

Water/Electricity

PRIORITY FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS

For a long time, the supply of water and electricity has been the weak link in Equatorial Guinea's development policy – which explains the heavy investments underway now.

Observers are unanimous on the fact that infrastructure improvements have not yet seriously influenced the quality of life for Equatoguineans. This explains the measures taken by authorities to provide solutions to two crucial problems, electricity and water. According to African Economic Outlook, Equatorial Guinea, which heavily subsidizes electricity rates, also holds a 62% share in the national electricity provider, Sociedad de Guinea Ecuatorial (Segesa), a company whose performance remains to be perfected: "SEGESA is still experiencing difficulties with its aging electrical grid. Unauthorized power hookups

battery back-up power on the island and the mainland, the renovated plant of San Joaquin and the mini-plants of Riaba-Musola, among others. One should also mention the Sendje power plant, whose startup is already projected, as well as the consolidation of the electrical generating facilities of Ebebiyin, Evinayong, Niefang, Mongomo, Kogo, Mbini, and so on. An important point is that, as far as production is concerned, we are counting on clean and renewable sources of energy." As for President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, he likes underscoring that: "This sector is of vital importance, because energy development represents the first phase in moving towards industrialization. To

day. With Soner (Société pour l'Électrification Rurale), we will attain our goals."

François Bambou

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are widespread. As a consequence, the distribution of electricity is not reliable. The plan for modernization of the grid is continuing in 2010. Segesa has recently implemented a new customer service that has made it possible to minimize the waiting time for a power hookup." As for the provision of water, the same experts emphasize that there are intermittent supply problems, even in Malabo. "Potable water is available in the big cities but the supply is not always reliable, due to poor maintenance of the aging infrastructure. Interruptions in supply are frequent and prolonged in some neighborhoods. A major project to improve the public water system is in the works. Some villages and rural areas are equipped with generators and pumps belonging to private individuals."

For the deputy Minister of Mines, Industry and Energy, Gabriel Mbega Obiang Lima, major efforts have already been made: "At this point, we have power generation resources consisting of the Djibloho power station, which will soon be operating, the turbogas power plant,

me, the task of transforming the country has been a challenge, since we should not forget that on August 3, 1979 [Editor's note: date of his arrival in power], our cities did not have electricity, and now electricity is distributed in nearly all towns, even the smallest ones."

To the Minister of Energy, it is a crucial challenge. "There is no development without energy, particularly in rural areas, where 80% of our population lives. So we cannot develop the country if we marginalize such a large percentage of the population." To this end, in recent years the government has endeavored to implement rural electrification projects, as well as supplying power to all districts, provincial capitals and large towns, both in the island and on the mainland (formerly Rio Muni). "This project is in its final phase. We want the public to have the benefit of electricity and to use it to generate income, so we have set up thermal power plants, which are then to be replaced by a hydroelectric plant. The aim is that with these projects, the rural population will have the benefit of electricity 24 hours a



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