

Panelists' Bios

A. Welcome and Opening Keynote Remarks

H.E. Dr. Frehiwot Woldehana is State Minister at the Ethiopian Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy. Prior to his obtaining current position in the Government, Dr. Frehiwot served as Associate Professor at Addis Ababa University and as Head of the Center of Biomedical Engineering, Institute of Technology, which runs both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. He is a member of the Ethiopian Society of Electrical Engineers and was its President for over five years. His current responsibility is leading the energy sector through the core institutions, the Ethiopian Electric Power, the Ethiopian Electric Utility, and the Ethiopian Energy Authority. The major focus is executing the national electrification program with grid expansion and densification as well as off-grid solutions such as solar mini-grids and solar home systems.

Mikul Bhatia is a Senior Energy Specialist in the World Bank's Energy Practice and the Ethiopia Energy Program Lead. He has also served as Deputy Manager at Maruti Suzuki Ltd., and he has an MBA from the India Institute of Management Ahmedabad.

B. The Evolution, Opportunities, and Challenges of the Mini Grid Sector in Ethiopia

Hizkyas Dufera is Senior Advisor to the Minister at the Ethiopian Ministry of Water Irrigation and Energy. Hizkyas leads and supports energy policy, project development and power sector reform initiatives. He comes from the US private sector and has a strong leadership and entrepreneurial background in the energy and aerospace industry. At the Ministry of Water Irrigation and Energy, Hizkyas has been leading the country's mini-grid project development and the power sector reform roadmap. He has also supported the launch of the National Electrification Program (NEP) and has been assisting on IPP policies, projects and initiatives.

Shiferaw Telila is CEO of the Ethiopian Electric Utility.

Belayneh Gizaw is Head, Regional Operation Coordination Support Office and A/ Director, Licensing and Economic Regulation Directorate

C. Learning from Challenges and Successes Abroad

Jon Exel leads the World Bank's Global Facility on Mini Grids and manages the Energy Access for the Urban Poor initiative. He previously worked with the World Bank from 1998 to 2004 on renewable energy operations in Asia and Africa. Jon has also worked with private investors, governments, nongovernmental organizations, and started the first registered mini-hydropower development company under the new energy policy and regulations in Croatia. Jon has over two decades of experience in energy access and alternative energy sector, working with diesel, solar, hydropower, wind, and biomass-based energy systems, developing expertise in the delivery of energy services to large groups of end users; business plans and delivery models; pre-investment and investment plans; market intelligence; and how institutions plan and operate. Jon has lived and worked in Liberia, Indonesia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, East Jerusalem, and Cambodia. Jon holds a MA in Energy Engineering and Business Administration.

Uche Honnah, Jr. is the Senior Technical Design Expert at the Nigerian Rural Electrification Agency, where he has been instrumental in the planning of energy audit exercises for the Energizing Economies Initiative, Energizing Education Programme as well as the Nigeria Electrification Project (NEP) solar mini grid and solar home systems components. He is an experienced and skillful Engineer and ICT Expert who holds both a BSc in Electrical Engineering from the Pennsylvania State University, USA and MSc in Petroleum Engineering from Teesside University, United Kingdom. Prior to his role at REA, Uche served as the Communication Systems Design Manager for the Lagos Solar Project, a joint project between the UK DFID, Lagos State Government and the Solar Nigeria

Program and Nigeria's largest distributed social solar project to date. Uche entered the public service as an Electrical/Project Engineer in the Lagos State Electricity Board where he supervised the maintenance of HV & LV power distribution and control networks within Lagos State. Prior to that, he had an extensive career in web design in the United States.

Suman Sureshbabu joined The Rockefeller Foundation in 2008. As an Associate Director, she leads strategic development and execution of the Foundation's energy initiative. She has grown this work from its inception and currently focuses on promoting economic development through energy access. Suman's previous work at the Foundation included a focus on agriculture, urbanization, and resilience; she has worked in both the Asia and Africa regional offices. Prior to joining the Foundation, Ms. Sureshbabu was a Fulbright Scholar and Project Manager at the Center for Sustainable Development Initiatives (CENSUDI), and a consultant for the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), both in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Her previous experience also includes consultancies with UNDP-Malawi, Environmental Defense Fund, Oxfam America, and the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka. Ms. Sureshbabu received a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from the Johns Hopkins University and a Master's in Public Affairs at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

