

world energy
we

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IN *frica*
TRANSITION





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my Africa

by Rita Lofano

AS THE GEOPOLITICAL AXIS SHIFTS, EUROPE HAS LONG SINCE CEASED TO BE AT THE CENTER OF THE WORLD. AFRICA IS WHERE THE FUTURE HAPPENS—BE IT IN CLIMATE CHANGE, THE TRANSITION, THE INCLUSIVE ECONOMY OR SECURITY. WORKING WITH AFRICA —WITH THE MANY AFRICAS—IS THE ONLY WAY



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"AFRICA," THEY THROW IN THE HEAT OF DEBATE, as if they were talking about a homogeneous thing, with just one culture. "Africa," you read in the newspapers, served up as though it were a single country. Whose "Africa"? Perhaps that of a West that, all these centuries later, is still stuck in the dichotomy between "us and them," failing to grasp that they are many, a multitude of different peoples, one-fifth of the world's population, young and growing fast. Europe is no longer at the center of the world's geopolitics, though it remains a bastion of knowledge, history, educational possibilities and development. Here is what we can do together for the many Africas we barely know: provide a toolbox, a set of questions and answers, skills to build a future, the future we can no longer imagine for ourselves. It is not just a philosophical issue: half of the secondary schools in sub-Saharan Africa have no electricity. The Brookings Institution reports that fewer than a quarter of African students pursue STEM-related careers, resulting in a heavy reliance on foreign energy sector expertise. The concrete world of WE - World Energy is a kaleidoscope of philosophies, starting with realism and pragmatism, and a touch of utopia, to craft a program that is achievable. During the Conference of Ambassadors at the Italian Ministry

of Foreign Affairs, this vision of a plural Africa was the subject and object of reflection, revealing the many different 'Africas'. Africa's energy continent is first and foremost a cultural issue, which concerns us as Europeans, our mindset. It is not just an issue of energy transition, of oil and gas can as stepping stones to sustainable development, steering clear of ideology and grasping the need for affordable and reliable energy for all. "From Africa there is always something new," wrote Pliny the Elder. A lesson that still holds 19 centuries later. The (re)discovery of Africa was born out of a historical necessity to decouple from Russia's energy supplies after the invasion of Ukraine. It marked a point of no return, the end of a political season. That's when Italy found itself in the role of potential Mediterranean pivot: who better to launch a policy for the Mediterranean as Europe's energy hub? No one. Eni envisions its role as that of a historical force projected into the future; its presence is not a wish, it is a fact, a reality. Africa is where the future happens—be it in climate change, the transition, the inclusive economy or security. The challenge is now. The stakes are high. Working with Africa—with the many Africas—is the only way. **we**

Addressing the global challenge of energy transition requires a tailored approach, recognizing the disparities in development levels, climate change impact, and historical responsibility for CO₂ emissions across different regions worldwide. In Europe, the focus is on the dual challenge of decarbonization and energy security. Meanwhile, African countries predominantly strive to expand energy access to support their ambitions for socio-economic development, industrialization and social justice. Ongoing dialog on the transition issue becomes crucial to reconcile seemingly distant yet complementary priorities and seek collaborative solutions. To foster this dialog, the International Network on African Energy Transition was established. This international network comprises experts dedicated to supporting the sustainable development of Africa, respecting the diverse priorities and approaches of all involved. Leading African and European international institutions, universities and think tanks actively participate in this network. This issue of World Energy is largely dedicated to the Network's inaugural conference, which took place in Rome on November 16 and 17. The event, supported by Eni and LUISS University, features extensive excerpts from speeches and round tables that enriched the discussions over the two-day conference.



THE FIRST BRICK

THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON AFRICAN ENERGY TRANSITION IS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN BUILDING A BRIDGE THAT CANCELS THE DISTANCES BETWEEN THE TWO SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN, DEEPENING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

by Lapo Pistelli

FOSTERING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING and unbiased dialogue is crucial for collectively achieving significant strides in energy transition and sustainable development in Africa. Beyond my role at Eni, I serve as the chairman of the Organisation Méditerranéenne de l'Energie et du Climat (OMEC), a Mediterranean energy and climate group. This organization bridges companies and stakeholders from both sides of the Mediterranean, including members from North Africa, parts of the Middle East, and the Balkans. Reflecting on our general assembly in Cairo back in January 2020, just before the pandemic hit, I recall a pivotal moment of realization. This event, occurring during a challenging time in my energy career, highlighted the stark differences in perspectives across the Mediterranean. The sea, rather than being a small basin, appeared as a vast divide between differing viewpoints and challenges. European representatives discussed their transition strategies and objectives, while our North African counterparts voiced their 'fossil pride.' The discussions were intense, particularly with representatives from the European Investment Bank emphasizing new lending policies centered solely on green initiatives, with no mention of gas, infrastructure, or other concerns. This period was especially trying for OMEC, whose mission is to facilitate dialogue between diverse continents. Yet, it seemed as though true dialogue was absent, with each side operating on a completely different wavelength.



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THE DISCUSSION OF THE ENERGY TRILEMMA

In the last three years, the conversation surrounding climate and energy has intensified markedly. Europe, Italy, and the developed world are deeply engaged in what's known as the 'energy trilemma,' a term reflecting the challenge of simultaneously addressing three interlinked but often conflicting issues.

Firstly, there's energy security, which Europe is grappling with in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, striving to reduce traditional dependencies.

The second issue is the energy transition itself, which is a gradual process. There's a certain ideological belief that this shift can happen magically—like Cinderella's pumpkin turning into a carriage—implying an immediate leap from the hydrocarbon-heavy present to a renewable energy future. Yet we're all aware that transitioning to a new energy paradigm involves significant changes to sources, vectors, infrastructure, and even the end-use applications of energy. Moving from one energy source to another is a lengthy process, akin to the historical shifts from coal to oil, oil to gas, gas to nuclear, and now towards renewables, each requiring the introduction of new technologies and infrastructure overhauls. In terms of the global climate conversation, it's like running a marathon at the sprint pace of a 100-meter dash—it's incredibly challenging.

The third pillar is economic sustainability. The past three years

have shown that an excessive focus on the transition without considering energy security can lead to soaring commodity prices, sparking protests from consumers and businesses alike over energy costs. Alternatively, prioritizing energy security can lead to a delayed transition. Both security and transition need to be economically viable for governments, public spending, businesses, and households. The result is a trilemma: while it's relatively straightforward to address each of these problems individually, tackling all three simultaneously is a complex and nuanced task.

DISTORTED PERCEPTIONS

As a European who often visits Africa, I'm keenly aware of the need to challenge the many preconceived notions about the continent. Despite the European Union's frequent discussions about Africa, I sense that we Europeans speak about Africa without truly understanding it. The continent, often invisible in global economic data, is teeming with untapped potential. It's vital to recognize that Africa is not monolithic; the continent contributes less than 3 percent to global GDP and to global emissions yet bears the brunt of climate change's impact. This paradox is at the heart of the challenge we face.

The interconnectedness of African development, energy transition, climate change, food security, and migration is frequently overlooked or underestimated in the Global North. These issues, inextricably linked in Africa, are often viewed separately through a distorted lens. A holistic approach—considering all elements simultaneously—is essential.

Dialogue with international policymakers and banks often suffers from a disconnect. For example, energy lending criteria vary significantly among institutions like the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the IFC, and the European Investment Bank. The notion of 'leapfrogging' to a renewable energy solution is overly simplistic; while Africa's abundance in renewable resources—wind, water, and sun—is considerable, these alone won't suffice, especially for rapidly growing urban populations.

The key is for Africa to harness its domestic resources, such as natural gas, to drive national development. Communicating this perspective in global policy centers like Washington or Brussels is challenging. Thus, the creation of a platform like the International Network on African Energy Transition is crucial for fostering mutual understanding and knowledge. For Eni, for Europe, and for me personally, changing this perception is of utmost importance. The biases sometimes apparent in European energy debates should not be misconstrued as ill will by Africa but rather as misunderstandings that we must diligently address. It's imperative that we act in good faith and with genuine intent to forge a connection that eradicates divisions.

HUMILITY, TIMELINESS, AMBITION

Three key words come to mind when discussing Africa: humility, timeliness, and ambition.

First, humility is essential. The continent's complexity and diversity demand that we approach it with an understanding of our limitations. The 'Mattei Plan' put forward by the Italian government, aiming to create a structured platform for sustained engagement in Africa, is commendable. But we must recognize that every initiative, no matter how well-intentioned, has its constraints. Africa's vast scale and cultural diversity outscale any one nation's efforts, including China's, let alone Italy's. We're a mid-sized European player facing a rapidly developing continent, and we need to listen to its many voices without presuming a one-size-fits-all solution. Africa presents a rich array of needs, energy landscapes, and perspectives, all intertwined, necessitating a humble approach.

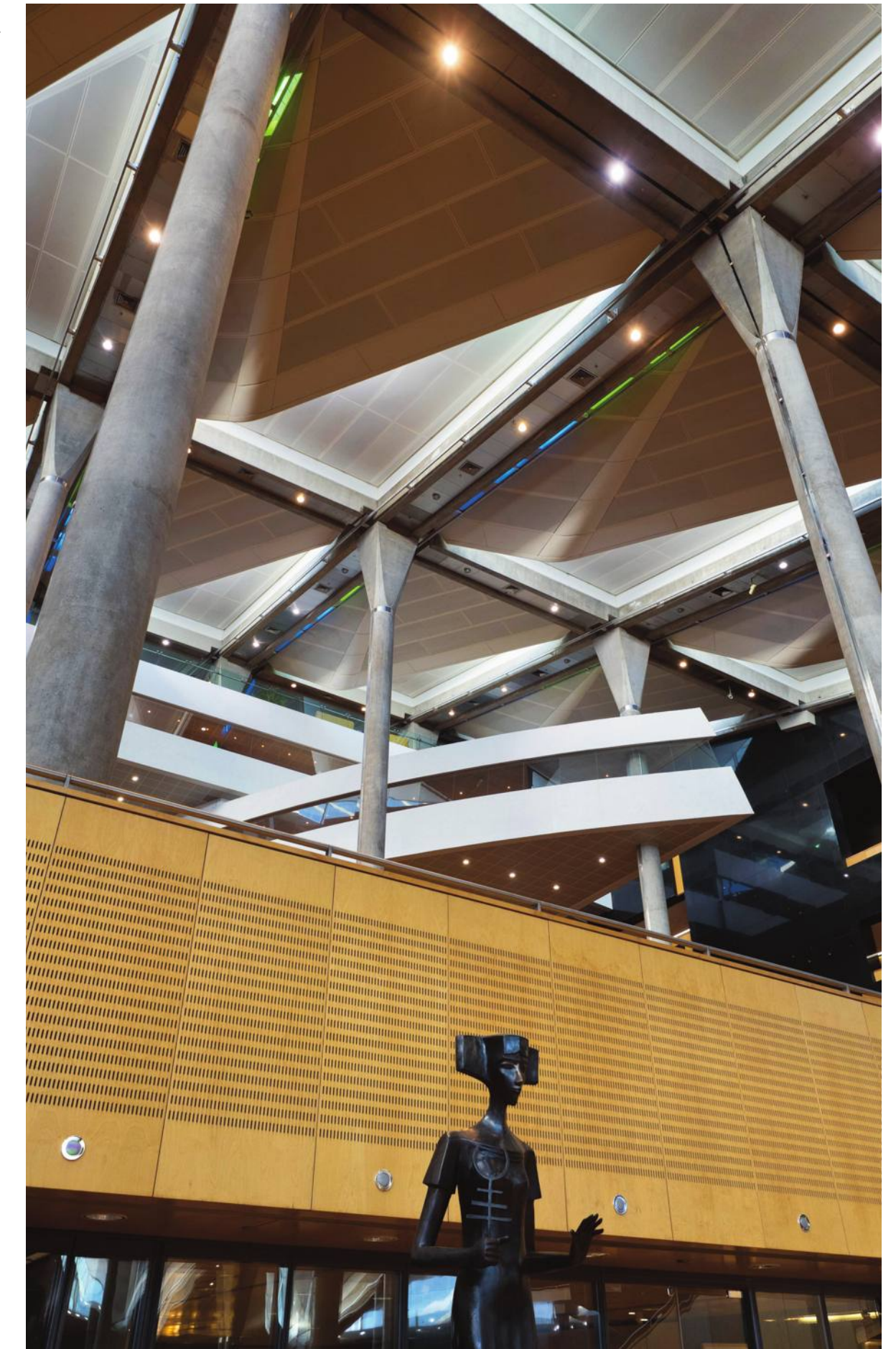
Timeliness is the second word. The International Network on African Energy conference took place just weeks before COP28 in Dubai. Reflecting on recent climate discussions—notably COP26 in Glasgow and COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh—there's a marked evolution. COP26 appeared Eurocentric, with major powers seeking to engage countries like China, India, and Russia on climate targets, sidelining the Global South as well as energy firms. COP27 shifted the narrative, a bit chaotic but inclusive, with the Global South elevating its voice on adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage—core facets of the energy transition. Eni has stepped up, advocating our role as not just energy developers but also technological innovators, offering solutions and sharing our experience. COP28 is set to be a watershed in aligning the climate and energy sectors, fostering dialogue between policymakers and industry, setting shared goals and monitoring milestones. This requires pragmatism and resolve, not concessions.

