H.E Dr. Philip Isdor Mpango, Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania
- H.E Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson, African Union Commission
- Dr. Kevin Kariuki, VP Power, Energy Climate Change and Green Growth, AfDB
- Dr Fatih Birol, Executive Director, International Energy Agency
- Your Excellencies;
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;
- All protocols observed;

1. It is my pleasure to invite you today to this momentous occasion in Africa's Clean Cooking transition. Today, we gather here to not only review the progress on clean cooking since COP 28 but also present evidence of what we can achieve together through collaboration and partnerships.
2. First, the theme of today's side event is drawn from one of the recommendations of the inaugural clean cooking publication on Africa's cooking sector: **Sustainable Scaling: Meeting the Clean Cooking Challenge in Africa**". This publication, that we will launch today, calls for urgent need for Africa's leadership in transforming the continent's clean cooking sector.
3. Second, I am happy to note that the work that went into developing the publication resonates with the call made during the Summit on Clean Cooking in Africa held in Paris on 14th May this year. If you recall, the Summit underscored the need for collaboration and decisive action from governments, businesses, academia, civil society, and

philanthropic partners. This publication has been developed to provide an evidence-based design of the African Clean Cooking Programme through collaborative efforts of the African Energy Commission (AFREC), Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS) and the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) of the World Bank as knowledge partners.

4. Third, our today's speakers represent the top leadership from the African continent thus resonating with the theme. From the engagements, we will witness firsthand what we can achieve together with commitment from the top leadership of all stakeholders. We also look forward to the establishment of new partnerships and commitments from our partners towards the African Clean Cooking Programme and the individual Member States initiatives.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

5. Advancement in clean cooking solutions aligns well with Africa's aspiration of a "prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development" as envisaged in the continent's development blueprint: Agenda 2063. The benefits of clean cooking extend far beyond environmental sustainability to include creation of new opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and social development.
6. The transition to a more sustainable and equitable future in Africa requires addressing the widening clean cooking access gap between urban and rural areas which needs to be addressed. This gap has been growing over the last two decades, posing challenges to a just transition. In the last two decades the people in rural areas in cooking poverty decreased only by 5.8%, while population urban areas still in

cooking poverty appear to have fallen from 69.1% in 2000 to 58.3% in 2021.

7. These figures of people remaining in cooking poverty, remind us of the following:
 - A. Africa is significantly off- track on SDG7 Targets in relation to access to clean household fuels for cooking without dramatic acceleration in the coming years.
 - B. Despite the significant progress made of some individual African countries have made in last two decades, access to clean cooking fuels and technologies in Africa increased at an average annual rate of 1.76%, are overshadowed by the alarmingly slow progress in the rest of the continent.
 - C. The access gap between urban and rural areas has widened over the last two mainly to due to factors like affordability, unreliable supply, Infrastructure, low perceived benefits and supportive financial strategies among others.
8. The conservative Cost of Inaction of continuing the current state of access of cooking fuels and technologies is US\$ 791.4 billion per year calculated from the negative externalities of gender equality, health, and climate.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

9. By shifting manufacture, distribution and supply chain of clean cooking technologies from outside Africa and closer to the people who need it the most, we can stimulate local economies, empower communities, and improve energy access for all. We invite all stakeholders to build national baskets of fuels based on available energy resources, and

existing value chains and infrastructure for a just clean cooking transition that support socio-economic growth

10. It therefore means that any commitment we make today shall not only pivot the lives of almost a billion people in Africa to clean cooking, but also support our global development agenda. This is critical, especially for girls and women who are the most affected by energy poverty.

11. Through strong partnership and concrete commitments to action today, we can tackle the clean cooking challenge by 2030.

12. I thank you.