



ACCELERATE RENEWABLE ENERGY INVESTMENT TO ALLEVIATE POWER SHORTAGES

Copperbelt Energy Corporation Plc (CEC) Managing Director, Mr. Owen Silawwe, has identified acceleration of investments in renewables as a sure way for Zambia to attain the desired energy mix to enable it minimize its vulnerability to dependence on hydro energy.

Speaking on the sidelines of the National Economic Summit in Livingstone on 26th July 2019, Silawwe observed that Zambia was on the right path with regard to the adoption of and investment in renewable energy, particularly solar.

“Our country’s power source is predominantly hydro making, up about 80 percent, with the rest being mostly thermal; this makes us vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As such, we must find sustainable ways of ensuring that we do not repeatedly experience power shortage each time we have partial or full droughts.”

He said that considering Zambia is well endowed with water resources makes hydropower still a source worth developing even though it casts doubt in the minds of some as to whether it still makes a viable investment in view of the climatic challenges it is prone to; but that in combination with other renewables, such as solar and wind, it still is.

A well balanced combination of other renewables and hydro has the potential to give an optimum level of generation, capable of enabling the country to withstand the impact of drought.

Renewables, be it solar or wind, tend to be variable whereas hydropower enables for storage of energy because water basically can serve us stored energy. This makes such a combination a good one.

Given the volatility of renewable energy sources, Silawwe counseled that it was imperative that the country works at attaining network flexibility by adopting modern technologies that allow for operating volatile technologies such as solar.

With the support of cooperating partners such as the World Bank and KfW, Zambia is already making considerable strides in actualizing solar energy development as can be seen from programmes such as Scaling Solar and GET FIT Zambia, which also demonstrate the Government’s will for the industry.

CEC and its consortium partner, Innovent SAS, are developing two sites of 20MW each of solar awarded under the GET FIT Zambia solar tender earlier in the year.

“We are on the right path as a country as we have already started adopting solar technologies, all that is needed is to determine milestones such as how much solar will we develop in the next one to three or five years. Once such benchmarks have been set, then we can focus on that being the sustainable solution we require,” stated Silawwe.