The final word, ambition, is about vision and aspiration. The platform we discuss may not be the sole avenue for African-European dialogue, nor the only forum for Italian-African discourse, but it's a significant one. It's the foundational stone for a bridge, not a barrier, aiming to enhance mutual understanding. There are no certainties, but this is where we set our ambitions.

We

LAPO PISTELLI

Since July 1, 2020 he is Director of Public Affairs at Eni. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation from 2013 to 2015, he resigned from his position in the government and in Parliament, joining Eni in July 2015.



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Africa has a wealth of new energy sources—in its winds, waters, and underground—but renewables alone will not be enough to provide reliable, continuous power to large, fast-growing cities and megacities and to sustain the continent's development. Photo: wind power plants in the Sinai Desert, Hurghada, Egypt.



Mutual awareness and a dialog without prejudice are essential conditions for achieving together ambitious goals in terms of energy transition and sustainable development in Africa. Photo: a reading room at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, an major center of culture on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, located in the city of Alexandria, Egypt.

the CLIMATE FOOD



by Maria Helena Semedo

ENERGY



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THE AFRICAN TRANSITION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MUST CONSIDER THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN ENERGY, FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE ACTION BY PRIORITIZING RENEWABLES, ADOPTING CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTING ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION MEASURES

AFRICA HAS IMMENSE POTENTIAL, abundant natural resources, youth, culture, diversity, tradition, knowledge, but also faces numerous challenges. As an African, from Cabo Verde, I am very proud of my roots and determined to build a positive narrative about the continent's future. Doing so means grasping the deep interconnection between energy, food security and climate change and discuss how Africa can successfully leverage and optimize these links.

ENERGY, A DRIVER OF DEVELOPMENT

Access to reliable and affordable energy is fundamental for economic development and people's well-being; it is also key for

food and agriculture. Unfortunately, Africa lags in this regard: 600 million Africans, 45 percent of us, lacks access to electricity, particularly in rural areas. In such circumstances, the development and transformation of the continent is unimaginable. Its deficit in access to energy hampers industrial and agricultural growth, limits educational opportunities and hinders access to health care and clean energy. Indeed, producing the world's food and getting it from farm to fork consumes 30 percent of global energy and 33 percent of greenhouse gas emissions come from the agrifood sectors. Food, it turns out, is not only about food, but also climate. We need to transform the agrifood sector so that it can help to reduce

global emissions and achieve the green transition. And to address this challenge, Africa must prioritize the sustainable development of its energy sector, there can be no sustainable development in Africa without energy. Our continent is blessed with abundant sunshine, strong winds, and vast and abundant rivers full of untapped hydroelectric potential: all opportunities to generate clean and renewable energy. For instance, in Mozambique, hydropower potential is estimated to be among the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in the Zambezi Valley. Hydropower, coupled with sustainable food production and an efficient domestic water supply, can be a model for sustainable development with a view

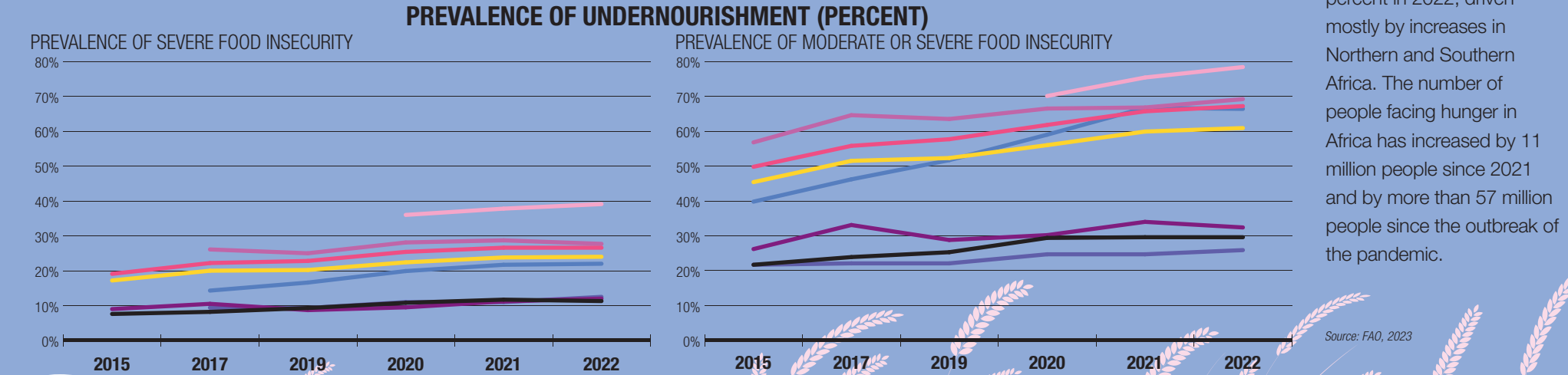
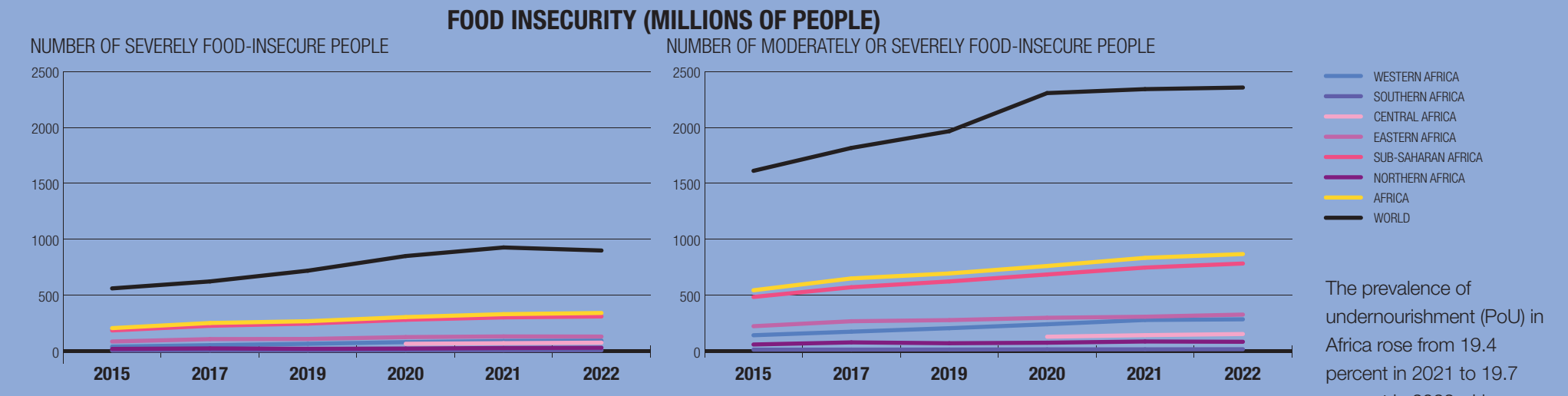
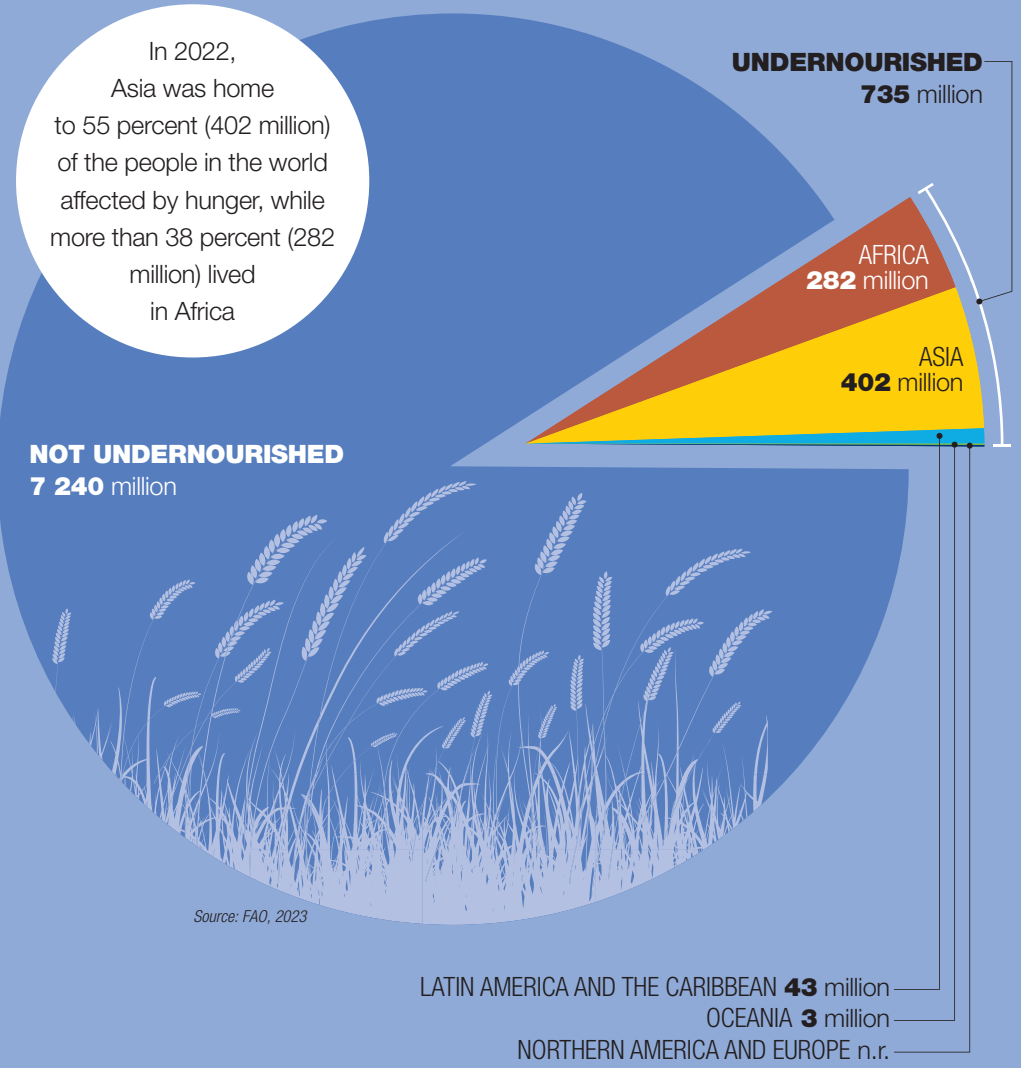
to the multipurpose sustainable use of water resources. Yet for all its potential, Africa has the lowest share of modern renewable energy of any continent: over 80 percent of Africans, particularly in rural areas, rely on traditional biomass for preparing food, causing over 500,000 deaths a year from indoor pollution. Beyond indoor pollution, there is also deforestation: cutting down trees in an unsustainable manner to produce charcoal to cook our food. And this situation is set to worsen as population continues to grow because clean cooking and sustainable forest management technologies have not been deployed at scale. Investing in renewable energy infrastructures not only reduces greenhouse gas emissions but also creates job opportunities, stimulates sustainable economic growth, agrifood systems transformation and improves energy access for all. This is the transition we are talking about. How to facilitate this transition? We need to work on multiple fronts:

- First, we must adopt policies that support renewable energy development and attract investment in this sector.
- Secondly, we need to develop energy efficiency measures. African governments and business should promote energy efficient practices and technologies to ensure a sustainable and resilient energy future.
- Thirdly, we must mobilize investments in research and technology and implement the solutions they generate. We need to increase efficiency, and to increase efficiency, we need improved technologies.
- Finally, we must work with partners including public, private sector, academic and research institutions as, as well as financial institutions.

