

PRESS RELEASE

Celebration of One Millionth On-Grid Connection

Kigali, January 23, 2020 - Hon. Claver GATETE, Minister of Infrastructure, officiated the ceremony to celebrate the number of on-grid connections which has already reached 1,000,000.

The Government of Rwanda recognizes the vital role that electricity plays in accelerating economic development through improving health and standards of living. Energy and particularly access to electricity is Government's key priority. Electricity is an essential driver of modern technology and socio-economic development.

Therefore, significant investments have been made and progress registered led to the increase of households accessing to electricity with the Government target of Universal access by the year 2024. Access to electricity has increased from 2% in 2000 to around 52,8% today, including 38.5% households connected to the national grid while 14.3% are using off-grid solutions including inter-alia standalone solar home systems and mini-grids.

From the years 1937 when REGIDESO was started in Rwanda and 1957 when the first ever power plant was built in Rwanda up to the years 2000, access to electricity in Rwanda was being considered as a rare privilege to dwellers of big cities, with only 46,000 households with access to electricity during that period.

In 2009, a special program to roll out access to electricity (EARP) especially in rural areas was established to increase the access rate in the Rwandan community. At that time, only 6% of Rwandan households had access to on-grid electricity. Thanks to the support from the Government of Rwanda and various development partners, the program increased the access to electricity to 492,641 in 2014 and to over 1 million households connected to the grid today.

Despite the aggressive expansion of Rwanda's electrical grid network, grid connections will take time to reach all households. Therefore, off-grid solutions, including solar home systems (SHS), will play a key role. Off-grid technologies and commercial structures have developed significantly in recent years and now present a viable alternative to grid connections. Today, over 386,000 households have access to electricity through the use of off-grid technologies.

Looking at the projection of increase of the number of households in Rwanda, 3.8 million households will have access to electricity by 2024. This means that a total of 2.4 million households will be connected in the coming 5 years. Among these, 1 million will be connected to the grid while 1.4 million will be provided with off-grid solutions.

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