

Beat: News

AT COP24, UNITED NATIONS AND BERTRAND PICCARD JOIN FORCES

TO PROMOTE RENEWABLE ENERGY IN AFRICA

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USPA NEWS - UNCTAD and the World Alliance for Efficient Solutions "" a Swiss non-governmental organization established by Bertrand Piccard's Solar Impulse Foundation "" are joining forces to promote renewable energy in Africa.

UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General Isabelle Durant and Mr. Piccard today signed a formal agreement during the 2018 United Nations climate change negotiations, the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24), taking place in Katowice, Poland, 2""14 December 2018.

"UNCTAD guides developing countries, including least developed countries (LDCs) such as those in sub-Saharan Africa, toward energy policies that support productive and sustainable economic activity. But we also aspire to connect governments looking for new solutions to the innovators that are working on them," Ms. Durant said.

"With this agreement, UNCTAD and the World Alliance will work together to introduce concrete solutions to Africa in support of Sustainable Development Goal 7 on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all."

Mr. Piccard said: "Clean energies and technologies are able to provide social wealth, peace and stability to developing countries. The Solar Impulse Foundation and the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development are going to prove it through a collaboration that will bring profitable and clean solutions, to help with environmentally friendly growth, to the regions who need it the most." UNCTAD's Least Developed Countries Report 2017 found that more than 40% of businesses operating in these countries are held back by inadequate, unreliable and unaffordable electricity. On average, they suffered ten power outages per month, each lasting around five hours, costing them 7% of the value of their sales.

More than 60% of the population in LDCs on average lacks access to electricity. Moreover, LDCs as a group have around just 8% of the capacity of other developing economies to generate electricity for each person, and barely 2% of that of wealthier nations.

"There can be little economic activity and few development prospects, with such an absence of electricity," Ms. Durant said. "No entrepreneur, no multinational, no digital infrastructure, no start-up can properly function without it."

Ms. Durant and Mr. Piccard also pledged to hold a joint workshop to link selected innovators with concrete solutions to an audience of African diplomatic representatives at the United Nations office in Geneva, Switzerland.

UNCTAD is the United Nations body that supports developing countries to access the benefits of a globalized economy more fairly and effectively. Based in Geneva, UNCTAD provides analysis, facilitates consensus-building, and offers technical assistance to developing countries so that they can use trade, investment, finance, and technology as vehicles for inclusive and sustainable development.

The World Alliance for Efficient Solutions, established by the Solar Impulse Foundation, assesses solutions submitted by its members and, with the help of independent technical and financial experts, selects promising ones to be presented to governments, businesses and institutions to encourage them to adopt more ambitious environmental targets and energy policies.

Psychiatrist and aviator Bertrand Piccard was the first person to fly non-stop around the world in a balloon and was the pilot of Solar Impulse, a solar-powered aircraft that circumnavigated the globe in 2016. He is a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador.

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