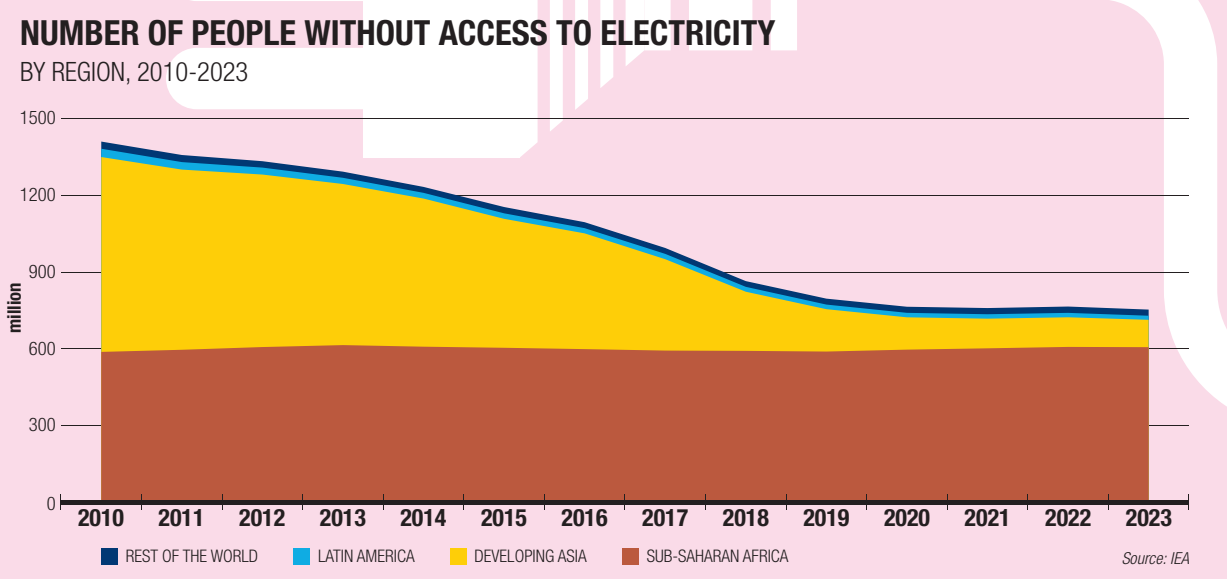
FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Sadly, Africa remains home to a significant proportion of the world's hungry and malnourished. According to the latest FAO figures, the number of Africans experiencing hunger has increased by 11 million since 2021. In part, this is because COVID exacerbated the situation for a much larger proportion of the population compared to other regions. But climate change plays a part as well. Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts: though we contribute only minimally to global greenhouse gas emissions, we are powerfully affected by the impacts, and we don't have the capacity to deal with this crisis. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns and increased frequency of extreme weather events pose significant challenges to the continent's ecosystems, economies, and livelihoods. To combat climate change, Africa must adopt a two-way approach—adaptation and mitigation—, bringing food and energy into the climate equation. To improve food security, we need to get the energy transition right. On the one hand, mitigation efforts involve reducing

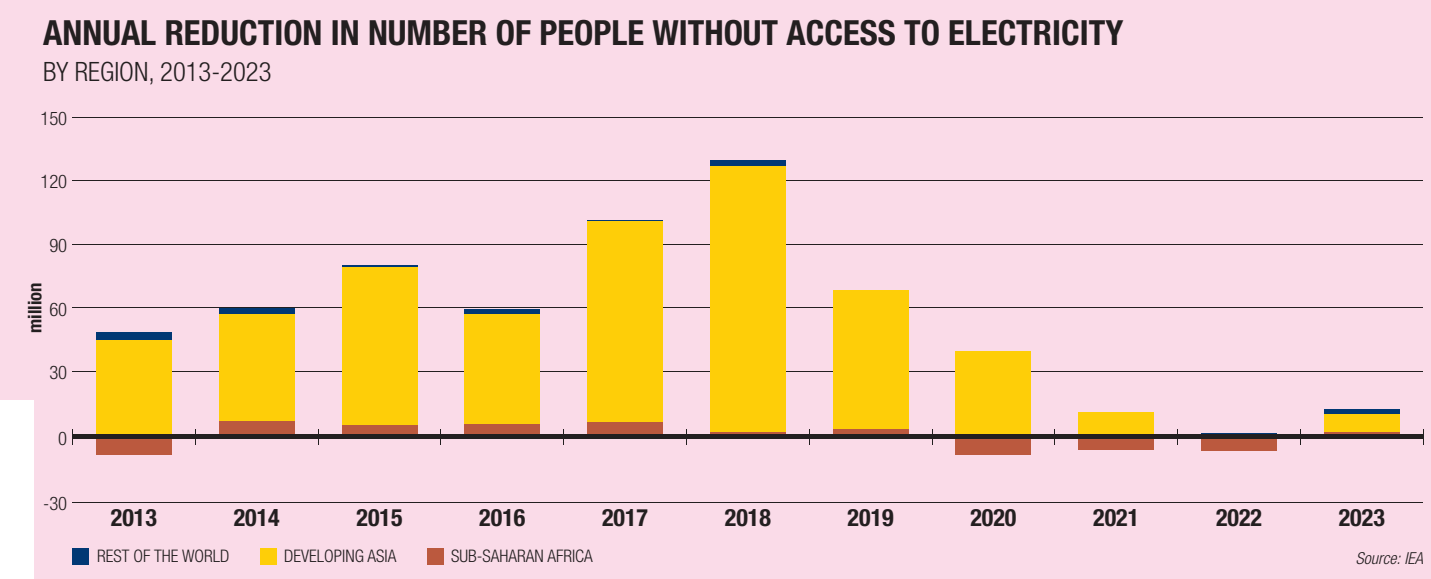
Food and energy nexus



The prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) in Africa rose from 19.4 percent in 2021 to 19.7 percent in 2022, driven mostly by increases in Northern and Southern Africa. The number of people facing hunger in Africa has increased by 11 million people since 2021 and by more than 57 million people since the outbreak of the pandemic.



In Africa, mounting debt burdens at national electric utilities constrained financial resources available to expand access. Between 2019 and 2022, many African utilities bore the cost of keeping energy affordable for users, contributing to high debt levels. This, along with supply chain disruptions, impeded grid extension projects. As a result, the number of people on the continent that gained electricity access via a grid connection or a mini-grid dropped by up to 50% in 2022. Setbacks were observed in almost 80% of countries in sub-Saharan Africa.





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greenhouse gas emissions through the transition to clean and renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable land use. Adaptation measures, on the other hand, look to build resilience, for example by adopting climate-smart agricultural practices, agroforestry, sustainable land and forest management and restoration, precision farming, investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, promoting ecosystem-based approaches, improving early warning systems, and enhancing social safety nets for vulnerable communities.

We understand climate impacts; we know that a drought will come, a flood will come. We cannot avoid it. But with technology, we can be better prepared, and preparedness matters. The investment-to-cost ratio is 1 to 20: if we are well-prepared, we save 20 for each unit of investment. This underlines the importance of early warning systems and of preparedness.

Africa can reduce its vulnerability by integrating climate change considerations into development planning and decision-making processes. This cannot happen without women, because women bear the brunt of a lack of energy, of climate change and of food insecurity. But women also can contribute to the solution; empowering women in agriculture is an essential condition for achieving food and energy security.

Women play a central role in food production and nutrition. Yet African women often face gender related barriers, such as limited access to land, energy, credit, and education. Promoting gender equality in agriculture can unlock the full potential of African agriculture and sustainable agrifood systems.

Boosting investment in agricultural research and development, expanding small-scale farmers' access to credit and markets, and adopting sustainable land management are crucial. These steps not only increase sustainable food production but also cut down on food waste—one third of total production. Efficient use of energy, water, and land is vital, especially considering the losses incurred through inadequate cold chain and transportation. Moreover, these improvements could lead to greater self-sufficiency, make clean energy more affordable, create jobs in the energy sector, and enhance the quality and marketability of food through better conservation and processing.

FAO'S COMMITMENT

FAO advocates for energy-smart agrifood systems to address both food security and climate change. Our efforts are concentrated on sustainable agricultural practices, generating sustainable bioenergy, increasing renewable energy use in agriculture, and enhancing overall energy efficiency and sustainability within the sector.

We are currently working in 30 countries, as well as producing tools and guides to support Member countries. To achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, global clean energy investments must exceed USD 4 trillion annually by 2030. This demands significant growth in renewable and sustainable energy within agrifood

systems, necessitating greater investment in energy-smart agricultural solutions.

We recognize the necessity of technology, innovative funding, and public-private collaboration. Currently, climate finance is insufficiently allocated, with less than 3 percent directed to overall solutions and a mere 18 percent of climate-targeted development finance. To meet the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and the Africa Agenda 2063, national policies must integrate and prioritize agrifood systems transformation and adopt an energy-smart approach.

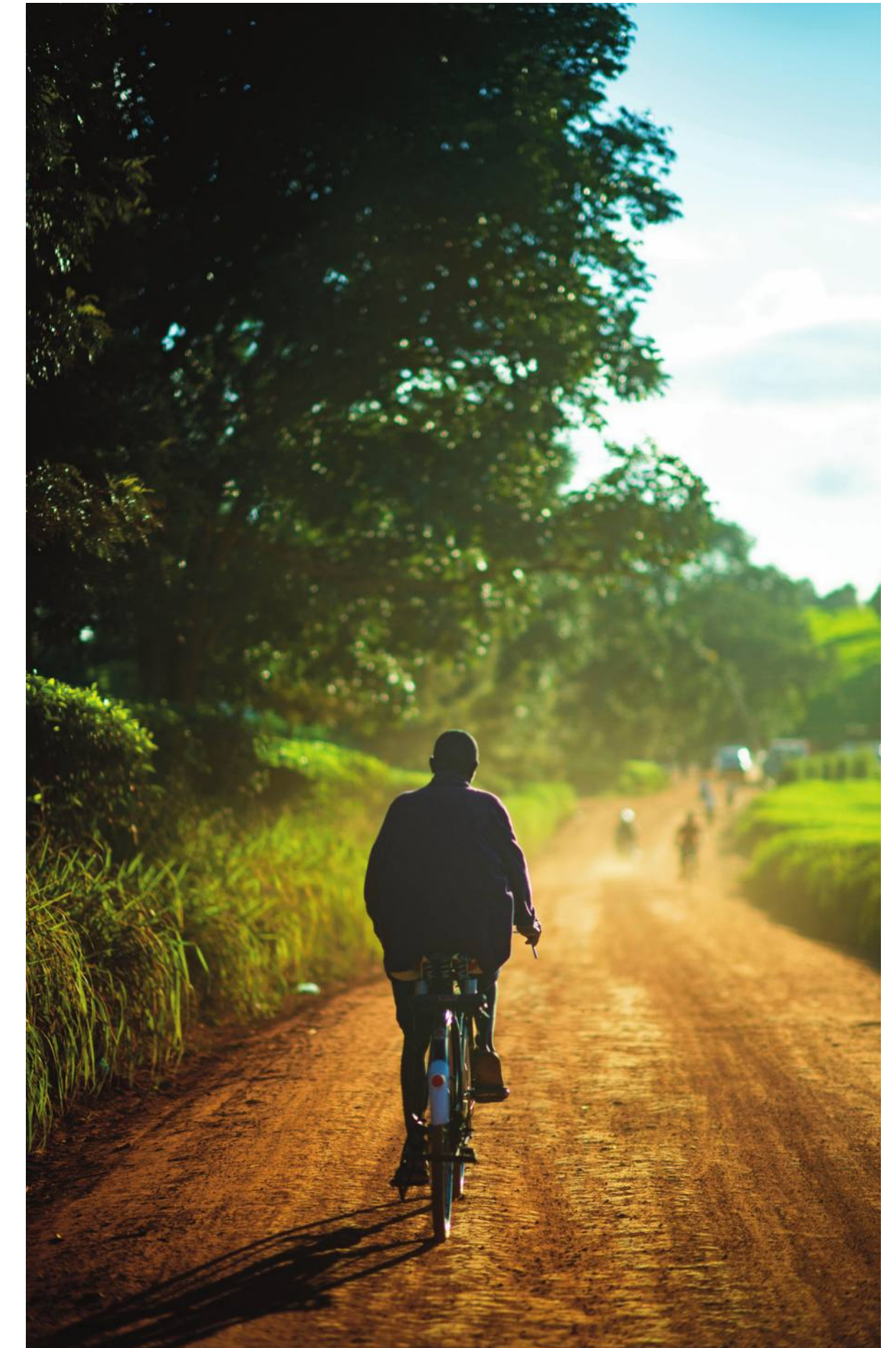
Universities are pivotal in conducting cross-disciplinary research and innovation to address Africa's energy, food, and climate challenges. With their rich base of knowledge and experience, they can produce and share critical insights, advancements, and policy advice. Those with broad partnerships encourage South-South and triangular cooperation, thus promoting collaboration across academia, government, civil society, local communities, and the private sector, and fostering a thriving startup ecosystem.

In summary, Africa's path to a more prosperous and sustainable future hinges on effectively merging energy, food security, and climate strategies—prioritizing renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, and appropriate response actions. By collaborating—governments, businesses, investors, and educational institutions can introduce innovations and strengthen ties with African entities to brighten Africa's prospects for its nations and its people.

We

MARIA HELENA SEMEDO

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A WINNING TEAM

by Carla Montesi

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THE EUROPEAN UNION WANTS TO JOIN AFRICA IN DEVELOPING RENEWABLES TO ENSURE ENERGY ACCESS, GROWTH OF THE ENERGY INDUSTRY AND JOB CREATION, TRIGGERING A VIRTUOUS PATH TOWARDS AN ENERGY TRANSITION FOCUSED ON CLIMATE

THE WORLD IS NOT ON TRACK to deliver on the Paris Agreement. The window is quickly closing even just to implement existing commitments to limit warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, let alone to raise our ambitions. We have to speed up the global energy transition, because the energy sector is one of the largest contributors to global emissions. The European Union is at the forefront of the global fight against climate change: from REPowerEU to the European Green Deal, the EU has a clear goal to accelerate the energy transition, which is now one of our top priorities. The European Green Deal remains our roadmap to green transition, both in Europe and in our engagement with partner countries around

the world. The triple challenge of energy transition, energy security and access to affordable energy is now firmly at the center of cooperation between Africa and Europe.

