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STIMSON

Renewable Energy and MINUSMA

Wednesday 6 October 2021 - 4:00 to 5:30 pm CEST (10:00 to 11:30 am NY time)
Berlin Climate Security Conference

Mali and MINUSMA face some of the world's highest energy costs, as well as supply line vulnerabilities from transport of diesel across hundreds of miles. Renewable energy, now the cheapest power source in Mali and most countries, presents significant opportunities to address these challenges, as well as reduce carbon emissions and potentially leave a positive infrastructure legacy for host communities from the mission's deployment.

This special virtual discussion – hosted by the Permanent Missions of Permanent Missions of Norway, the United Arab Emirates, France and Mali (TBC) to the UN and Powering Peace (a partnership between Energy Peace Partners and the Stimson Center) – brings together MINUSMA leadership, relevant UN departments, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and interested Member States to evaluate options for renewable energy integration. The event also occurs in the context of the UN Security Council's consideration of MINUSMA's mandate renewal, which recognizes climate's relevance to the mission, and the UN's ambitious internal goals around climate. As a baseline, the event will present Powering Peace's just-released report "[*From Renewable Energy to Peacebuilding in Mali: MINUSMA's Opportunity to Bridge the Gap*](#)", on MINUSMA's energy situation, and outline potential next steps based on security, technical, and financial viability. The discussions will also consider MINUSMA's contribution toward the UN Secretariat's overall 80% renewable energy target by 2030.

The event is part of a series of workshops and panels in 2021 and 2022 on renewables implementation in specific security contexts and broader UN peace operations.

Background

MINUSMA is one of the largest UN peacekeeping operations, with over 15,000 personnel, and relies almost exclusively on diesel, which is both now significantly more expensive than solar power and requires transport across zones of potential attacks. MINUSMA is also one of the largest estimated single sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Mali.

The mission accordingly started to introduce solar and renewables integration plans in 2017, including a recent solar-with-storage pilot in Bamako. However, scale has been limited.

Indicatively, it is estimated that of a key camp's annual production of 8,500 megawatt-hours, only 370 are generated by solar panels.

At the same time, the UN Secretariat in September 2019 committed to 80% renewable energy by 2030 under its UN Secretariat Climate Action Plan, on the basis of reducing energy costs and leading by example on climate change. Fulfillment of the commitment rests largely on six peacekeeping missions, including MINUSMA, which also takes place in the context of phase two of DOS' Environment Strategy for Field Missions.

Renewable energy may not be appropriate for all settings and functions, requiring site- and activity-specific analysis and solutions. But based on emerging practices from UN missions in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Somalia, for the bulk of energy needs, missions in practice could potentially redirect their diesel procurement budgets to power procurement from local renewable energy providers, negating the need for capital expenditure and allowing the creation of infrastructure that outlasts the mission. Initial analysis also suggests that renewable energy is part of the response to protect fuel convoys, a notable threat facing peacekeeping missions. Deployment of renewable energy can significantly reduce a mission's fuel requirements, and therefore the frequency or size of fuel convoys, and associated vulnerabilities. It can additionally create socioeconomic and peace dividends for local communities and governments that host UN operations.

The scope for troop-contributing countries to transition to renewables in their field deployments is potentially more complicated, given that upfront costs would be required to acquire renewable energy hardware, unless a clear reimbursement scheme were introduced.

More broadly in Mali, it is estimated that just over 50% of the population has access to energy, vs a global average of around 90%. In remote communities, diesel is the primary modern power source, but too expensive for most consumers and small businesses. IRENA research indicates that distributed renewable energy systems – namely solar – would be the lowest-cost way to provide energy benefits to unelectrified communities.

Audience profile

The event is targeted at:

- Member States, particularly members of the UN Security Council and those with particular interest in MINUSMA; host countries of other UN peace missions; troop-contributing countries; and members of the Groups of Friends on Environmental Management in the Field, Sustainable Energy, and Climate Change
- UN field mission technical staff
- UN staff involved in UNSCAP, the Environment Strategy, and energy/climate issues
- Broader peace operations community

Agenda

5min 5 min	Co-Moderators opening: Welcome and objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hans Olav Ibrekk, Director Section for Energy, Climate and Food Safety, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway• Nawal Al Hosany, Permanent Representative to IRENA, United Arab Emirates Comments by El-Ghassim Wane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of MINUSMA Comments by H.E Issa Konfourou, Permanent Representative of Mali to the UN (TBC)
15 min	Report highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victoria Holt, Vice President, Stimson Center• Dave Mozersky, President, Energy Peace Partners• Rida Lyammouri, Lead co-author• Dirk Druet, Lead co-author
5 min	Comments by Olivier Richard, Head of Climate and Development, Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations
20min	Q&A
5 min 5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closing remarks by Elizabeth Press, Director Planning and Programme support, IRENA• Wrap-up by moderators

Registration

Click here to register your participation: <https://bit.ly/3Co5Vpj>

A virtual link and updates will be sent to registered participants prior to the event.

Contacts

- Norway: Mona Løvstad Tranøy, First Secretary, Mona.Lovstad.Tranoy@mfa.no
- UAE: Dane McQueen, Senior Advisor, Development and Humanitarian Affairs, d_mcqueen@mofaic.gov.ae
- Powering Peace
 - Victoria Holt, Vice President, Stimson Center, vholt@stimson.org
 - Dave Mozersky, President, Energy Peace Partners, dmozersky@energypeacepartners.com



