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AFRICAN ENERGY COMMISSION (AFREC) SIGNS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH GAS EXPORTING COUNTRIES FORUM (GECF) ON THE SIDELINES OF THE 7TH GECF SUMMIT IN ALGIERS



H.E Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, signing the MoU with H.E Eng. Mohamed Hamel, Secretary General of GECF.

01 March 2024, Algiers, Algeria: The African Union, through its specialised energy agency, The African Energy Commission (AFREC), signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF). Signing the agreement were H.E. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy and H.E. Eng. Mohamed Hamel Secretary General of the GECF. The areas of cooperation with GECF will involve holding joint activities of mutual interest, conducting joint research and advocacy, sharing data and knowledge

in energy policy and promoting natural gas as a sustainable source of energy among others.

The MoU lays a strong foundation between the African Union and GECF to promote the use of natural gas in increasing energy access and enhancing energy security in Africa. This aligns well with both parties' goals of promoting sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development. The GECF and the African Union, through AFREC, are committed to working closely to execute the outlined activities and share experiences and best practices in the energy sector. The collaboration will encompass energy market analysis, data and information, technology advancement, and strategies for energy system decarbonisation.

Africa has an estimated natural gas reserve of 18 trillion cubic metres (tcm) with significant reserves in Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt and Mozambique. With the global energy demand projected to rise by 20% in 2050 and natural gas contributing at least 26% in the energy mix, Africa's natural gas production is projected to grow at a rate of 3% annually due to new gas discoveries in Africa including in Senegal, Mauritania and Tanzania. The AU will therefore promote the exploitation of these gas resources in a sustainable way to benefit the African people in line with the common position on just transition and Agenda 2063.

Commissioner Abou-Zeid, stated that *"natural gas is an important component of Africa's energy mix and recognised and adopted in the 'African Common Position on Energy' as transition fuel and also critical to clean cooking efforts in Africa."* She added that *"natural gas can contribute to Africa's sustainable development and energy security especially in increasing energy access and she encouraged African countries to promote and to locally develop the entire value chain for this important resource"*.

African countries approved the AU Common Position on Energy Access and Just Transition in 2022 which emphasizes an inclusive approach that will ensure no one is left behind through a gradual shift from the conventional sources of energy to renewable energy to address the energy access gap. *"This means that African countries support the development of all sources of energy including oil and natural gas in the spirit of diversifying the energy portfolio to achieve universal access and the much-needed energy security."* underscored the Commissioner.

Secretary General Eng. Mohamed Hamel highlighted that *'substantial investment in both the upstream and downstream segments of the natural gas industry is necessary in Africa and access to financing shall be facilitated'*, to enhance socio-economic development and regional integration.

Africa presents unique opportunities for natural gas while addressing infrastructure constraints, regulatory challenges, and increasing investments in gas-to-power projects will be critical to unlock the full potential of natural gas in the region to drive

sustainable development in Africa. This MoU will therefore help to enhance joint efforts between AFREC and GECF to pave the way for impactful initiatives on natural gas that will benefit communities and contribute to a more sustainable world.

About the organisations:***African Energy Commission (AFREC):***

The African Energy Commission (AFREC) is a specialised energy agency of African Union (AU) with a mandate articulated in the AFREC convention. AFREC's mandate was established by African Heads of States and Governments in 2001, with broad objectives to lead the development of energy policies and programmes, create and continuously update the African Energy Statistics, mobilise technical and financial support for Member States and implement capacity building programmes. It engages actively with a broad network of experts and partners in the 55 AU member states, ensuring that all energy initiatives align with the future development of the energy sector in Africa and the pursuit of building 'the Africa We Want'. For more visit AFREC website: <https://au-afrec.org/>

Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF):

The GECF is an international governmental organisation established with the aim to support the sovereign rights of its Member Countries over their natural gas resources and their abilities to develop, preserve and use such resources for the benefit of their peoples, through the exchange of experience, views, information and coordination in gas-related matters. The GECF comprises nineteen member countries.

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