THE HUGE POTENTIAL OF RENEWABLES

Africa is the continent most affected by climate change. Aside from a handful of exceptions, African countries represent a miniscule share of global emissions. Yet all African countries face a boom in demand for energy, linked to population growth, to economic development and to the industrialization process that Africa seeks to launch. So, the challenge for Africa today lies in charting a course towards sustainable development and

industrialization that aligns with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Achieving this is feasible through investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency. The outlook for Africa is optimistic: the continent has immense potential for renewable energy, which can play a crucial role in providing clean, affordable, and reliable electricity to the 600 million people in Africa currently without access to power. This energy revolution has the potential to energize businesses, industries, and create job opportunities for young people, strengthening local economies and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The expansion of Africa's clean energy sector promises substantial benefits. Studies indicate that a swift transition to solar and wind power could



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Africa contributes the least to emissions but is the continent most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. All African countries face an explosive demand for energy, linked to population growth, economic development and industrialization. Photo: the night skyline of the Egyptian capital, Cairo, along the River Nile.



The renewable potential in Africa is enormous and can provide energy access to 600 million Africans still without electricity, as well as the industrial sector, and create jobs for young people, thus improving the value chain and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Photo: aerial view of a mangrove forest in Gambia.

lead to a doubling of jobs in the energy sector by 2030. However, to accelerate clean energy investments, it will be critical to improve access to capital and reduce the costs of financing.

HOW MUCH IS EUROPE INVESTING?

Africa's renewable energy potential is so vast that it could not only meet its own needs but also become an exporter of clean energy. This positions climate action as a key driver of growth on the continent. However, realizing this potential calls for significant investment. Europe is stepping up to bridge this investment gap, aiming to become a primary partner for Africa in this endeavor.

The European Union, along with its member states, has a long history of energy cooperation with African countries. From 2014 to 2020, the EU dedicated 3 billion euros to sustainable energy projects across more than 30 African nations. These projects have expanded access to energy for 20 million people, supported nearly 10 gigawatts of renewable energy generation, and prevented the emission of 34 million tonnes of CO₂. When combined with contributions from individual member states, the total investment reaches 13.8 billion euros. Looking ahead, the Team Europe Initiative, known as the Africa

Europe Green Energy Initiative (AEGEI), comprises the EU, 12 member states, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Under this initiative, a commitment of 20 billion euros has been made for the 2021-2027 period. Of this, the EU alone has pledged 3.4 billion euros. AEGEI, a flagship project under the Global Gateway framework, aims to enhance energy access and efficiency, including clean cooking solutions, and to increase the share of renewable energy. Its ambitious goals include the development of at least 50 gigawatts of additional renewable energy capacity, extending energy access to at least 100 million people, and supporting the green hydrogen value chain.

WHICH FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS IS IT USING?

The EU's Global Gateway strategy is pivotal in fostering smart investments in high-quality infrastructure, adhering to the strictest social and environmental standards. This strategy aims to mobilize up to 300 billion euros in investments from 2021 to 2027, targeting significant infrastructure developments in areas like climate and energy, digital technology, transportation, health, education, and research. This initiative will operate under the 'Team Europe' brand, uniting the EU, member states,

European and national financial institutions, and aiming to attract private sector finance and expertise.

A key component of the Global Gateway is the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD+), an integrated package offering financial support through grants, technical assistance, budget guarantees, and cooperative ventures to bolster both public and private investments. EFSD+ serves as a risk-sharing tool, designed to leverage financing from the private and public sectors by mitigating risks and rendering projects bankable, fostering a more favorable investment climate. This approach is crucial, as creating an investment-friendly environment remains a significant challenge for many partner countries. Consequently, enhancing regulatory frameworks and governance will be essential to support and facilitate the investment process.

THE ROLE OF GREEN HYDROGEN

Green Hydrogen is increasingly recognized as a key player in the global shift towards a low-carbon economy powered by renewable energy. That's good news for countries rich in renewable resources, which often include low- and middle-income nations in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America. Green hydrogen presents an opportunity to harness this

renewable potential, paving the way for green industrial processes and local value chains.

The relevance of green hydrogen extends across climate change, energy transition, and energy security, intersecting with global concerns and creating avenues for mutually beneficial, long-term collaborations. Recognizing this potential, we have established memoranda of understanding focused on energy and hydrogen cooperation with various partner countries.

Fostering fair and reciprocal energy cooperation with Africa is a key priority for the European Union, Team Europe, its member states, and associated financial institutions. This commitment is not just about supporting Africa's renewable energy development; it's about ensuring access to energy, promoting energy growth, and creating the jobs that Africa is striving for.

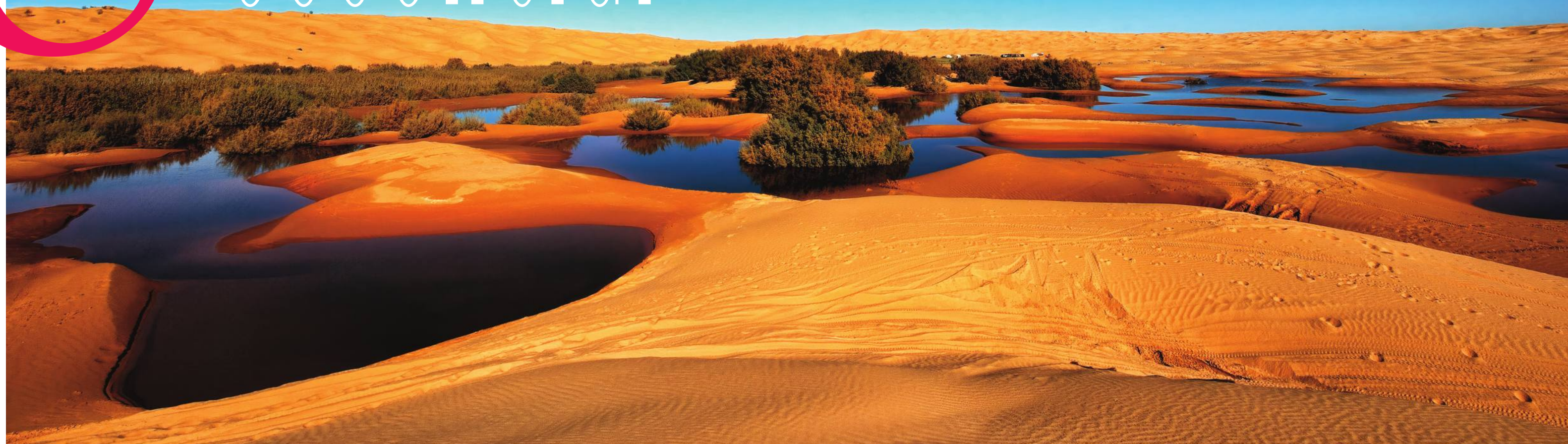
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CARLA MONTESI

Carla Montesi is currently Director at the European Commission's Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA). She is responsible for the Directorate "Green Deal and Digital Agenda", covering policy areas such as climate change, environment, sustainable energy, agri-food systems, transport, technology and digitalisation.

Strategic & Essential

by Francesco La Camera



FOR AFRICA, RENEWABLES ARE A CRUCIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH AND INDUSTRIALIZATION. FOR NOW, ALAS, AFRICA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL IS LARGELY UNTAPPED FOR LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT, AND PARTNERSHIPS

A FOCUS ON RENEWABLES is not just strategic; it is essential for Africa's development and industrialization. Leveraging its rich endowment of renewable resources can energize the continent, catalyze green industries, and drive progress in critical sectors like healthcare, education, and agriculture.

THE DIVIDE BETWEEN THE WORLD AND AFRICA

Since 2014, renewables have dominated new global energy capacity: according to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), which I direct, 83 percent of all new capacity in 2022 came from renewable sources. This shift reflects a global recognition of the fundamental importance of renewables for energy security, independence, and cost-effectiveness. Our recent Cost Report estimates that the use of renewables globally has generated energy cost savings of some USD 520 billion last year alone. IRENA's projections suggest that the share of renewables must be tripled by 2030 to achieve climate security.

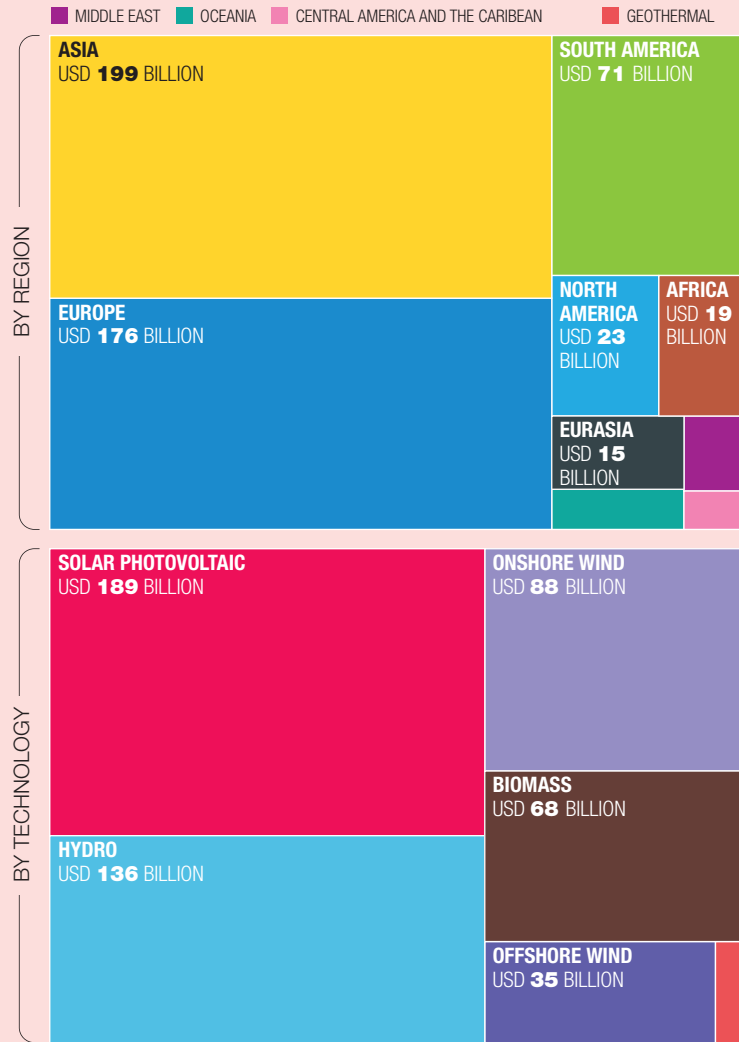
Africa is rich in renewable resources, yet this potential remains largely untapped. In 2022, Africa's share of new renewable energy was less than six gigawatts, compared to around 300 GW added globally. In 2021, renewable investments per capita in North America were 179 times higher than in sub-Saharan Africa. And over the past two decades, less than 2 percent of global investment in renewables has flowed into the continent, where 600 million people still lack access to electricity. In a world in which the required technology and resources exist, I think we can all agree that such disparities are totally unacceptable.

THE PATH TO A SYSTEMIC CHANGE

In IRENA's World Energy Transition Outlook, we set out a three-

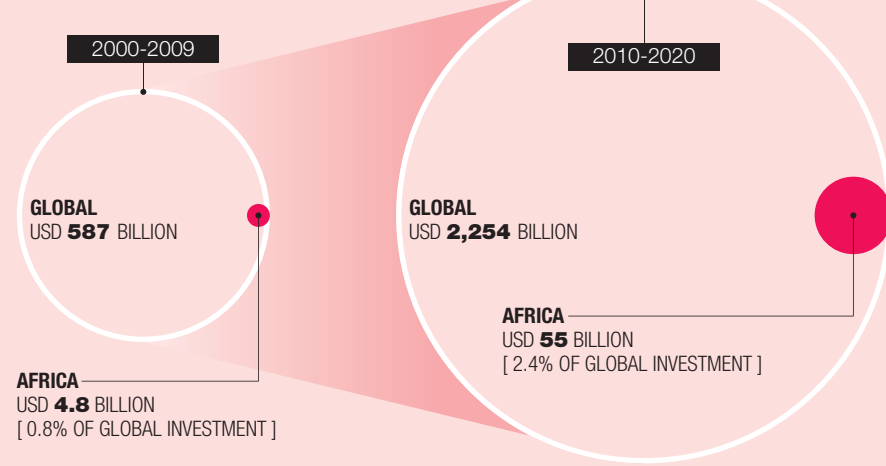
Source: IRENA

OVERALL SAVINGS COMPARED WITH FOSSIL FUEL COSTS IN THE ELECTRICITY SECTOR

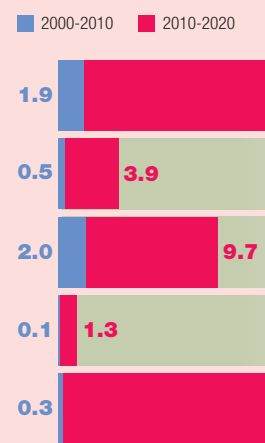


The 2022 crisis in fossil fuel prices was a clear example of the powerful economic benefits of renewables. By 2022, renewable energy used globally since 2000 has saved around USD 521 billion in energy costs in the electricity sector alone. In Europe the figure totaled USD 176 billion.

