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The Sixth African Geothermal Conference (ARGeo-C6)

'From Concept to Action'

Investing in Geothermal Energy to Power Africa

Addis Ababa, 2 November 2016 – Today Ethiopia is host to more than 600 participants gathered to attend the sixth African Geothermal Conference (ARGeo-C6). In attendance are regional and international experts, policy makers, developers and financiers, geothermal institutions, Ministers of Energy and Mining from across Africa among others. The conference theme is “*Geothermal: Solution to Africa Energy needs*”.

The key objective of this conference is to showcase the unfolding success stories on geothermal development in Africa. It also aims to promote regional cooperation and provide an innovative information exchange platform on exploration, development, investment and utilization of geothermal resources in the region and elsewhere in the world.

In his opening speech, the Minister for Mines, Petroleum and Natural Gas H.E. Motuma Mekasa said, “governments have to create enabling laws and a supportive regulatory framework that will make the exploitation of geothermal resources possible.”

The Minister further observed that “power shortage and high cost of power undermine efforts to combat poverty and that African countries need to work together in solving the current financing, technology and implementation capacity challenges associated with the development of renewable energy in general and in geothermal energy in particular.”

He also noted the importance of concerted effort between the government and the private sector. “Africa’s doors are open to the private sector for the establishment of mutually beneficial collaboration in developing Africa’s vast geothermal resources,” added H.E. Motuma Mekasa.

The conference takes place at a time when implementation of 2030 Agenda - Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is an on-going top priority for governments across the world. Particularly, countries in Africa are at a critical time in pursuit of alternative sources of renewable energy. With only 25% of African population having access to electricity, and more than 70% dependent on the traditional biomass fuels which causes widespread deforestation, erosion and loss of fertility of arable land.

The conference is an opportunity to share knowledge, experiences, and strengthen the means of investing in partnerships for sustainable development to achieve *SDG Goal 7: ensure access to affordable and clean energy*.

During the opening ceremony, UN Environment Regional Director and Representative for Africa, Dr. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, called on Africa and partners to use the potential of geothermal in the region to catalyze the continent’s economic, social and environmental development aspirations.

“The continent has an abundance of untapped renewable energy resources including hydropower, wind, geothermal, solar, and bio-fuels. With a geothermal potential of over

20,000 MW of electricity, the East Africa Rift System is one of the most highly endowed regions of the earth; yet, it is the least connected with electricity,” said Dr. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo.

“Geothermal is ‘indigenous’, it is reliable and can and should be a key ally in realizing a transition to a low carbon, resource efficient and inclusive Green Economy — a transition that was endorsed as an important pathway to achieving sustainable development at the recent “Rio+20 Summit” and a pathway that many countries in the region have embarked upon,” she added.

A number of activities scheduled for the two day conference including a Ministerial roundtable discussion of Ministers of Energy and Mining from East Africa to deliberate on how to develop a strategy on accelerating development of geothermal resources in the region.

Also scheduled are field trips to Ethiopian Geothermal Prospects - Aluta Langanu and Tendaho - as well as exhibitions on geothermal products.

Note to Editors:

The conference is organized with the support of the UNEP-ARGeo Programme and is one of its biennial geothermal Conferences. The UNEP ARGeo Programme, through one of its project components “Regional networking, information systems, capacity building and awareness creation” supports and assists member countries to host and organize this conference, on rotational basis in coordination with other geothermal support programmes such as Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA), Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR), United Nations University- geothermal Training Programme (UNU-GTP), African Union Commission (AUC), US-Power Africa, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), African Geothermal Branch (ARB), and International Geothermal Association (IGA).

The African Rift Geothermal Development Facility (ARGeo) project implemented by UNEP was launched in 2010 in Djibouti to encourage public and private developers to accelerate the development of geothermal resource in the East African region, and reduce risks associated with the resources exploration, thereby reducing greenhouse gases The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

For more information check: <http://theargeo.org/>

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