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Monday, November 25, 2024, Lusaka, Zambia - World Vision Zambia, with support from World Vision United States, Private Donors and Chikwa Parish, has handed over a 58-kilowatt Solar Micro-Grid in the Manga community under the Chikwa WASH-Energy Project to the Zambian Government through the Ministry of Energy and Manga Community in Chama district. This marked a significant step towards addressing energy and water challenges in rural Zambia.

The \$682,471 project (approximately ZMW 18.5 million) aims to tackle the current water and energy deficit, worsened by the recent El Nino droughts that have strained Zambia's energy and water sectors. The Solar Micro-Grid, one of four planned under the project, directly supports World Vision Zambia's goal to improve the well-being of 1.5 million children by 2025.

Speaking during the event, World Vision Zambia National Director Marc Nosbach said the Manga Solar Micro Grid would improve the health and overall well-being of 5,762 people.

"This Solar Micro-Grid ensures that the Manga Health Care Facility operates efficiently, creating a safe and dignified environment for patients and staff," said Mr. Nosbach. "Expectant mothers will now give birth in a safe, dignified environment with reliable lighting and Health workers will have well-lit spaces to perform their critical work, even at night."

"This Solar Micro-Grid aligns with Sustainable Development Goals #6 and #7, focusing on clean water and sanitation, and affordable, clean energy for all," said the World Vision Zambia National Director. "This development further enables communities to engage in income-generating activities through gardening and small businesses will now have the much-needed power to grow with consistent water supply for irrigation, increasing agricultural yields and reducing dependency on rain-fed farming. This ensures year-round farming and sustained source of income."

In a groundbreaking move announced on the sidelines of the Conference Of Parties (COP28) in Dubai, President Hakainde Hichilema revealed Zambia's ambitious initiative to deploy mini-grids across the nation. This landmark program, a collaboration between the Zambian government and prominent partners, namely the Rockefeller Foundation, the Global Energy Alliance For People and Planet, and Sustainable Energy For All, aims to revolutionize the country's energy landscape.

During the announcement, President Hichilema emphasized the significance of collaborative efforts between local and foreign investors in propelling accelerated development. The mini-grid initiative is set to address energy accessibility challenges and stimulate growth in crucial sectors, including agriculture, energy, and rural development.



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"We are pleased to embark on this transformative journey with the Rockefeller Foundation, the Global Energy Alliance, and Sustainable Energy For All. This initiative symbolizes the power of international partnerships to drive positive change at the local level," stated President Hichilema.

In recognition of the potential hurdles for smaller installations, the Zambian Government has taken proactive measures by passing a statutory instrument to streamline regulatory processes. This move is expected to reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and facilitate the swift implementation of the mini-grid project.

Expressing gratitude to the President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Mr. Rajiv J. Shah, President Hichilema acknowledged the Foundation's pivotal role in this significant endeavor. Mr. Shah, in turn, highlighted the Foundation's commitment to the project, announcing the commencement with an initial deployment of 1400 mini-grids and outlining a long-term expansion plan.

"The Rockefeller Foundation is proud to partner with Zambia in this initiative. Our goal is to bring sustainable and reliable electricity to communities, unlocking new opportunities for economic development and improved quality of life," affirmed Mr. Shah.

President Hichilema echoed the sentiment, noting that the mini-grids will not only address energy challenges but also catalyze economic growth in key sectors. Looking ahead, President Hichilema outlined the ambitious trajectory of the project, projecting an expansion to over 5,000 mini-grids within the next five years.

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