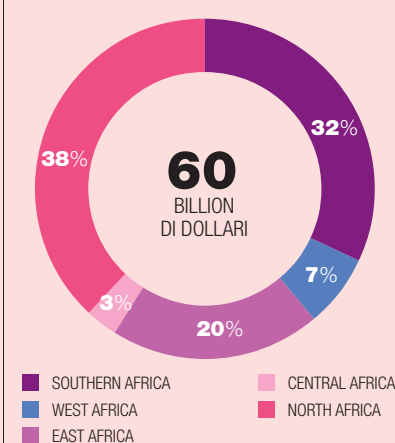
CUMULATIVE INVESTMENT IN RENEWABLES IN AFRICA AND THE WORLD



INVESTMENTS BY REGION (IN BILLIONS OF DOLLARS)

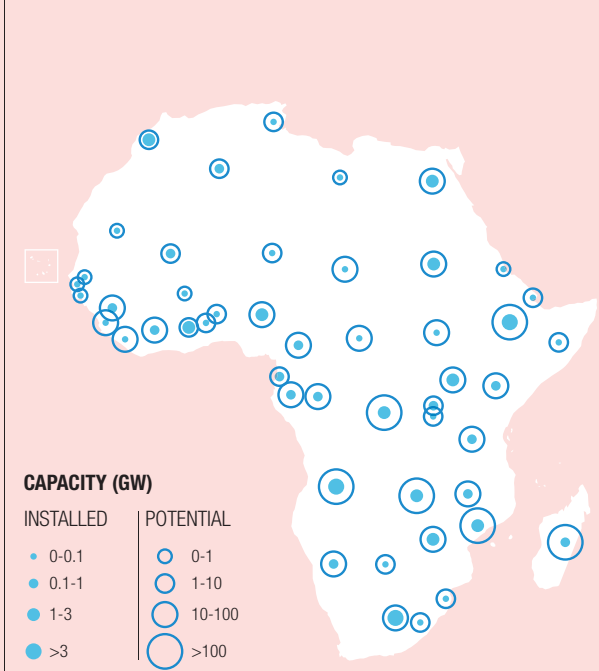


CUMULATIVE INVESTMENT 2000-2020 (IN PERCENT, BY REGION)



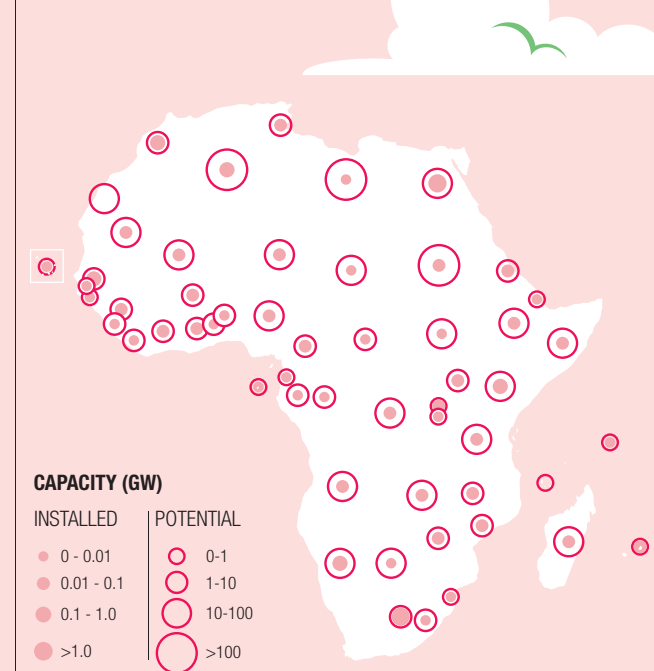
Despite Africa's vast potential and huge energy needs, only 2 percent of the USD 2.8 trillion spent globally on renewables between 2000 and 2020—equivalent to USD 60 billion, excluding hydropower—went to Africa. Moreover, three-quarters of the investments made between 2010 and 2020 were made by just four countries: South Africa, Morocco, Egypt and Kenya.

HYDROPOWER: POTENTIAL AND CAPACITY



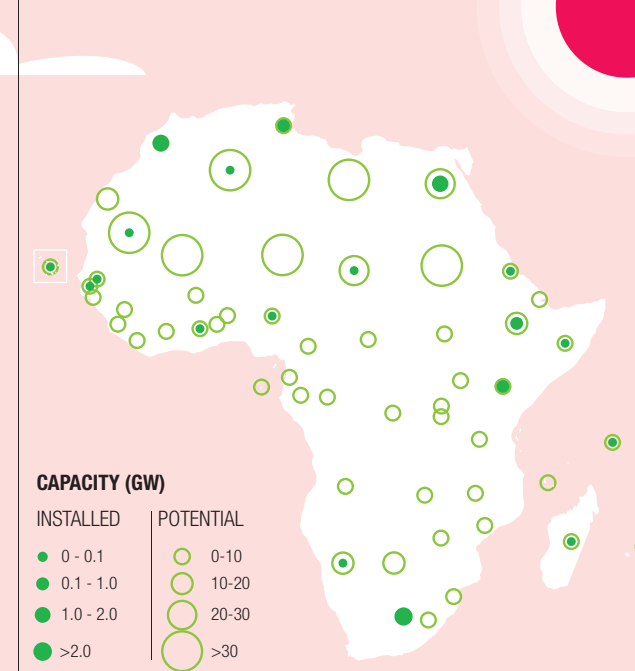
At present, large-scale hydropower is the largest source of renewable electricity in Africa, with considerable untapped potential. The largest hydropower producers are Ethiopia, Angola, South Africa, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sudan, Morocco and Ghana.

PHOTOVOLTAICS: POTENTIAL AND CAPACITY



Africa is among the areas of the world with the greatest potential for solar energy production. IRENA estimates the continent's solar technical potential at 7,900 GW (assuming a land use factor of 1 percent). Despite this, solar energy has been used systematically in only a few countries. South Africa and Egypt are the two largest African producers of solar energy, with more than three-quarters of the installed solar capacity in 2020.

WIND POWER: POTENTIAL AND CAPACITY



IRENA estimates the technical potential of African wind power generation at 461 GW (assuming a 1 percent land use factor), with countries such as Algeria, Ethiopia, Namibia and Mauritania possessing the greatest potential. Wind power contributes substantially to the electricity mix of some countries, yet it remains highly underutilized on the continent, particularly in parts of North Africa and the Sahel region.

pillar approach to achieving a desperately needed systemic change. The first pillar is the physical infrastructure: Africa needs to expand and modernize its grid, with greater cross-border connectivity and strategic use of mini-grid and off-grid systems. Building infrastructure on this scale requires a new way of thinking in terms of planning and investment, for multilateral financial institutions and MDBs. And we need to innovate to create pipelines of bankable projects and overcome barriers to investment. At COP27, we launched the Energy Transition Accelerator Facility (ETAF) platform to advance renewable projects in developing nations. With six financial partners already on board, and

others soon to come, our goal is to scale investment to 5 billion dollars by 2030 in to deploy five gigawatts of projects. The pace at which this can be accomplished greatly depends on the second pillar, which consists of evolved policy and regulatory architecture that takes into consideration the changing dynamics and steers investment in the right direction. We estimate that keeping to the 1.5 °C pathway would mean increasing GDP by 6.5 percent and creating almost 4 percent or more jobs in Africa by 2050. Finally, we need to pay close attention to institutional and human capacity: this will be among our most significant contributions to this young and dynamic continent.

But we also understand that achieving impact on the ground requires working with other parties able to complement, amplify and implement action in the field. Therefore, we have placed partnership at the center of our work. At the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, President Ruto of Kenya launched the Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA), led by a cohort of African countries—Ethiopia, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe—with an ambitious renewable agenda to drive sustainable development and green industrialization. Denmark, Germany and the UAE are the funding partners currently supporting this initiative, which is coordinated and facilitated by IRENA, and which perhaps Italy too could

consider joining. Such a partnership could be instrumental in shaping international cooperation and delivering results at different speeds and on different scales.

We

FRANCESCO LA CAMERA

He is Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Mr. La Camera took office on 4 April 2019 and brings more than thirty years of experience in the fields of climate, sustainability, and international cooperation. In his role, he is responsible for leading the delivery of IRENA's work program and strategy in cooperation with the agency's member states.



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financing THE TRANSITION

by Fabio Natalucci

FOR EMDE COUNTRIES TO OBTAIN THE CAPITAL NEEDED FOR THEIR TRANSITION, AN APPEALING INVESTMENT CLIMATE NEEDS TO BE ESTABLISHED AND A PRIVATE CLIMATE FINANCE NEEDS TO BE UNLOCKED

THE 28TH UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP28) marked a pivotal milestone in enacting the 2015 Paris Agreement by completing its first global stocktake. Significant strides were made on several fronts, including the activation of the Loss and Damage Fund and a commitment to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030. Key agreements also focus on accelerating the phase-down of coal power without carbon capture, transitioning from fossil fuels in energy systems to more sustainable alternatives in a fair, orderly, and equitable way, and eliminating inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. Achieving these objectives necessitates a dramatic shift in financial flows, with estimates running into the trillions of dollars. The International Energy Agency (IEA) projects that around \$5 trillion in annual global climate mitigation investments will be required by 2030 to reach a net-zero carbon footprint by 2050. Approximately \$2 trillion, or 40 percent of this total, is needed in emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs) — a five-fold increase from current levels. This investment would represent 12 percent of the total investment in these countries, a significant rise from the present 3 percent.

THE TRANSITION IN EMDES

Currently, about two-thirds of the world's greenhouse gas emissions originate from emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs). This means that, despite significant emission reductions in advanced economies like the US and Europe, the global climate issue cannot be fully addressed without tackling emissions in EMDEs. However, the economic landscape in these regions has become increasingly challenging. Post-COVID-19, public debt has soared relative to GDP, particularly in some African countries, worsening the fiscal outlook. Additionally, as central banks in advanced economies hike interest rates to combat inflation, external financing costs, especially in countries with sub-investment grade ratings, have surged. There's a pressing need for private capital to fund the transition to a low-carbon economy. The IMF's October 2023 Global Financial Stability Report suggests that in EMDEs, private sectors currently finance about 40 percent of climate mitigation invest-

ment. This figure needs to escalate to 80-90 percent. EMDEs encounter multiple obstacles in scaling up private capital. Some barriers are unique to these economies and not directly climate-related. For instance, only around 60 percent of emerging markets and just 8 percent of developing economies have an investment-grade rating. This excludes countries with sub-investment grade ratings from the investment portfolios of many large global institutional investors. Other challenges include policy uncertainty, institutional and legal frameworks, and governance issues.

Regarding climate-specific barriers, issues arise both in the demand for capital and the availability of bankable projects. In some instances, the problem isn't just a scarcity of capital but also a lack of viable projects for investment. Here, technical assistance from multilateral development banks (MDBs) like the World Bank is crucial throughout the entire project cycle, from design and development to market introduction.

On the supply side of capital, a key step is to engage more local private capital in EMDEs, such as pension plans and insurance companies. Developing local capital markets could mitigate foreign-exchange risks associated with currency mismatches in project financing. However, this process is time-consuming, and urgency is key. Hence, there's an immediate, critical need to draw private financing from global capital markets.

HOW CAN WE ATTRACT PRIVATE CAPITAL?

To achieve the monumental task of climate finance in emerging markets and developing economies, we need a comprehensive mix of policies to attract investment. A starting point is carbon pricing, providing investors with the necessary signals to weigh risks and opportunities, and spurring the move to green projects. Clear, actionable climate goals set by authorities, coupled with robust policies, are also vital. These goals must be measurable, such as transition pathways that investors can follow and assess. Further, it's essential to bolster what's termed 'climate information architecture' — accessible, high-quality climate data that are comparable and consistent worldwide. Transition taxonomies are particularly needed in EMDEs, where most activi-



© ARNAUD SCHILDKNECHT/UNSPLASH

ties fall between 'green' and 'non-green.' These taxonomies should encourage investors to gradually shift towards greener practices. Additionally, the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB)'s global standards must be implemented, providing investors with a comprehensive baseline for climate-related disclosures.

