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The Republic of Senegal is making progress to expand its renewable energy sector under the World Bank Scaling Solar Program. As it stands, 70.4% of the Senegalese population has access to electricity, of which less than a third is generated from domestic sources - total installed capacity currently sits at 1,555 MW.

However, under the government-backed World Bank Scaling Solar program, 60 MW was added to Senegal"s domestic power generation last year alone through solar.

Last month, H.E. President Macky Sall inaugurated the 23 MW peak Diass solar power plant, supported by German Chancellor, H.E. Olaf Scholz.

The $21.4 million project was financed by the German development bank Kreditanstalt f?r Wiederaufbau (KfW) and represents part of $961.54 million in sustainable development finance provided by the nation to Senegal to date.

The plant, which is located 40 km south of the capital of Dakar in the department of M"bour, will supply 33,000 Senegalese households, saving Senegal"s national electricity company SENELEC an estimated $2.77 million per annum in fuel costs for thermal power plants over its 25-year lifespan. The Diass solar power plant is an undertaking of SENELEC itself, part of H.E. Macky Sall"s government"s goal to reach an estimated 30% share of renewables in the national grid by 2050.

Meanwhile, the Kael and Kahone solar plants came online in May 2021, developed by Engie and Meridiam following competitive tendering by Senegal"s Energy Regulatory Commission, financed by the International Finance Corporation, European Investment Bank, Proparco and Senegalese sovereign wealth fund, FONSIS. The paired solar power plants cost $40.77 million, providing electricity to 540,000 people at under four cents per kWh - not only the cheapest energy in Senegal but among the most cost-effective across sub-Saharan Africa.

As it stands, Senegal has 112 MW of installed solar, however this figure is rising exponentially year on year as investment swings in favor of green energy development and policymakers under H.E. Macky Sall"s regime and others realize the benefits of the renewable source. Notably, Senegal generates 1,600-1,800 kWh/kWp per annum per installed photovoltaic (PV) units, far above the global average, thanks to its exceptional insolation bordering the Sahara.

The Diass solar power plant has 85,248 polycrystalline PV modules installed across 32 hectares, all feeding

through eight inverters and 16 transformers into the national grid through the Kael substation, providing M"bour with cheap, green power. The project also works to level lingering inequities in access to power for the nation, since whilst urban electrification stands above 90%, access to electricity in rural areas remains at approximately 40% - a huge divide.

The MSGBC Oil, Gas & Power conference and exhibition, taking place in Dakar this September, will see strong, unified regional commitments, investments and policies made towards driving the energy transition as COP 27 approaches in Egypt this November. Corporate delegations and heads of state are expected from all basin nations including Senegal, Mauritania, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry, as well as African leaders including Morocco and Ivory Coast, sharing best practices and writing a unified narrative for Africa"s energy future, electrification, economic growth and emissions.

This year has seen Senegal roll out solar street lamps and Africa"s first electric bus fleet, Mauritania double down on 40 GW of green hydrogen commitments and The Gambia hit a new milestone with renewable energy now accounting for 52.4% of actual total consumption.

Now, as the region"s energy sector gathers steam through gas developments paired with solar, wind, hydrogen and hydropower, the MSGBC Oil, Gas & Power event will pave the way for the coming decade"s worth of low-carbon energy projects.

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