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UN chief lauds Kenya's efforts to generate clean energy



2 April 2011 – [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today said he was fascinated by how Kenya is tapping the volcanic heat of the Great Rift Valley to generate electricity, saying the East African country may be on the way to becoming sufficient in low-carbon and resource-efficient energy to power a “green economy”.

“It is a remarkable story – not just in terms of renewable energy and climate change – but in partnership for development,” said Mr. Ban when he visited the Olkaria Geothermal Plant near the Kenyan town of Naivasha.

He said the power plant was an example of how the United Nations, the World Bank, aid donors and the private sector are supporting initiatives and public policies that can help to reduce poverty and lay the foundation for a sustainable future.

“In the past few days I have learned about the development of the biggest wind farm in sub-Saharan Africa – a project in Turkana [northern Kenya] that will generate more than 300 megawatts [of electricity].

“Kenya's Vision 2030 [economic development blueprint] also includes waste-into-energy projects, co-generation and feed-in tariffs, and ongoing work with UNEP [UN Environment Programme] and other partners to support the tea industry with small-scale hydro power,” said the Secretary-General.

He said that although Kenya is not rich in oil, natural gas or coal reserves, the country has a wealth of “clean fuels” - from geothermal energy, to wind, solar and biomass. The country, he said, could generate 1,200 megawatts of electricity by 2018 by developing its geothermal capacity.

The challenge is to integrate all the emerging components of a renewable energy economy into an efficient, modern distribution network, Mr. Ban said.

He said UNEP and the Global Environment Facility are working with the Government, regulators and power companies to address power generation and distribution challenges.

“Done efficiently and creatively, this can help to catalyze renewable energy not just in Kenya, but as part of the planned East Africa Power Pool. As Kenya – and many other countries – are showing, there is a growing menu of economically-viable choices for generating energy,” said the Secretary-General.

He said next year's UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, (Rio 2012) will be an opportunity to look further into how economies can be developed to generate decent employment in a “way that keeps humanity's footprint within planetary boundaries.”

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