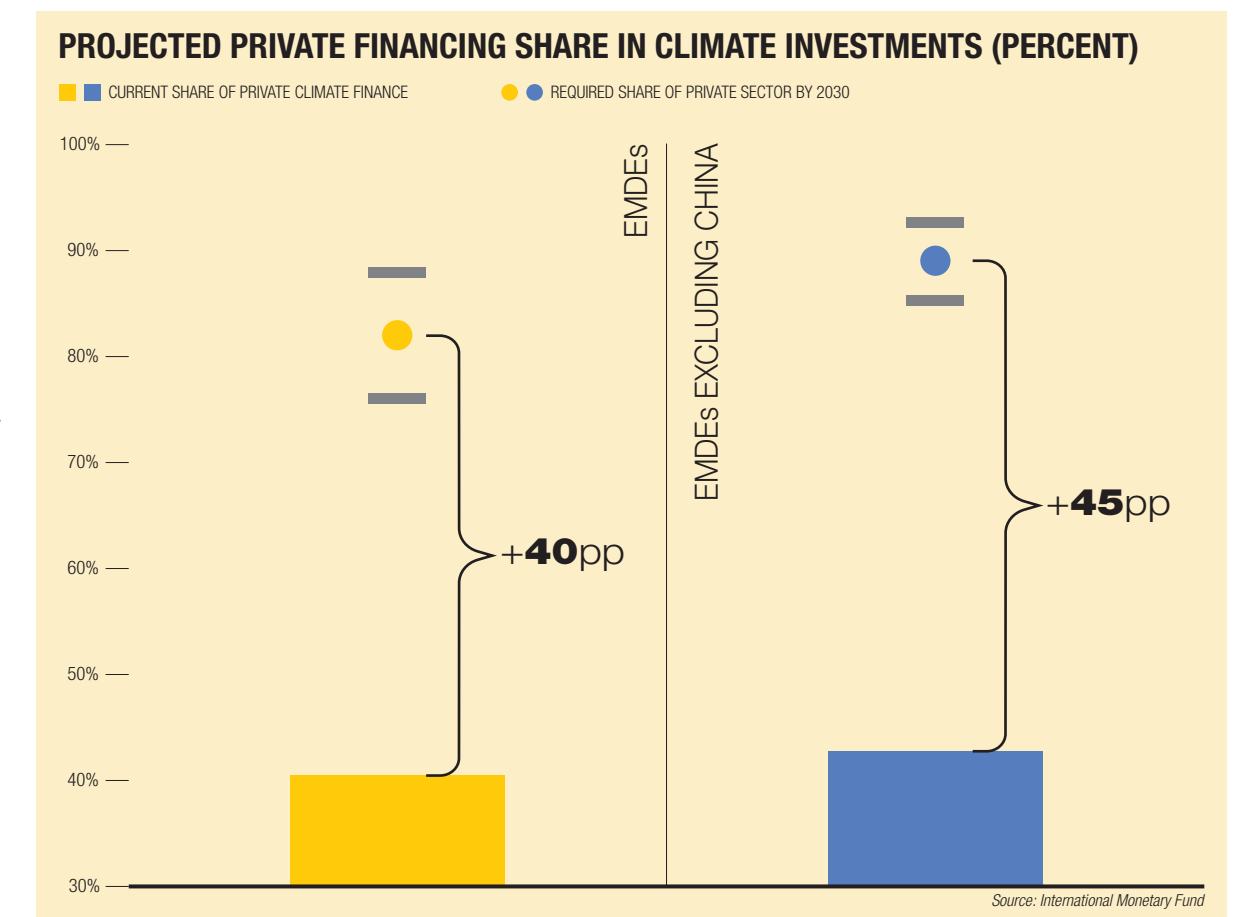
Policies must also promote the scaling up of private capital. Sharing risks between public and private sectors is fundamental to encouraging private climate investments in EMDEs. Financial mechanisms that allow pooling of resources, diversification, and credit enhancements can reduce the cost of private capital and draw in a wider range of investors. Given the abundance of debt, instruments that provide first-loss absorption, like equity or guarantees, are essential. Multilateral development banks and donors can use guarantees effectively to mitigate both actual and perceived risks.

Blended finance structures, involving public actors like MDBs, governments, and development finance institutions, sometimes supported by philanthropies, can improve the risk-return profile for private investors. While not a silver bullet, blended finance has proven its worth in several countries by showcasing the investability of EMDEs and harmonizing financial and sustainability goals. Scalability is key here, as it brings standardization and liquidity, both of which are essential to draw in global capital.

Major financial institutions must align their actions with their commitments to finance the green transition. The IMF's Global Financial Stability Report from October 2023 highlights a shortfall in the climate impact of financial institutions' pledges. An evaluation of 30 significant banks' climate policies indicates that more aggressive efforts are needed to meet net-zero targets. Among investment funds, climate impact funds constitute a minor fraction of both the overall investment fund pool and the broader ESG spectrum. Improved disclosures and labeling for sustainable investment funds are imperative to boost market transparency, uphold integrity, and ensure alignment with climate objectives.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION

This challenge transcends borders and demands global cooperation. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) stands prepared to contribute. Leveraging its ability to bring parties together, the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) is poised to serve as a linchpin, uniting governments, multilateral development banks (MDBs), and private entities to advance climate investment financing. While the RSF's \$40 billion may seem modest in the context of the vast global climate finance requirements, the reforms it supports are designed to foster an environment conducive to private climate finance. Member countries have the option to allocate a portion of the fiscal latitude afforded by the RSF to implement risk-sharing and credit-en-



hancement strategies for private investors, mindful of fiscal health and debt sustainability. Alongside traditional IMF programs, the RSF aims to tackle macroeconomic issues in member nations, to unlock local financial resources. The IMF is also poised to offer capacity development, particularly vital for low-income countries, to enhance climate policies, including the gathering of robust, dependable, and uniform climate-related data.

We

The transition to a low-carbon economy requires private capital. According to the International Monetary Fund's October 2023 Global Financial Stability Report, the private sector in EMDEs currently covers, on average, 40 percent of climate mitigation investment: this means that the private sector's share of total climate investment will need to jump to 80-90 percent.

FABIO M. NATALUCCI
He is a Deputy Director of the Monetary and Capital Markets Department at the International Monetary Fund. He is responsible for the Global Financial Stability Report that gives the IMF's assessment of global financial stability risks.



THE IMPACT

Africa is exceptionally vulnerable to climate change. Despite being responsible for only 3-4 percent of the world's emissions, the continent, home to 15-17 percent of the global population, faces significant environmental fragility and limited capacity to adapt. The impact of climate change in Africa is profound, affecting agriculture, energy, and critical mineral sectors, influencing the economies and societies. This increases risks of poverty, displacement, and migration.

Moreover, climate change shapes African politics, including climate-related conflicts and foreign relations. There is a strong sense of climate injustice in Africa, as the continent grapples with the repercussions of actions primarily taken by the global north. This sentiment is pivotal in discussions with wealthier nations. Africa advocates for a just green transition, emphasizing fair funding, appropriate transition pace, and suitable methods for its diverse countries.

GIOVANNI CARBONE, PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MILAN IN CHARGE OF THE AFRICA PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY STUDIES (ISPI)

THE PRIORITIES FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Africa, comprising 55 diverse member countries of the African Union, presents a united front on climate change, action, and priorities. Yet, the realities vary significantly at national and local levels. Each African country has its unique context, especially regarding vulnerability to climate change. This diversity is evident in the varying regional and country-specific impacts within the continent.

During the recent Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, the African Union and the Kenyan government finalized the Nairobi Declaration. This document aligns with the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report, underscoring Africa's vulnerability and the acute susceptibility of certain sectors. The report concludes that current efforts are insufficient to maintain global temperature rise within 1.5 °C. This shortfall highlights the urgent need for adaptation and resilience-building in Africa.

Financially, the Africa Group urges that 50 percent of climate finance be dedicated to adaptation. This aligns with the pursuit of a just transition, aiming to safeguard African communities, economies, and livelihoods from climate impacts. The Declaration also focuses on loss and damage, emphasizing the need for immediate capacity building and support to mitigate the evident effects of climate change, such as frequent flooding and cyclones.

The Nairobi Declaration advocates for the reform of multilateral financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. African nations, while diverse in their specific demands, collectively seek changes in how these institutions structure finance, aiming to prevent climate finance from exacerbating debt. The Declaration asserts that the current quality and quantity of climate finance are inadequate for Africa's needs, highlighting a preference for subsidized financing and grants. A crucial aspect of Africa's stance is the desire to be recognized as a strategic partner, not merely as a victim of climate change. Africa offers significant opportunities in areas like green innovation, strategic minerals, and thanks to its young demographics. The continent's approach is grounded in justice and equity, emphasizing its minimal contribution to the problem yet significant vulnerability. Africa is committed to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future but requires substantial support, including financial resources and technical assistance, to realize this vision.



THE PECULIARITIES OF THE AFRICAN TRANSITION

The energy transition is a pivotal part of the African Union's agenda. Over time, it has become clear that transitioning to a low-carbon economy requires substantial investment. African governments have crafted numerous policies aimed at this transition but implementing them remains a significant challenge. There is a pronounced gap between policy formulation and actual practice. The question arises: how can we translate extensive research into tangible actions? In Europe and China, local economies thrive on the backbone of small businesses—a model that Africa needs to emulate. Reliance solely on development funding is insufficient, as projects often cease when the funds run out. The current challenge for Africa is to prevent the collapse of projects at the end of the funding cycle. To this end, private sector engagement is crucial. Businesses driven by profit can develop sustainable solutions and innovations that serve end-users and benefit local communities.

Our policymakers have fostered a conducive environment for private investment and social innovation that begins within local communities. However, it's also critical to consider local culture and social dynamics. For instance, an initiative to build wells in communities facing water shortages encountered an unexpected cultural nuance. Despite the convenience of nearby wells, many women preferred the long walk to the river. This journey was more than a chore; it was a cherished social ritual, an opportunity for community bonding and storytelling. This insight underscores the importance of adapting technologies and initiatives to fit local contexts and social structures.

A holistic approach that integrates local culture and social considerations is essential for the success of any transition, be it in energy or other sectors.

ROMY CHEVALLIER, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

ANDERSON KEHBILA, DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICA ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM AT THE STOCKHOLM ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE (SEI)



SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION: THE CASE OF LADOL

Development finance alone cannot meet Africa's industrialization needs, largely because the prevailing definitions of bankability don't align with the continent's requirements. The Lagos Deep Offshore Logistics Base (LADOL) example illustrates how sustainable development of the industrial sector is feasible through private financing. We have converted an unused swamp into a thriving industrial logistics support base, primarily servicing oil and gas companies with material handling, personnel logistics, repairs, and construction. To date, nearly \$500 million has been privately invested in LADOL.

Our key facilities include a ship docking point and a new quay at Apapa Port in Lagos, constructed in the early 1970s. This port, the largest in West Africa, accounts for 70 percent of imports, yet saw a 30-year hiatus in significant infrastructure development. Our progress is directly linked to servicing commodity exports.

LADOL's master plan, created with Nigerian, British, and Danish experts from Salvo and Nereus, aims for net-zero emissions by 2035. This plan has been supported over the past two decades by committed stakeholders with a long-term vision, focusing on

enabling sustainable industrialization in Nigeria and building a supportive ecosystem for projects and downstream activities.

In our initial phase, we attracted substantial investment to construct a special economic zone on underutilized land. Now, LADOL is expanding its focus to include non-oil and gas companies and to further develop the special economic zone—all through private funding, exemplifying sustainable business practices.

As a member of the United Nations Business and Sustainable Development Commission (BSDC), I was involved in a study revealing that sustainable sectors could unlock twelve trillion dollars in business opportunities. LADOL is also implementing a sustainable governance framework and constructing climate-smart infrastructure, which are foundational to our net-zero journey. Moreover, by mapping out business opportunities with our partners, we've identified specific areas for creating clusters where businesses can flourish within the free zone.

AMY JADESIMI, CEO OF THE NIGERIAN SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON STATE CAPACITY FOR ACTION

The ongoing drought in the Horn of Africa since 2020 starkly illustrates the drastic changes such events inflict on people's lives. With twenty million people facing severe food insecurity and a rise in child malnutrition, our strides toward food security have been reversed. Livestock, a primary livelihood, has been devastated, with over ten million animals lost, threatening the sustenance of countless families, and leading to the displacement of more than 2.7 million individuals. Such displacement uproots people from their cultural foundations, often severing long-held family ties. In Kenya, where over 80 percent of the land is arid or semi-arid, agricultural productivity—a lifeline during the COVID lockdowns—has plummeted due to the drought. The cultural sector, which usually contributes about a third to the GDP, has seen a sharp contraction, dragging down economic growth.

The irony of drought is the desperate wait for rain, only to face new challenges when it arrives. Surviving livestock are at risk from flash floods, continuing the cycle of devastation. The Kenyan government frequently steps into aid communities in restoring livelihoods, importing food to counter severe insecurity, which in turn reduces import duties and government revenue. This loss requires reliance on subsidies and social protection measures, straining the state budget.

Furthermore, when agriculture falters, the manufacturing sector, dependent on it for raw materials, also suffers, leading to decreased tax revenues and budget deficits. Drought can disrupt power supplies as well, forcing a reliance on coal and complicating efforts to reduce emissions while ensuring energy sufficiency.

These cascading effects highlight the constraints African states face in meeting their climate commitments. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are rarely fully financed, leaving countries with limited scope to navigate the implementation of their climate strategies amid such challenges.

ROSE NGUGI, OF THE KENYA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

THE ROLE OF THE CITY

The most effective approach to climate change involves a polycentric response—a multi-level strategy that prioritizes the local level, crucial for climate justice. Local communities, vulnerable to the direct impacts of climate change and the inadvertent effects of climate policies, must be at the center of this strategy. Even well-intentioned climate change mitigation policies can lead to unintended consequences, so it's vital to devise plans that consider the needs of these communities and involve local authorities and entities throughout the process.

Cities across Africa each have their unique perspectives on climate action. While their input into global climate policy can sometimes be complex to navigate, cities are increasingly finding ways to assert themselves and influence these policies. Through coordination, mutual learning, and collective experimentation, cities are developing and implementing their own tailored climate initiatives within networks like C40 Cities and others.

