

Samoa green electricity

Apia, Samoa - The official dedication of the \$11.3 million Tala Afolau Biomass Gasification Power Plant marks a new era for Samoa in its renewable energy efforts. The new Plant will produce five-million-kilowatt an hour (kWh) of electricity per annum based on running the 750kw plant at 85 per cent of its capacity at 90 per cent of the time.

This is the first facility of its kind to be set up in Samoa and the region and will benefit up to 5,000 families on the north-western side of the island of Upolu who will use electricity from this Plant.

"This project is one of the Government's long term development goals to generate 100 per cent of the country's electricity needs from renewable energy sources by 2025, which is Samoa's contribution under the Paris Agreement, to reduce Green House Gas emissions, as well as reduce Samoa's reliance on diesel as we are now doing," said Prime Minister, Tuilaepa Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi.

"At the moment, up to 50 per cent of our electricity needs are being produced by renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and hydro power. We can now add biomass gasification - a new renewable energy source for Samoa and countries in our region - to that list. This Plant also adds to Samoa's contribution to global efforts to reduce green house gas emissions or carbon dioxide which have depleted the ozone layer, and which have severely impacted on global warming and climate change as we have seen recently with cyclones Evan and Gita."

The Plant is part of activities under the IMPRESS - Improving the Performance and Reliability of Renewable Energy Power Systems in Samoa - Project. This project was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) via the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the European Union and the Government of Germany's Government Agency of International Cooperation (EU-GIZ ASCE). The project was implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Finance, Electric Power Corporation (EPC) and the Samoa Trust Estates Corporation (STEC).

"UNDP is fully committed to working with the Government of Samoa in addressing the threat of climate change. Samoa has shown great dedication in combating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming, amongst other commendable actions," said UNDP Resident Representative, Jorn Sorensen.

"The launching of this Plant has proven to the region and the world that Samoa remains true to its word and means business when it comes to climate-proofing its future. The Biomass Gasification Power Plant has made Samoa an example to other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to emulate in the wise use of its indigenous biomass resources as a sustainable energy resource, as well as incorporating it with Samoa's other developments in areas like agriculture as demonstrated by STEC."

As the Plant is built on Government land in Afolau, under STEC, and the forest of evasive trees is on this STEC land, the Plant has been assigned to STEC to run as a business. STEC and EPC have entered into a 20-year-long Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA) for STEC to operate and maintain the Plant to generate electricity and sell to EPC.

Biomass gasification is a process whereby wood chips are dried before feeding inside a gasifier in which, without oxygen, produce syn gas at very high temperatures then cooled down before using to produce electricity from gas generators. Weeds and invasive species like tamaligi, puluvao, coconut logs, husks and coconut shells are chopped up and used as fuel to feed the biomass gasifier. The gas produced from these will be cooled and pumped into generators to produce electricity that will feed into the EPC grid.

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