

Biomass energy and the development of Rural Nigeria- Gideon Baklit- University of Jos

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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.