



1.5 Million Solar Lights Shine as SolarAid is recognised at Zayed and the UN International Year of Light is launched

19 January 2015: Today, as the UN International Year of Light is launched, UK-based charity SolarAid announces that its social enterprise has sold 1.5 million solar lights. This morning the organisation has also been recognised by the Zayed Future Energy Prize for its work bringing clean, solar power to rural African communities.

SolarAid's CEO, Andrew Webb, said: "It may be Blue Monday but there is some great news to brighten the day. Today, we have hit a new milestone, SolarAid's work has enabled almost 1.5 million African families to wake up with clean, safe solar light in their homes.

By recognising this impact, and SolarAid's ambition to bring solar energy to millions more, the prestigious Zayed Future Energy Prize is raising awareness of a powerful solution to energy access. Solar lights are helping the world's poorest people lift themselves from fuel poverty, with another light sold every minute. In Africa, a brighter, low-carbon future is not just possible, it is possible right now."

Both the Zayed Future Energy Prize and the UN International Year of Light 2015 will help raise awareness of the need for clean light; which has a significant impact on health, education and opportunity. 90% of the people SolarAid reaches through its social enterprise, SunnyMoney, live under the poverty line of \$1.25 per day. On average, a solar light enables a family to save around 10% of their annual income.

By enabling the sale of 1.5 million solar lights, SolarAid has helped around 9 million people access the technology. The charity aims to catalyse a sustainable solar industry across Africa by 2020, eradicating the need for families to use dangerous kerosene lamps to light their homes.

The Zayed Future Energy Prize highlights organisations working to address the global challenges of climate change, energy security, energy access, and economic development; this year it received a record 1111 entries. Other finalists in the NGO category are: Electriciens sans Frontieres, Liter of Light, Practical Action and the World Resources Institute.

SolarAid has also been recognised by the Department of International Development. All donations made to SolarAid by individuals in the UK will be doubled by the UK government until the 5th February.

SolarAid is being represented at the Zayed Future Energy Prize in Abu Dhabi by its Chairman, Dr Jeremy Leggett.

SolarAid is being represented at the International Year of Light Opening Ceremony at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris by Linda Wamune, Operations Director of SunnyMoney Kenya.

Linda Wamune will also be a keynote speaker at the UK Launch on the 28th January at St James' Palace, hosted by HRM Duke of York.

Notes for Editors

Press enquiries:

Please contact: Susie Wheeldon: +44 (0) 7903 701 343 susie.wheeldon@solar-aid.org

Social media:

SolarAid are active on twitter [@solaraid](https://twitter.com/solaraid) and [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/solaraid).

Images:

Images can be found at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/solaraid>

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Quotes:

“[Because of the solar light], my lifestyle has changed, my kids eat well, study well and we are a happy family now.” Dickson Murumbi, Kenya

“Kerosene was expensiveI did not allow [my daughter] to study at night ... [with a solar light] she is free to study any time” – HonorathaElipidi, Tanzania

“I used to find soot in the nose of my children every morning when they sleep in a room with paraffin and they would complain of chest pains but now that they use the solar light they do not complain about the chest pains or soot anymore.” VeledianPhiri, Zambia.

“There are no magic bullets that will solve all of our greenhouse gas problems, but replacing kerosene lamps is a low hanging fruit.” Dr Kirk Smith, Nobel Prize Winner

Key Individuals available to comment

In the UK: Andrew Webb, CEO SolarAid

Andrew Webb has held a number of roles at a senior level in both the commercial and the international NGO worlds. He is a Sloan Fellow from London Business School and a graduate of Imperial College, London.

From Zayed Future Energy Prize, Abu Dhabi: Dr Jeremy Leggett, Chairman and Founder of SolarAid

Jeremy Leggett is also Chairman of the Carbon Tracker Initiative, and Founder and Director of Solarcentury, an international solar solutions company. An Entrepreneur of the Year at the New Energy Awards and a CNN Principal Voice, Jeremy convened the UK Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security and is a Founding Director of the world’s first private equity fund for renewable energy, Bank Sarasin’s New Energies Invest. As a former geologist, whose research on shale were funded by both BP and Shell, he is a recognised expert on fossil fuel reserves, and has authored several books on fossil-fuel dependency, including Half Gone, the Carbon War and most recently The Energy of Nations. At the Business Green Leaders Awards 2014, he was recognised as Champion of the Year.

Interview during 26th - 30th January, UK: Linda Wamune, Operations Director SunnyMoney

Linda Wamune will also be available in the UK for interviews during the 26th - 30th January.



Linda Wamune is the Operations Director of SunnyMoney Kenya. Linda holds a BSc (Hons) in Civil Engineering from the University of Nairobi as well as an executive MBA from JKUAT University in Kenya and is fluent in English and Swahili.

Key Facts

About energy access in Africa:

- Nearly 600 million people in Africa have no access to electricity
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 91% of the rural population has no access to electricity
- Over 290 million people in Africa use kerosene as their main source of lighting

About solar light:

Impact - a solar light*:

- saves a family around \$70 per year from reduced lighting costs
- on average, enables an extra hours of homework each night
- means less risk of lethal fires and accidents
- reduces toxic smoke that can cause chest problems and illness
- saves CO₂, as well as dangerous short-lived climate pollutants

*Further details about SolarAid's research and the impact of solar lights can be found in the SolarAid [Impact Report 2014](#).

About SolarAid:

SolarAid is a London-based international charity that believes in business-based solutions to poverty and climate change. SolarAid was founded in 2006 by solar company Solarcentury to explore and create clean, safe, affordable energy for all.

Solarcentury established SolarAid by making a long-term commitment of donating 5% of annual company profits. In 2008 SolarAid created a social enterprise called SunnyMoney to run its on the ground operations in Africa. SunnyMoney currently operates in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, and Uganda.

In 2013, SolarAid won the Ashden Gold Award, the Business Green Award, the Google Global Impact Challenge and the Guardian Sustainable Business Award.

SolarAid is working on solar light research with a number of organisations and institutions including Google and Stanford University.

[For more information, visit www.solar-aid.org](http://www.solar-aid.org)

About the International Year of Light 2015:

On 20 December 2013, The United Nations (UN) General Assembly 68th Session proclaimed 2015 as the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies (IYL 2015). This International Year has been the initiative of a large consortium of scientific bodies together with UNESCO, and will bring



together many different stakeholders including scientific societies and unions, educational institutions, technology platforms, non-profit organizations and private sector partners.

In proclaiming an International Year focusing on the topic of light science and its applications, the United Nations has recognized the importance of raising global awareness about how light-based technologies promote sustainable development and provide solutions to global challenges in energy, education, agriculture and health.

For more details, visit <http://www.light2015.org/Home.html>

About The Zayed Future Energy Prize

The Zayed Future Energy Prize is an annual US\$4 million award that recognises individuals, organisations and schools that have contributed significantly to the fields of renewable energy and sustainability.

The United Arab Emirates Government established the Zayed Future Energy Prize in 2008. The Prize is managed by Masdar, Abu Dhabi's renewable energy company.

This year the 7th Zayed Future Energy Prize received a record 1,111 entries from 84 countries, 597 submissions and 514 nominations for Lifetime Achievement Award. Nine winners have been selected from 31 finalists.

Since its establishment in 2008 The Zayed Future Energy Prize has recognised some of the most innovative and visionary leaders worldwide in clean energy and sustainability solutions that seek to conserve energy, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and increase the production of clean, renewable energy.

The Prize has awarded 30 individuals, organisations and schools. Winners have positively impacted the lives of over 150,000,000 people around the world.