

## Off-grid Solar Expected to Surge in Africa

Innovative off-grid and mini-grid technologies to be presented at the Africa Energy Indaba 2019

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Johannesburg, 5 February 2019;**The 11th [Africa Energy Indaba](#) conference on 19th – 20th February 2019 will be hosted in Sandton, the economic hub of Africa at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa. The symposium will focus on the role of off-grid and mini-grid in rural electrification in Africa, particularly highlighting the significant growth potential of solar.

Solar has a major bearing on the African energy sector. The total power derived from solar increased by more than 50% and has officially outpaced any other fuel with regards to global energy output. Solar is currently the frontrunner in renewables and solar PV additions are transcending all other fuels, including coal. A report conducted by The International Energy Agency (IEA) predicted unrelenting solar PV growth up to the year 2022. In addition, it was estimated that electricity capacity would increase by 43% to over 920 GW.

Projections state that solar PV will represent the largest annual capacity additions for renewables, exceeding wind and hydro within the next five years. According to recent tracking of off-grid solar PV applications in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa conducted by the IEA, off-grid capacity is estimated to triple to over 3000 MW in 2022 owing to solar home systems (SHS), industrial applications and mini-grids led by government electrification programmes, and private sector investments. The most dynamic sector in the off-grid segment is solar home systems which will consequently have a significant socio-economic impact on the continent by providing electricity to millions of people in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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The growth in solar PV is anticipated to bridge the electrification gap in Africa; a working example being Lumos in Nigeria where OPIC (Overseas Private Investment Corporation) financing is supporting Lumos, an off-grid electricity provider, in launching its portable solar stations which connect to rooftop panels and include cell phone payment systems. This entails providing a device that converts solar energy into affordable, clean and reliable electricity and is paid for by using the mobile phone. The IEA foresees that within the following five years, Africa's entrepreneurs and innovative payment solutions will be empowered to enable millions of low-income additional African consumers, access to electricity services by 2022.

OPIC provides funding for off-grid energy projects delivering home solar solutions that are not only portable and easy to install, but affordable, thereby enabling people without power, access to support appliances such as air conditioners and refrigerators. An OPIC loan is also funding Greenlight Planet, affording remote communities solar lighting and phone charging devices. These unserved populations will now be provided with ready access to power for their homes and businesses. These above-mentioned private sector innovations supported by Power Africa and funded by OPIC are enabling communities to access power in increasingly shorter periods of time through off-grid energy solutions. By substituting kerosene and diesel with solar, these solutions offer millions of people the benefits of both reducing their energy expenditures as well as drastically reducing CO2 emissions.

Being the sunniest region on the planet and with its vast natural resources, Africa is set to experience considerable socio-economic advancements. Connecting to the main grid remains extensive and costly which subsequently remains a focal concern of African governments and international development institutions. However, emphasis should be placed on the potential of providing millions of people with affordable, reliable and accessible power in the very near future. Market and policy frameworks require drastic improvements in order to accelerate the following objectives: providing long-term price signals to attract investment, ensuring efficient short-term electricity dispatching, pricing negative externalities and unlocking sufficient levels of flexibility as well as cultivating various dispatchable renewable technologies, including hydropower, bioenergy, geothermal and concentrated solar power.

The [Africa Energy Indaba](#) is partnering with the South African Electrotechnical Export Council (SAEEC) in collaboration with the South African Department of Trade & Industry (the dti), will host various Rural Electrification Agency CEOs and decision-makers from several African countries. Key discussions to enlighten these Agency CEOs on innovative off-grid and mini-grid technologies will be presented at the conference. In addition, technology companies, EPC contractors and financiers will find it worth their while to attend the event as they will be privy to the most recent renewable energy projects that are up for tender.

Furthermore, the conference will feature Hosted Buyers from property development companies, municipalities, retail centres and manufacturers, all of which demonstrate an eager interest in solar rooftop installations and solar solutions. Abundant business opportunities abound for those attending the Business Matchmaking Programme as well as anyone immersed in the energy sector.



Press Release Ends

## **ABOUT AFRICA ENERGY INDABA**

*An African Energy event for Africans and by Africans*

### **2019 Theme: Africa's Energy Future**

Africa's power and energy sector is a critical driver of growth and development across the continent. With vast natural energy resources ranging from coal, oil, gas, hydro, solar, wind and geothermal, there is ample choice for the discerning energy investor. Lack of access to electricity means that there is an opportunity for regional governments, energy businesses, organisations and financiers to unlock electricity access to millions of people who have don't have power. **The Africa Energy Indaba** is the continent's premier energy conference and exhibition: bringing together leading African and global energy players to unlock energy and business opportunities across the African continent. The event is the World Energy Council (WEC) regional event for Africa and has strategic partnerships with the South African National Energy Association (SANEA) and the NEPAD Planning & Coordinating Agency (NPCA).

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**19 -20 February 2019 at Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg**

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