

Summary 2nd International Community Wind Symposium 2017

Community Power in Africa

The second part of the afternoon focussed on Community Power in Africa. Before Stefan Mager (GIZ) chaired the panel-discussion with practitioners and experts from five African countries, Dr Ibrahim Togola (Mali Folkecenter) and Dr Benjamin Laag (Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development BMZ) took the podium.



Intense discussions among the participants of the Symposium 2017

Panellists of Symposium's 2017 session 'Community Power in Africa'

In his keynote, Ibrahim Togola gave a brief overview of the status quo of Community Power in Mali as well as the main barriers for the further development of projects. He indicated that today the African energy sector is very favourable for large scale RE projects, both with mini-grids and grid connected. However, considering the demographic situation in Mali and most of West Africa, renewable power with mini-grids has a big role to play. What is now needed is investment capital, policy and transaction structures which allow for both long-term investment and the involvement of local communities. As host of the next World Community Power Conference in 2018 he invited all participants of the symposium to come to Mali in the next year.

Dr Togola's opening was followed by a presentation from Dr Benjamin Laag from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development on creating a decentralised and citizen-oriented energy supply for African rural areas to improve livelihoods. Laag presented elements of his government's community energy strategy for Africa, which are a key part of the newly established "Marshall plan with Africa". He pointed out that decentralized energy solutions can make a fast and effective contribution to energy security in rural areas in Africa. Furthermore they not only promote economic development and generate urgently needed jobs, but also bring new income and regional added value. A decentralized energy supply based on renewable energy would therefore be both an opportunity and a challenge for Africa.