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FRESH building blocks were again laid unto the renewable energy / energy sector last week, when the Energy Commission of Nigeria and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) unveiled a new project that will promote investment in clean technologies and foster the production, transmission and use of renewable energy at the national and local levels.

Coming under Global Environment Facility (GEF)'s Promoting Low Carbon Energy Solutions in Nigeria, the project is set to facilitate the switch from fossil-fuels to the various renewable energy technologies such as solar, wind, hydro or renewable biomass energy and electricity, thus contributing to a drastic reduction of CO₂ emissions from Nigeria's power sector.

The project will involve a diverse range of public and private stakeholders, whose involvement is essential because each partner has a distinctive mandate and a role to play in the area of power sector policy-making and operations, private sector engagement, promotion of renewable energy, and climate change mitigation.

Similarly, the project, which will have the Federal Ministry of Environment as one of the executing agencies, will also encourage small scale renewable energy on-grid investment, typically individuals or group of individuals willing to install Solar Roofs with Photovoltaic panels, both in cities or in rural areas as an alternative to individual Diesel Generators.

Team Leader, Environment & Sustainable Development, UNDP, Mr. Muyiwa Odele disclosed that the meeting is a first crucial step in the development of a new project to exchange ideas with stakeholders and actors in the renewable energy / energy sector. “It is a prerequisite for ensuring that the project design builds on existing knowledge base, lessons learnt and create a critical mass of potential partners towards the success of the project,” he said.

National Programme Coordinator, UNDP GEF Energy Efficiency Programme, Etiosa Uyigwe stated that under the policy and institutional framework for private investment in on-grid renewable power generation, renewable energy policy and targets have been formulated and adopted as well as technical regulations for on-grid renewable energy plants.

Training has also been provided to federal and state institutions in charge of RES policy making and implementation

He said that the project will facilitate design and implementation of a first batch of commercial on-grid projects for a total of at least 100 MW in installed RE-based power generation capacity.

UNDP has implemented over 230 GEF clean energy projects in close to 100 developing countries, and has acquired a unique base of institutional knowledge on transforming renewable energy markets in developing countries. One of UNDP-GEF’s three signature climate mitigation

programs – Clean Energy – specifically promotes access to clean and affordable energy supply.

Two recent UNDP publications on de-risking renewable energy investment environments ('Transforming Renewable On-Grid Energy Markets' and 'De-Risking Renewable Energy Investment') summarize UNDP's empirically- and theoretically-robust 'theory of change' for catalyzing private-sector renewable energy investment.

The project is also in line with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Nigeria. UNDAF aims at reducing poverty, the degradation of basic social indicators, and setting the country on a pathway to sustainable development.

The two first priorities of the UNDAF are: (i) governance and accountability that supports transparent, equitable and effective use of resources; (ii) productivity and employment for wealth creation with a bias towards the poor and to help build a private sector-led non-oil economy.