However, empirical research suggests emerging challenges for African cities within these networks. Internal hierarchies, reflecting the financial disparities between cities, can hinder equal participation and resource mobilization. Not all networks are created equal—some are more inclusive of African cities than others. For instance, the Global Parliament of Mayors, which comprises mayors from various global cities and grants equal voting rights to each member, includes about 50 percent representation from medium and small African cities. This body is particularly effective in amplifying the voices of African cities.

The essence of joining such networks is to promote democratic and coordinated action that benefits local communities, focusing on adaptation and climate justice. Ultimately, the objective is not just to have a voice in political discourse but to ensure that this voice translates into tangible, on-the-ground projects that make a real difference.

ELENA DE NICTOLIS, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, LUISS UNIVERSITY



A STRATEGIC

Continent

by Rama Yade

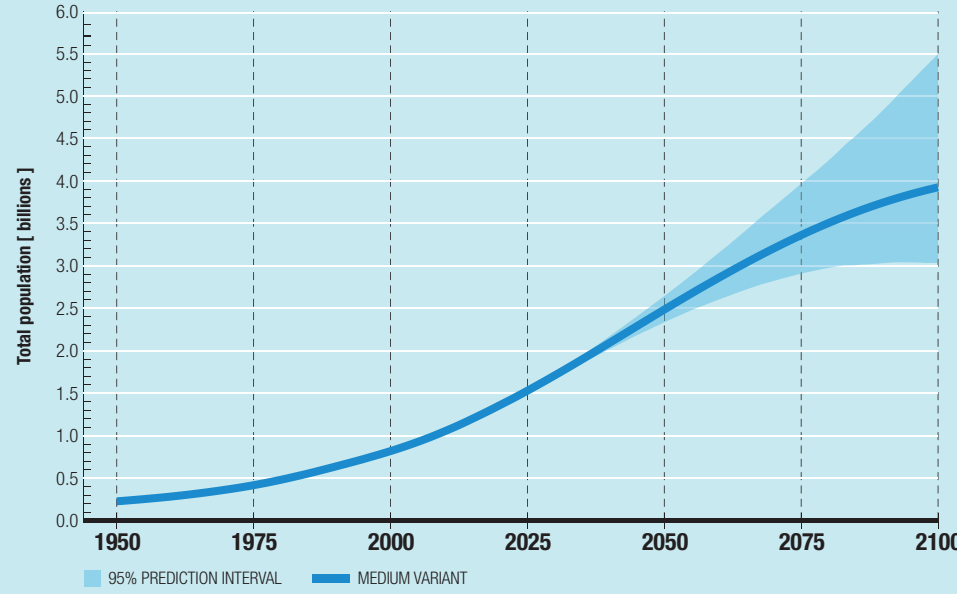
WITH A YOUNG POPULATION THAT WILL DOUBLE BY 2050, A STEADILY GROWING MIDDLE CLASS AND ENORMOUS WEALTH IN NATURAL RESOURCES, AFRICA IS TAKING ITS FUTURE INTO ITS OWN HANDS. ON THE ENERGY SPACE, ITS PRIORITIES ARE TWOFOLD: COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE AND PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT

AFRICA, THE CRADLE OF HUMANITY, is also its youngest continent, with an average age below 20. It boasts half of the world's most rapidly growing economies, buoyed not just by its natural riches but also as the site of the largest emerging free trade zone. By 2050, its population is expected to double, and an expanding middle class along with digitally savvy youth are spearheading a significant digital revolution. Agriculturally, Africa holds 70 percent of the world's untapped arable land, in-



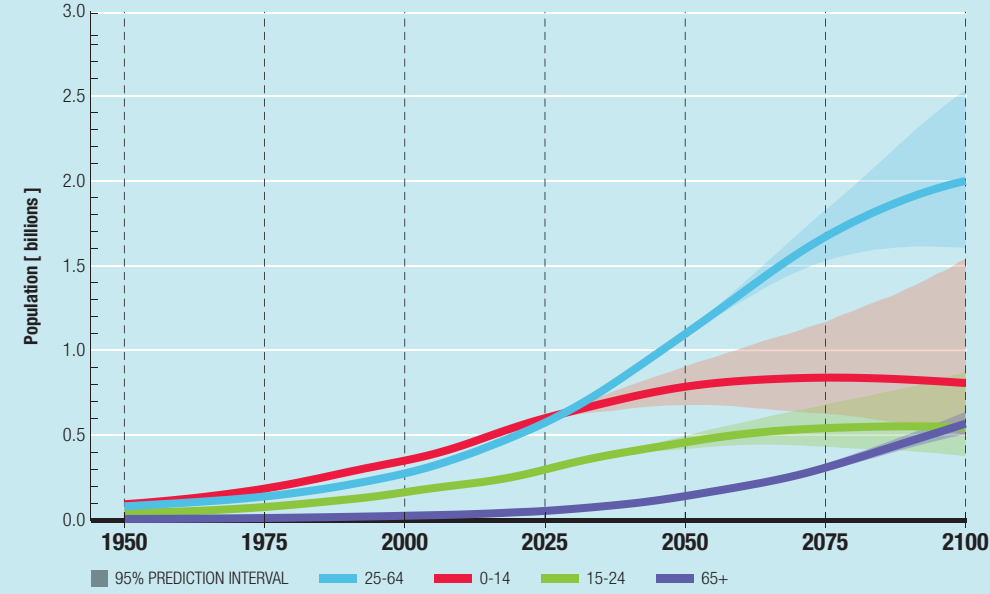
TOTAL POPULATION

Source: 2022 United Nations, DESA, Population Division



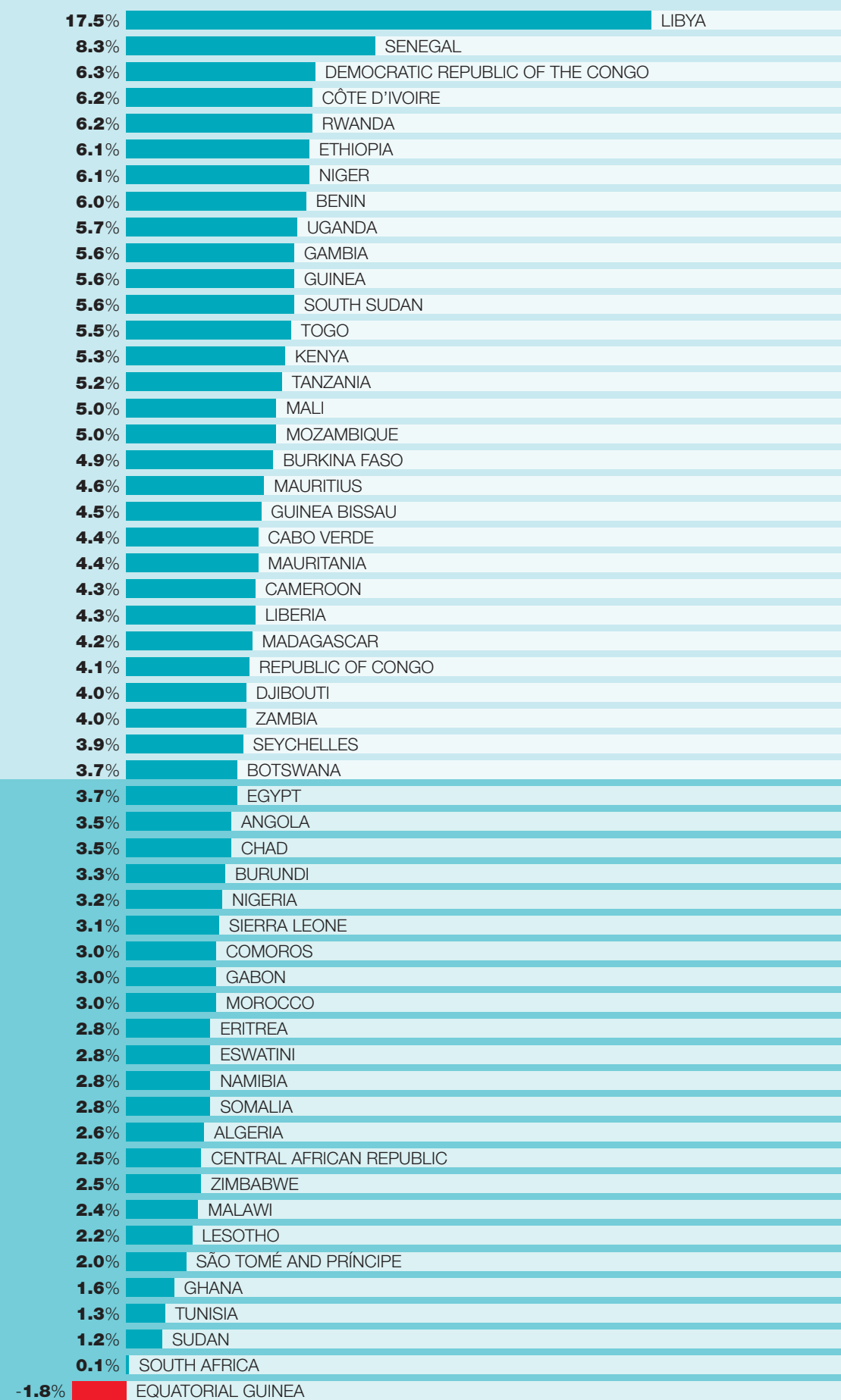
POPULATION BY BROAD AGE GROUPS

Source: 2022 United Nations, DESA, Population Division



THE GDP GROWTH OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Source: Statista, 2023



Africa growing

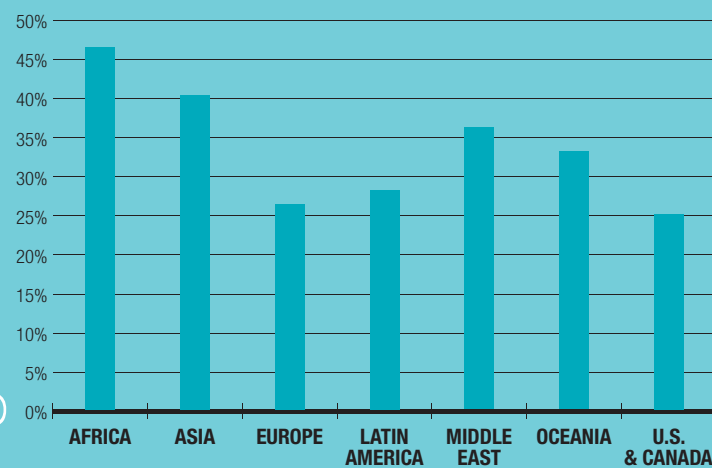
Africa can count on a young and dynamic population that is leading the largest global digital revolution in the last two decades. The charts below show that, while still

lagging behind in absolute values in terms of web usage or new broadband subscriptions, Africa is the continent with the highest growth rate in internet bandwidth.



The digital revolution

CAGR INTERNET BANDWIDTH GROWTH BY REGION



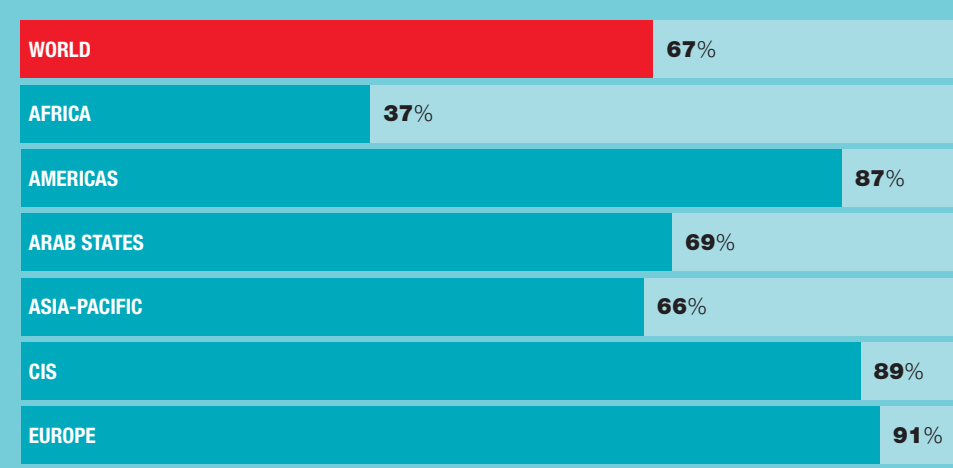
Source: The State of Broadband 2023, ITU/UNESCO

MOBILE-CELLULAR TELEPHONE SUBSCRIPTIONS PER 100 INHABITANTS BY REGION (2023)



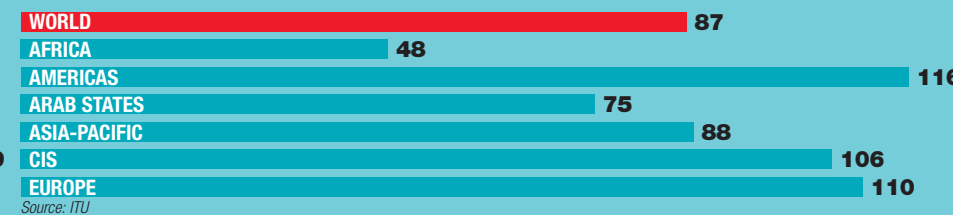
Source: ITU

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS USING THE INTERNET BY REGION, 2023



Source: ITU

ACTIVE MOBILE-BROADBAND SUBSCRIPTIONS PER 100 INHABITANTS BY REGION (2023)



Source: ITU

dicating its potential to become a global breadbasket. Additionally, it's a unique reservoir of critical minerals vital for clean energy technologies. These factors underscore Africa's strategic importance and why it's a focal point for international and regional power dynamics.