Mohammad Wahidur Rahman is the Senior Vice President and Unit Head (Technical) at Renewable Energy of Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL), a leading Financial Institution in Bangladesh engaged in financing infrastructure and renewable energy projects. Mr. Rahman has been leading the Engineering team at IDCOL for solar energy, bio-energy and eco-friendly Green Building projects of IDCOL. Mr. Rahman has more than 10 years of professional experiences in management of development projects including renewable energy, management of funds extended by various development partners, and monitoring of activities by microfinance and private institutes. Mr. Rahman has been trained, home and abroad, on techno-financial management and reporting, project financing, financial modeling, procurement, project evaluation, and monitoring. He holds a Bachelors in Civil Engineering. He is an active senior professional member of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh and a member of the National Bio-energy Guideline Committee of Bangladesh.

D. Panel: Overview of Energy Legislation/Energy Regulation/Directive

Gosaye Mengistie is Senior Energy Advisor at the Ethiopian Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy. Previously, he was Chief Executive Officer of the Ethiopian Electric Utility and Energy Director in the Ministry of Water Irrigation and Energy, the Ministry of Mines and Energy, and the Ministry of Infrastructure. He has an MSC in Energy Economics from the University of Dundee, Scotland UK, 1995, where he authored a dissertation entitled "Options to alleviate Power Constraints in Ethiopia."

Yiheiyis Eshetu is Director of Energy Policy, Strategy and Information at the Ethiopian Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy (MoWIE). Previously, he was an Energy Analyst at MoWIE, a photo Lab and Reproduction expert in the Ethiopian Mapping Agency, and a Physics and Engineering Mechanics teacher in Walliso Agro-Technical School. He has a B.Sc degree in Physics from Addis Ababa University, as well as a B.A. in Public Administration and Development Management and an MSc. in Energy Technology. He was born in Bale-Goba in southern Ethiopia.

Shiferaw Telila and **Belayneh Gizaw** (see above).

E. Scaling up Financing and Unlocking Private Markets

Moderator: Hizkyas Dufera, Senior Energy Advisor, Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy (see bio from morning)

Aaron Leopold is the CEO of the Africa Minigrid Developers Association (AMDA), representing the decentralized utility sector as a partner in progress for national and global efforts to electrify Africa. AMDA advises governments, donors, financiers, fund managers and consultancies on energy planning, offgrid business models and finance.

AMDA is building the large detailed dataset on minigrid costs, performance and trends in the world, enabling investors and policymakers to more fruitfully invest in, regulate, plan for and otherwise grow the sector. Aaron also serves on the Board of Directors of the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE), a global industry association representing the entire rural energy value chain.

George Harris joined PowerGen as Head of Business Development in July 2018 and is responsible for building a pipeline of bankable mini-grid projects across East and West Africa, and also oversees PowerGen's advisory business. Before joining PowerGen, George worked at EDF Energy Renewables, securing investment for large-scale battery storage and offshore wind projects in the UK.

Quentin Peries-Joly, Business Development, has worked for more than 2 years at ENGIE PowerCorner where he is responsible for country expansion in East Africa and commercial innovation to improve the minigrid business model. Quentin graduated in business, sociology and Political Studies. He has worked for the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) where he supported the development of small industries in West and North Africa. He worked at the French high economic council where he advised the Economic minister on the new industrial policies to support French companies of the energy transition sectors. Quentin

Robert Kremer is the Energy Services Senior Director for Smart Power Myanmar and oversees project development as well as, investment and business advisory services. Robert has been involved in the power sector since 2003 and has experience throughout the power value chain. Robert has nearly a decade of financial and operational experience in African power markets that include Cameroon, Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, Rwanda and Senegal. Robert played leading roles in numerous pioneering Independent Power Projects throughout West Africa. Prior to joining Smart Power Myanmar, Robert was working with Deloitte Consulting on the USAID Nigeria Power Sector Program.

Steve Gray is the Regional Representative, for UK Export Finance. Steve is a tenacious and seasoned corporate executive with over 30 years of demanding multinational roles within challenging environments of Africa and the Middle East, delivering exemplary commercial governance, risk management and business transformation success within multinational companies like Taylor Woodrow, Lonrho, UK Export Finance and providing consultancy and advisory services to international and African companies to raise funds for their capital projects and market entry strategies. Expert in emerging markets, infrastructure, and capital projects in a variety of sectors including, oil and gas, mining and ports.

