

Proposed power projects could help SADC meet demand

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Southern African countries could meet their combined projected energy demand in 2016, if 12 electricity generation and transmission projects presented at a Southern African Development Community Energy Investor Roundtable, in Zambia, in July, came to fruition, New Partnership for Africa's Development Secretariat energy expert Professor **Mosad Elmissiry** stated.

Twelve energy generation and transmission projects from the Southern African Power Pool member countries were presented at the roundtable as part of plans to deal with the energy deficit in the region and to meet the expected energy demand growth in the region.

These projects included the proposed 2 000-MW Benga thermal coal power station, the 2 400-MW Moatize thermal coal power station and the 1 500-MW Mphanda Nkuwa hydropower station, in Mozambique.

The 120-MW Itezhi Tezhi hydropower station and the 350-MW Kariba North Bank Extension hydropower project, in Zambia, would also contribute to the region's energy provision capabilities.

Zimbabwean electricity generation projects, such as the extension of the Hwange thermal power station, the extension of the Kariba South hydropower plant and a new independent power producer thermal power project, Gokwe North, would contribute a further 1 400 MW of electricity for the region.

"Assuming that these projects are implemented according to schedule, we will have sufficient energy by 2016 to supply the current and expected increase in energy consumption levels," assured Elmissiry.

However, he added that this estimation did not include new rural electrification projects.

In the short term, however, the region should also focus on demand-side management, energy conservation and renewable energy sources to help tackle the shortage of power.

"Africa is blessed with enormous solar energy resources and these resources need to be exploited. In fact, solar irradiation in Africa is among the highest in the world, yet solar energy usage in Africa is the lowest," stated Elmissiry.

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