



## Kenya ranks high on *renewable* energies, but we could do much more.

In terms of world rankings, most people know about our marathon runners, but not so many are aware that Kenya competes with the best in terms of *renewable* energies, standing alongside Sweden, Uruguay and Morocco as a world leader. All aim to derive 100% of electrical power from renewable sources within the next decade or two.

With a large land area and variety of choices, Kenya is well-endowed with renewable energies. For years, hydropower has been a major source, generated chiefly by waters flowing from Mt Kenya, while in recent decades geothermal power from the Rift Valley has played a prominent role. More currently, energy generated from wind and solar has come to the fore, including the enormous Turkana wind farm.



Turkana wind farm: the largest in Africa

But if our goal is to become more sustainable in an overall sense, then moving towards renewables is not the complete answer; we need to think and act according to a wider frame. For example, our systems of transporting people could be geared more towards rapid transport for tens of thousands, rather than multiple vehicles for individuals (or small numbers) ... with of course, the electrical power required derived from renewables.

Across the world it's possible to find many excellent examples of schemes not dependent on roads or cars, which move massive numbers of people in and out of large cities on a daily basis. London's spiderweb network dates from the 1860s (and is still expanding), the Paris Metro from the early 1900s and Singapore's MRT from 1970. All over the world - New York or Rio, Melbourne or Beijing – we see variations on the same rapid-transit theme.



Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur provides an interesting contrast to Nairobi. With independence coming for both in 1963, the two capitals have grown to populations of more than 5 million, but today 'KL' has a rapid-transit system covering over 300 kms, while Nairobi still relies on outdated buses and builds more roads for cars and trucks. Imagine if a low cost, light rail ran from Githurai on one side, to Athi River on the other, what a difference that could make; or on the coast from Mtwapa, through Kisauni to Mombasa centre!

Thus joined-up thinking at the macro level is of paramount importance, but it's also vital to act in a sustainable way at the household level too: solar panels for electricity, recycling waste wherever possible and reducing our overall use of plastics are all good practices. A few years ago, Kenya took a giant step forward by banning plastic bags, but today we still see single-use hard plastics sold in huge quantities, as water and food containers.



Kenya is seen as a frontrunner in terms of renewable energies, and due to its stance on plastic bags, but to become a true powerhouse of *Sustainable Change* we need to incorporate many other elements into the broader picture. Then, as for its elite marathon runners, Kenya can become one of the undisputed world leaders!

And wouldn't this be a big leap forward for Mombasa: solar powered tuktuks? No noise; no pollution!

Have a sustainable day.

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