

Liberia solar thermal energy

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Montserrado County--The Government of Liberia, in partnership with the World Bank, has officially broken ground for a 20MW solar power plant, a significant step towards enhancing the nation's electricity supply.

This initiative comes under the World Bank's Regional Emergency Solar Power Intervention Project (RESPITE), which allocated \$96 million in financing specifically for Liberia to develop the solar plant, expand the Mt. Coffee Hydroelectric Plant, and provide technical assistance for the St. Paul River basin. RESPITE's total budget of \$311 million encompasses efforts across four countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Chad.

International Consolidated Contractors (ICC) emerged victorious through an international competitive procurement process, securing the contract for the design, supply, and installation of the solar facility. The contract, awarded on July 30, 2024, is valued at \$15,598,472 with an expected completion date of August 2025.

During the groundbreaking ceremony on October 11, 2024, President Joseph N. Boakai emphasized the project's critical role in addressing the power shortages that plague Liberia, particularly during the dry season when hydroelectric production is limited.

"This plant is the beginning of our strategic plan to address the power shortage in the dry season through the integration of solar energy, which is abundant when water levels are low," he stated.

"My administration prioritizes the supply of adequate, reliable, and affordable energy," he added, emphasizing that, "Without such energy, our ARREST agenda will face major challenges, impacting agriculture, education, healthcare, and overall economic productivity."

The President reassured attendees of the government's commitment towards energy investments, which include expanding the Mt. Coffee facility and exploring additional solar projects.

For his part, Monie R. Captan, Chief Executive Officer of the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC), outlined how the surge in global fuel prices, exacerbated by the Ukrainian War, has placed immense pressure on Liberia's energy costs.

Under the RESPITE initiative, the allocation of \$96 million for Liberia is set to not only enhance the solar



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project but also expand the Mt. Coffee Hydro from 88MW to approximately 148MW. The integration of these renewable energy sources will increase Liberia's installed capacity to 108MW, transitioning the energy mix to 74% renewable and 26% thermal energy.

The planned hybrid system at Mt. Coffee aims to optimize energy production throughout both rainy and dry seasons, setting a precedent for future energy projects and enhancing private sector involvement in the solar energy landscape.

President Boakai also extended his gratitude to various stakeholders involved in the project's development, including the Ministries of Mines and Energy and Finance, LEC, and international partners such as the African Development Bank, the European Union, and the United States government.

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