



PRESS RELEASE

The Seventh African Geothermal Conference (ARGeo-C7)

Seizing the moment: Investing in geothermal for sustainable development

(Embargoed until 31st October 2018)

Kigali, 31 October 2018 – Today Rwanda is hosting to more than 500 delegates of the seventh African Geothermal Conference (ARGeo-C7) whose theme is “***Seizing the moment: Investing in geothermal for sustainable development.***” In attendance are Ministers of Energy and Mining, and institutions from across Africa, and beyond.

“This forum is a key platform to discuss future of energy in Africa as a continent that needs to take a leap to achieve Sustainable Goals by 2030. It is also an excellent opportunity and the right platform for networking and sharing experience and practices in Geothermal Science and technology to develop this unique resource in the world.” said the Minister for Infrastructure Amb. Claver Gatete during the official opening.

He said that In Rwanda there is a positive indicator of geothermal potential, but that there is a need for further studies towards resource exploitation and development. This requires collaboration with regional and international experts for technical assistance to make sure that this resource is exploited and developed.

The 7th ARGeo conference will crystalize earlier discussions on direct use applications of geothermal resources in productive sectors such as agriculture, aquaculture, and agro-industry, among others. “Building on the ongoing focus on large-scale power generation from geothermal resources, this year’s conference focusses on the small-scale and modular generation of power from medium temperature geothermal resources,” notes Dr. Juliette Biao Regional Representative and Director UN Environment Africa Office.

Energy poverty remains a serious obstacle to economic and human development in most parts of the African continent. Africa requires between \$60 billion and \$90 billion annually to address its energy shortfall, roughly quadruple 2014 investment levels.” Countries in Africa need to urgently bridge the existing energy gap. Currently, only 25% of the African population has access to electricity, and more than 70% dependent on the traditional biomass fuels which cause widespread deforestation, erosion, and loss of fertility of arable land.

“As an indigenous and reliable renewable energy, geothermal can and should be a key ally in realizing a transition to a low carbon, resource efficient and inclusive Green and Circular Economy - a transition and a pathway that many countries in the region have embarked upon,” Dr. Biao further observed.

Other objectives of the conference are to: (i) showcase the unfolding success stories on geothermal development for both power generation and direct uses, particularly in Africa’s Eastern Rift region; (ii) catalyze public and private entities to invest in geothermal development in both the Western and Eastern Rift Regions and; (iii) provide an innovative information exchange platform on the exploration, development, investment and utilization of geothermal resources in the region, and elsewhere in the world.

The seventh geothermal conference is taking place at a very pivotal time. Notably, the implementation of global 2030 Agenda - Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Africa Union Development Agenda 2063 - “the Africa we want,” and the Paris Agreement 2015, are all an on-going top priority for governments across the continent. The successful development of geothermal resources is expected to contribute to the achievement of the “National Determined Contribution-NDC’s” targets to reduce Green House Gas emissions under the framework of Paris Agreement 2015. Still, the enhanced access to affordable and clean energy will be key to the achievement of all these development agenda and the Africa Union Development Agenda 2063.

During the three-day conference, ministers of Energy and Mining from East Africa will hold a Ministerial roundtable discussion building on the outcomes of the ARGeo-C6 conference held in Ethiopia in 2016. One of the key outcomes of the 2016 ARGeo-C6 geothermal conference was diversifying the use of geothermal resources and seek technical and financial support in the development of low to medium temperature geothermal resources. Already, several projects from Africa’s Western Rift Branch have submitted proposals for funding. The funds once approved, will be used for resource assessment and identification of suitable technology for harnessing low-temperature geothermal resources.

It is expected that discussions during the conference will propel member countries towards the realization of a Regional Energy Policy and the East African Sustainable Energy Roadmap and Strategy. The conference is a mix of plenary sessions and five parallel technical sessions for the presentation of more than 140 technical papers focusing on geothermal policy, exploration, development, investment and utilization, project finance and management. The presenters are renowned and budding geothermal scientists from the region, and from around the world. During the conference, various organizations will exhibit their geothermal development progress, technology, and science. To crown the conference, delegates will have a field trip to Rwanda’s Geothermal Prospects. The conference was preceded by a 2-day pre-conference workshop that trained more than 50 budding geothermal scientists.

Notes to Editors:

The seventh biennial Africa Rift Geothermal conference is organized with the support of the UN Environment - ARGeo Programme. Through one of its project components “Regional networking, information systems, capacity building and awareness creation” the ARGeo Programme supports and assists member countries to host and organize this conference, on a rotational basis. The ARGeo Programme works in coordination with other geothermal support programmes such as Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA), Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR), United Nations University-Geothermal Training Programme (UNU-GTP), African Union Commission (AUC), US-Power Africa, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Geothermal Association (IGA) and the IGA African Geothermal Branch (ARB).

The UN Environment African Rift Geothermal Development Facility (ARGeo) project was launched in 2010 to encourage public and private developers to accelerate the development of geothermal resources in the Eastern Africa region, and reduce risks associated with the resources exploration, thereby reducing greenhouse gases. The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other co-financing partners.

For more information check: <http://theargeo.org/>