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SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REPORT
SUBMITTED BY LIBERIA*

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The West African country of Liberia has forest reserves that can provide up to one million cubic meters of wood yearly. The large rivers in the country flow into the Atlantic Ocean and are proven to be suitable for hydroelectric power. The major emphases by the Government are to develop more hydro power for electrification, to extend the existing central grid and to replace where possible firewood and charcoal use. In 1979, up to 70 per cent of the total electricity in the Monrovia system of the Liberian Electricity Corporation (LEC) was generated by the Walker Hydro Plant on the St. Paul River. This however is only adequate to handle the normal demand in the capital.

In addition to hydro, other renewable energy potentials identified in Liberia are solar energy, wind energy, bio-gas, wood and charcoal.

The Government is aware of the existing energy problems and thus has recently constituted the National Energy Committee which has the Bureau of Hydrocarbon as its Secretariat. This committee is mandated to produce a National Energy Plan, and has just begun its work.

New and Renewable Energy Research in Liberia is very new. Most research projects are in the planning stage or waiting to be implemented.

The Bureau in collaboration with the University of Liberia Engineering Department has completed plans for programmes in solar and wind energy research. In addition plans to introduce bio-gas digesters that can be developed locally for the rural areas have been completed. Data on energy use or on implication of energy plans to other sectors of the economy does not exist and planning for most sectors often does not include energy considerations; for this reason the Bureau of Hydrocarbon is presently conducting a comprehensive study on the extent of usage of energy sources in Liberia.

Other renewable energy research projects are being considered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) including the installation of a pilot mini-hydro plant in a rural city of Lofa County. A feasibility study for other suitable locations for similar plants is being conducted through German Technical Assistance to Liberia.

Problems

a. Present technological advances in the new and renewable energy source development are not available, however, individuals including researchers, government and industrial agencies, and institutions of higher learning in Liberia have shown considerable interest in developing the technical know-how of their personnel in the area and are open minded to the transfer of the technologies.

b. The existing energy programmes need assistance both from international and other donors.

c. The training in energy management for policy makers, as well as lower level technicians and specialists in the development and transfer of new and

renewable energy technologies is seriously needed. The Bureau of Hydrocarbon, which is a government agency concerned with the development of new and renewable energy sources is presently lacking staff in this area and needs training assistance for its personnel.

d. Due to the dispersed nature of Liberia's rural population, technologies for producing energy from renewable sources need to be small scale and decentralized.

e. Several industries are developing in the country but consciousness of the need to install energy saving devices and those that will rely on new and renewable energy sources are not shown.