Jon Carrick is Business Development Manager at InfraCo Africa. Since joining InfraCo Africa in September 2017, he has been actively involved in developing both on-grid and off-grid power projects across Sub-Saharan Africa, most recently including a 60MW solar PV project in Malawi (with co-developer JCM Power) and 41 mini-grid sites across Sierra Leone (with co-developer PowerGen Renewable Energy). Prior to joining InfraCo Africa he was employed at a Canadian NGO in the capacity of Microfinance Programme Director. As Microfinance Programme Director he was responsible for overseeing microfinance operations in all countries where the programme was active: Honduras, Guatemala and Sierra Leone.

F. Productive Uses and Community Engagement

Moderator: Francis Elisha is a Director for the Africa program at Rocky Mountain Institute. Over 15 years of experience, he has acquired a wealth of knowledge in energy access challenges, project management, energy policy solutions and financial sustainability issues. His experience allows for a holistic view of energy systems and implementable solutions both on and off grid, with regular interaction with decision makers. Francis holds a solid international track record, having worked extensively in Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. He worked as Advisor to the Minister of Energy in Sierra Leone and more recently as Regional advisor under the Power Africa initiative in 2018, with a specific emphasis on energy access and power trade across West Africa. Prior to these roles, Francis was in charge of securing ambitious targets at the French wind power association during the French energy

transition law negotiations. He also gained experience in European utilities (Areva, EDF, Engie) addressing range of issues from power generation and electrification projects to contract negotiation and project finance, including business development.

Meskerem Mulatu Legesse is a Senior Gender and Development Specialist based in Addis Ababa. Currently, she is working as a Gender and Energy Consultant for the World Bank Ethiopia and Tanzania country office in support of different energy projects implemented by the Government of Ethiopia and Tanzania. She has 10+ years of experience working with UN organizations, donors, international organizations, research institutes and private sectors in Ethiopia and East African countries. She has extensive experience in providing support in closing the gender gap in sectors like energy, agriculture, education, trade and business sectors in Ethiopia. Her areas of expertise include development and implementation of programs in support of closing a gender gap in different sectors; curriculum and capacity development programs for women economic empowerment intended to strengthen their competence on entrepreneurship, agripurnership, SMEs etc. She has rich experience in designing strategies to increase the percentage of women employed in male-dominated sectors like energy and agriculture and designing and developing gender-transformative adult-centered capacity development programs.

Getachew Abegaz is Senior Partnership and Project Management Officer (SP &PMO) with VisionFund Microfinance. VisionFund focuses on delivering quality microfinance products in rural areas, particularly for people living in poverty. Getachew has been working in Vision Fund since the establishment of the institution fifteen years ago in different positions: branch manager, regional branches operation manager, integration manager at head office, delegate business development and marketing manager, senior partnership officer. Presently he is working in partnerships and managing different projects in VF-MFI.

Awet Tekie Bahta is a Senior Technical Expert for Agricultural Finance at the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency, where he focuses on provision of input output marketing for smallholder farmers. He published a book titled "Monetary Policy and Its application in Ethiopia" and also different articles focusing on economic aspects of Ethiopia and Sub Saharan African countries. He also worked as an Economic Research Officer at the National Bank of Ethiopia and as a specialist for strategic planning at the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange. Awet received a Master's degree in Economics from Bangalore University in India and a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Bahirdar University in Ethiopia. (bio taken from LinkedIn)

Omer Bomba Mohammed is the Managing Partner of Veritas Consulting, an Ethiopia focused management consultancy. Since the organization's founding in 2015, Omer has led many of its key initiatives, including the firm's broad assessment and recommendations for the commercial feasibility of mini grids in Ethiopia by leveraging productive uses. Omer also spearheaded Veritas' 4-year engagement with the Ethiopian Investment Commission, where Veritas helped to build and grow the Commission's much lauded after-care department. Omer also led a 2,600 business MSE survey and report to inform the Government's 2015-2020 'GTP' sector plan, and served as the lead private sector economist for the development of the Prime Minister Office's National Commercial Agriculture Strategy. He is on various boards including the American Chamber of Commerce in Ethiopia. Prior to his return to Ethiopia, Omer worked in the New York financial services sector as a mutual fund and distressed debt analyst for the telecommunications and technology securities, and served Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration in New York City where he was the Director of Strategic Planning and Policy for workforce development.