

# Press Release

Brussels, 10 December 2024

## ARE & the Commonwealth Secretariat partner to boost renewable electrification in 56 countries

Over 685 million people do not have access to electricity, which impacts their quality of life, impacts economic growth and stifles sustainable development. For most, the development of decentralised renewable energy (DRE) solutions would help alleviate this problem.

To advance this mission across the Commonwealth, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE) and the Commonwealth Secretariat at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The ARE is a global business association representing 200 members, and operating in more than 55 countries across Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.

Both organisations have mutually agreed to promote renewable energy solutions to expand energy access, particularly in rural regions. They aim to support government initiatives in reaching renewable energy goals, while also championing gender equality within the energy transition. Additionally, they will provide tailored business development assistance and market intelligence support to DRE companies.

**David Lecoque, CEO of ARE said:** *“We’re thrilled to embark on this monumental cooperation agreement with the Commonwealth Secretariat, marking a significant milestone in our shared commitment to advancing clean energy solutions. Covering 56 countries and 2.5 billion lives, this collaboration represents an unprecedented opportunity to catalyse sustainable economic growth through DRE solutions. Together, we strive to write a new chapter in the global transition to a cleaner, brighter future.”*

In this regard, the organisations aim to develop the capacity of renewable energy stakeholders in Commonwealth member countries, set up knowledge-sharing platforms to promote access to renewable energy, expand energy access knowledge and promote rural electrification. This will, for example, be achieved by conducting research on rural electrification and sharing it through policy campaigns and research papers to

increase knowledge in the Commonwealth countries and help in the development of strategic plans.

**Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC added:** *"Nearly half of the people without access to electricity reside in the Commonwealth, this partnership helps to address a key challenge for a just energy transition - closing the access gap. The Secretariat, through its Commonwealth Sustainable Energy Transition Agenda, is proud of this cooperation with the Alliance for Rural Electrification. It is our intention that this partnership strengthens our efforts to expand sustainable electricity access, enable economic growth and respond to climate change across our member states."*

The Commonwealth Secretariat supports the efforts of member countries to grow economies and boost trade, deliver national resilience, empower young people, and address threats such as climate change, debt and inequality.

Finally, the MoU states that the partners will offer support through business development services for renewable energy actors working within the Commonwealth, to address electrification needs, energy security and climate change challenges, as well as conduct applied research to foster the market for renewable energy technologies.

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**Note to the editor**

The [Commonwealth](#) is a voluntary association of 56 independent and equal countries, including 33 small states. It is home to 2.5 billion people, and includes both advanced economies and developing countries.

The Alliance for Rural Electrification ([ARE](#)) is a global business association representing 200 members along the distributed renewable energy value chain, working to expand sustainable electricity access, create jobs and respond to climate change in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.

