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FACT SHEET

Greening Kenya's justice system

Increasingly, criminal justice institutions in Kenya are taking steps to make their operations more environmentally friendly.

Green transition involves multiple interventions, such as renewable energy, transport solutions and circular economies, to minimize threats to the environment in compliance with the Paris Agreement on climate change. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) – through the European Union-funded Programme for Legal Empowerment and Aid Delivery in Kenya (PLEAD) – is enabling the justice sector to make this transition.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

With a view to reducing its environmental footprint, the Judiciary's greening initiative includes greater reliance on renewable energy, paperless court processes and biotechnology for waste management at court stations. The Judiciary's preference for solar power, to provide electricity for existing courts on and off grid power, is aligned with the Government of Kenya's commitment to achieve full transition to clean energy by the year 2030.

Additionally, in embracing digitalization, the Judiciary, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and Probation and Aftercare Service, among other justice institutions, will optimize the operations of virtual court hearings, e-filing and case management, in the process reducing paper use and transport-related greenhouse gas emissions.

ENERGY AND SOLID WASTE NEEDS

The 2020 PLEAD equipment needs assessment revealed that lack of access to stable power and reliable internet services was an impairment to the work of Judiciary staff across the PLEAD focal counties. In addition, adequate sanitation will be essential in creating a conducive work environment for criminal justice practitioners. It will improve access to the services provided for all court users and enhance their health and safety – particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PLEAD partnership is supporting critical infrastructure improvements at selected court stations, primarily through installing solar power to ensure reliable access to power and internet, and the construction of sanitation facilities. Biotechnology will be installed for waste management.

As an initial step, in 2021, UNODC, with the support of the Judiciary's Building Service Unit, conducted infrastructure assessments at 11 court stations. In line with the outcomes of these assessments, infrastructure improvements commenced in 2022 at selected court stations, considering the resources available and the potential impact on the efficiency of the entire justice sector. The planned initiatives will also support the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals on climate action and clean water and sanitation; and serve as steppingstones for prioritising the greening of key criminal justice institutions.





TARGET LOCATIONS FOR SOLAR

In October 2022, the first solar power panels and power back-up system supported through PLEAD were installed at Tononoka Children's Law Courts, followed by Shanzu Law Courts in November. Another nine court stations are earmarked for installation of solar power systems consisting of photovoltaic panels, inverters, charger controllers and maintenance-free batteries.

UNODC has undertaken a power load analysis of critical equipment such as printer servers, computers, and all electrical equipment's whose power failure would compromise court operations and thus affect timely resolution of court cases.

Each court station's power system is being designed based on its unique load demand, for example, at Shanzu Law Courts a 15kVA system is already operational. Winam and Maseno Law Courts are scheduled to have 8kVA solar power plants with panels of different technical specifications to suit their specific load demands. The panels to be installed will generate power even under minimal sunshine. Solar power installation is also being undertaken in Garsen Law Courts.



SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Further UNODC support in response to the Judiciary's needs has involved the planning of sewerage works in Shanzu, Maseno, and Garsen Law Courts. UNODC infrastructure specialist consultants, in conjunction with the Judiciary's Department of Building Services jointly assessed, designed, and specified sanitation interventions in these stations. The interventions include improvement of sanitation facilities and biodegradation of waste to safeguard the environment.



NEXT STEPS



To ensure effective delivery of justice, from 2023, phase two of PLEAD will continue to support critical infrastructure improvements at selected court stations, police stations, and prisons, particularly through installing solar power to ensure reliable access to power and internet, and the construction of sanitation facilities.

The propagation and planting of native tree species and maintenance of public green spaces by those performing community service will also be expanded by the Probation and Aftercare Service.



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

unodc-plead@un.org

www.unodc.org/easternafrika/plead/

Programme for Legal Empowerment and Aid Delivery in Kenya – PLEAD