

13<sup>th</sup> World Congress on **Biofuels and Bioenergy**  
&  
14<sup>th</sup> Global Summit and Expo on **Biomass and Bioenergy**  
August 26-27, 2019 | Vienna, Austria

## Biomass energy and the development of Rural Nigeria

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Biomass is all plant and animal matter on the earth's surface. Nigeria is blessed with abundant biomass resources that are either currently untapped or inefficiently harnessed. It has been estimated that about one billion metric tons of household waste is generated annually (comprising agro-residues such as rice husks, ground nut shells, corn cobs, sugar cane trash, coconut shells and sorghum stalks). Given those virtually free available huge quantities of biomass resources in Nigeria, the potentials for the development of alternative sustainable biomass based electricity for the development of rural Nigeria is very promising. Globally 1.4 billion people live without any form of commercial energy electricity. The implication of this is due to lack of access to energy and rural economies which cannot grow and develop as expected because of the absence or inadequacies (erratic supply/distribution of conventional energy-electricity) produced by Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) which still remains an illusion. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a radically different approach to electricity generation, particularly one that appreciates the condition and environment of the poor and their indigenous technology inclusive. Access to electricity is very important because it is the prime mover of all human socio-economic activities. More importantly, the adoption and development of biomass based electricity in Nigeria will enhance the drive towards rural development, electrification and industrialization. It will also promote the development of small scale economic activities which have immense potentials for strengthening poverty alleviation programs of the government, while simultaneously serving as a strategy for promoting a safe and healthy environment and sustainable development in rural Nigeria. Besides, it will assist the states and local governments to counter power outages being experienced and create an atmosphere of competition as well as job opportunities.

## Biography

Gideon Baklit is a Professor of Rural Development in the Department of Geography and Planning, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Jos, Nigeria. He has been a Consultant on several rural development projects spanning over agriculture and farm service centers in Plateau State, Nigeria. He was been a Team Leader on a three year Biomass Higher Education Research Programme with Kings College London during 2000-2002. As a follow up to the Research Linkage, he was invited to Loughborough University in the United Kingdom to present a paper on the stage of Biomass development in Nigeria, April 2012. At the moment, he is working with other colleagues in the Department and National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, Plateau State, Nigeria on research partnership for the promotion and development of alternative energy especially biomass based electricity generation using an appropriate renewable energy policy.

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