A DUAL CHALLENGE: CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT

Africa grapples with serious threats like poverty, terrorism, and notably, climate change—the latter warrants a closer examination. While climate change is a global issue, its effects are unevenly felt. Despite comprising 15 percent of the global population, Africa contributes less than 3 percent to worldwide emissions and disproportionately bears the brunt of its worst consequences, such as floods, deforestation, water scarcity, and rising sea levels. Here, global warming is an immediate reality, not a distant menace.

Developed nations pledged to finance climate response in Africa, promising \$100 billion annually from 2020 to 2025—a commitment nearing its due date and yet to be honored. Moreover, Africa faces the dual challenge of addressing climate change while securing funds for its development, needing an estimated \$200 billion yearly. With 600 million Africans lacking electricity, development is hampered; energy is essential for progress. Africa's renewable energy potential is vast, including significant solar and hydropower capacities. Yet, as the continent aims to balance industrialization with low-carbon growth, it considers natural gas as an essential bridge in this transition. African leaders, such as last year's African Union President Macky Sall, have lobbied globally for the acknowledgment of natural gas as a transitional resource, urging developed countries to maintain its funding.

AFRICAN SOLUTIONS

The urgency is clear: Africa cannot wait on international financial promises. Africans are proactively seeking their own solutions, leading to notable advancements. For instance, 'smart cities' in Africa are outpacing developments elsewhere, with eco-friendly urban projects like Angola's Kilamba, Nige-



ria's Centenary City in Abuja, and Kenya's tech hub, Konza, emerging from urgent urban challenges. With a population boom predicted, energy needs will surge.

In the Congo Basin, the planet's second-largest rainforest acts as a critical carbon sink for climate regulation. Africa's efficient utilization of such natural assets is key to tackling climate issues and meeting energy demands. The continent's wealth in minerals, including gold, chromium, and platinum, and having the largest global reserves of cobalt, diamonds, and uranium, is also part of this narrative.

The Climate Week Summit in Nairobi, attended by prominent leaders like John Kerry, Ursula von der Leyen, and Antonio Guterres, was a significant step towards addressing these challenges, notably with the allocation of over USD 23 billion for green energy. Yet, a unified continental effort and international support are essential to turn commitments into action—for Africa's future but also for world's benefit.

we

RAMA YADE

Ambassador Rama Yade is senior director of the Atlantic Council's Africa Center. She is also a professor of African affairs at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University in Morocco and at Sciences Po Paris. She is a Senegalese and French citizen. Ambassador Yade has over a decade of experience working in French, European, and international politics.

THE RESOURCES NEEDED

The title “Africa’s Development Path and the resources needed” is very ambitious, ranging from resources to solutions and, I would say, even opportunities. The most important opportunities are those offered to young people. That’s why, together with a network of ten Italian universities, we’re promoting action.

Africa is on its sustainable development path, but let’s not forget that the continent is now warming 20 percent faster than the global rate. People are undoubtedly suffering. This is why we need to support Africa, including by helping young people, and to rethink the ways we collaborate with Africa. And we must do so adopting a win-win approach.

DAVID CHIARAMONTI, VICE RECTOR OF THE POLITECNICO DI TORINO

A BIG DIVIDE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

Africa serves as the main repository for what we term “strategic minerals,” crucial for energy conversion and alternative industries. The developmental gap between the North and the South is wide. The pivotal question for the future lies in whether we are progressing towards collaboration or confrontation in addressing this divide. This quandary encompasses the Northern and Southern hemispheres, with particular emphasis on Middle Africa, a key supplier of these strategic minerals.

Africa’s long experience with external influences from major players like the United States, Europe, China, Russia, Japan, India, and Australia, underscores the need for a reevaluation of partnerships. The partnership between Africa and the North must be reinvented, presenting a shared challenge for Africans, Europeans, and the Northern Hemisphere. This goes beyond adherence to climate change requirements or standards; the primary challenge is fostering cooperation to avoid confrontation.

Italy, through the ‘Mattei Plan,’ exemplifies a dedicated effort to collaborate with Africa in a way that benefits both sides, emphasizing the urgency of building such partnerships. This collaboration becomes imperative as Africa lacks many of the essential resources crucial for a successful transition. The forthcoming European elections, scheduled for the middle of next year, will shape the direction of this partnership, making the election’s outcome a pivotal factor in influencing the trajectory of this collaborative effort.

ARSLAN CHIKHAOU, EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF NORD SUD VENTURES, ALGERIA



BIODIESEL AND AGRO-ENERGY PROJECTS IN RWANDA

Climate change poses a significant global challenge, but what are we prepared to do about it? In Rwanda, we launched a biodiesel production project in 2007 to combat greenhouse gas emissions. The project aimed to produce biodiesel for use in transportation, households, and power generation.

Although currently at pilot stage, the plant has been designed to produce a minimum of 2,000 liters of biodiesel daily. This biofuel was successfully tested in the transportation sector, powering green buses connecting Kigali to Bujumbura, as well as for household lighting and cooking stoves. Users often praise the product for its perceived safety compared to traditional diesel.

However, the production of biodiesel raises a known concern: it requires land for cultivating crops for vegetable oil extraction, potentially displacing food production. Addressing this issue while preserving economic viability and food security is crucial. To tackle this challenge, the Rwandan government strategically partnered with Eni, leading to a memorandum of understanding signed in 2022. Eni supports Rwanda through various initiatives, including agro-energy projects.

One such project involves cultivating castor oil seeds for distribution to other African countries. Recognizing Rwanda's limited space for bioenergy production and the need to avoid encroaching on food chains, the government's approach focuses on multiplying seeds in Rwanda and transferring them to neighboring countries like Kenya, Mozambique, Angola, or Congo-Brazzaville. This method aims to boost production on African soil, foster skill development, and provide more raw materials for the biofuel supply chain.

The Rwandan government believes that this approach offers a sustainable solution to the challenges posed by climate change, aligning with the broader global effort to address environmental concerns.



A UNIFIED SYSTEM: LOOKING TO THE EU

In the discourse surrounding a just energy transition, the intricate interplay between political and economic factors cannot be overlooked. A critical question arises: why do many countries, particularly those in Africa, exhibit a reluctance to earnestly engage in the energy transition dialogue? A primary consideration is the substantial investments tied to traditional energy sources, exemplified by a Nigerian billionaire who has invested USD 16 billion in an oil refinery that is yet to commence operations.

Encouraging such stakeholders to shift focus to renewable energy requires thoughtful solutions to recoup their significant investments.

Another crucial aspect is ownership, entwined with sovereignty, as numerous African nations possess underground resources, including fossil fuels and crude oil. The exploitation of these resources has long been a source of economic sustenance. Transitioning away from these resources presents a challenging problem. Additionally, economic reliance on exports, exemplified by Nigeria's prominence as the largest crude oil exporter, further complicates the shift, particularly as the value derived from foreign exchange is currently declining.

To catalyze a genuine movement towards energy transition, it is imperative to broaden the political-economic dialogue. Recent initiatives, such as the African Continental Free Trade Treaty (AfCFTA), offer a promising avenue. Modeled after the European Union's single market, AfCFTA establishes a unified legal and economic system across the continent.

AfCFTA addresses pertinent challenges associated with transitioning to reliable energy. Notably, it eliminates tariffs in trade between African countries, encouraging investors to view the African market holistically rather than focusing on individual nations. The treaty's protocols on investment create a harmonized investment regime, fostering economic cooperation within the AfCFTA framework. The promotion of free movement of people within the continent facilitates cross-border collaboration, akin to the European Union, allowing for the seamless exchange of technical expertise and resources.

While individual countries can address economic challenges independently, the integration of AfCFTA becomes particularly advantageous when contemplating investments in renewable energy and a just energy transition. Key considerations include the establishment of fair competition through uniform rules and practices, ensuring a guaranteed return on investment by expanding market access, and developing a unified and effective financing structure.

In summary, Africa's energy transition necessitates a nuanced approach that considers the complex interplay between political and economic factors. The AfCFTA

emerges as a crucial tool, providing a legal and economic framework that addresses challenges and promotes a cohesive and sustainable energy transition across the continent.



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THE IMPORTANCE OF A CIRCULAR ECONOMY APPROACH

In charting the course for Africa's development, a paradigm shift toward the circular economy approach emerges as a compelling strategy. This approach advocates for the responsible use and recycling of rare resources like lithium, cobalt, cadmium, and lead, essential components in modern technologies. Beyond resource conservation, the imperative for adopting circular practices is accentuated by the environmental hazards posed by these heavy metals, underscoring the need for sustainable and eco-friendly alternatives.

A central tenet of the circular economy is transforming waste into valuable resources. Africa grapples with environmental challenges arising from industrial waste and invasive species like the water hyacinth, notably affecting water ecosystems in countries such as Ethiopia and Egypt. Addressing this predicament requires innovative technologies and strategic interventions to convert waste into valuable commodities, mitigating environmental degradation and fostering resource efficiency.

Furthermore, the abundance of solar, wind, and hydropower resources in Africa positions the continent as a prime candidate for clean energy production. While hydropower remains a contentious issue, the focus on solar energy proves to be a promising avenue. Leveraging advancements in solar energy conversion, both inorganic and organic photovoltaic cells present opportunities to harness inexhaustible solar power. Notably, the development of solar panels offers the potential to convert

solar energy into usable fuels through processes like electrolysis.

Solar fuel production, through electrolyzing abundant water resources, stands out as a viable solution. With three-quarters of the planet composed of water, the electrification and hydrogen production process does not necessitate pure water. Additionally, innovative electrochemical methods enable the utilization of atmospheric carbon dioxide to produce carbon-rich fuels such as methane and methanol. This circular approach ensures that the energy generated is used to create fuels, that, in turn, can be recycled for diverse applications, replacing conventional methods and fostering sustainability.

In making this transition, the appeal is extended to developed countries to pivot towards technology-intensive approaches, reducing reliance on resource-intensive technologies. This shift not only aligns with global sustainability goals but also facilitates equitable development, ensuring that technological advancements contribute to a circular and resource-efficient economy.

Which is why the circular economy approach holds the key to Africa's sustainable development by responsibly managing resources, transforming waste into assets, and harnessing abundant renewable energy sources. The call to developed nations to embrace technology-intensive practices underscores the collective responsibility to navigate towards a more sustainable and equitable global future.

SHIMELIS ADMASSIE MOLLA, PROFESSOR AT ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN ETHIOPIA

THE NEED FOR GREATER INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

In my perspective, the call for Africa to embrace green initiatives goes beyond mere environmental considerations; it demands a holistic transition of production and energy systems toward sustainable processes. As we navigate this transformative era marked by new technologies, I find it essential to explore the combined industrial development of specific capabilities, with a particular focus on photovoltaics (PV) – a technology widely recognized for its green transition potential.

In delving into the opportunities presented by PV, considering both resource endowment and production capabilities, a striking conclusion emerges. Despite the ample solar irradiation available across the continent, limitations arise due to restricted mineral resources and limited investment in certain production processes. The scope for self-sufficient solar PV production appears constrained. This realization prompts a strategic shift: utilizing solar PV produced elsewhere to address the pressing issue of energy poverty in Africa and, subsequently, propel broader industrialization efforts.

However, such an approach underscores the need for thoughtful policy recommendations, especially within the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). I advocate for a key policy shift – the regionalization of objectives. By fostering collaboration among African nations, we can harness the collective strengths of each country, pool resources, and collectively strive towards sustainable industrial

development. This not only aligns with the overarching goals of AfCFTA but also enhances the feasibility of achieving common objectives.

The regionalization of green transition objectives offers a pragmatic solution, allowing countries to overcome individual limitations. This collaborative strategy not only addresses energy poverty through shared access to solar PV-generated electricity but also lays the foundation for diverse forms of industrialization beyond PV, recognizing the inherent constraints in pursuing certain opportunities in isolation.

In my view, Africa's journey toward a green transition requires a nuanced strategy that acknowledges the inherent limitations in resource endowment and production capabilities. By championing regional collaboration, African countries can collectively overcome challenges, tap into shared resources, and forge a path towards sustainable industrial development. This approach not only aligns with the ideals of AfCFTA but also sets the stage for a greener and more prosperous future for the entire continent.

ELVIS K. AVENYO, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

INCLUSION IS THE KEY

THE GLOBAL NORTH HAS INADVERTENTLY NARROWED ENERGY TRANSITION AND SUSTAINABILITY DISCOURSE TO CLIMATE ISSUES, BUT IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO BROADEN THE CONVERSATION ALONG THE LINES OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY, GOVERNANCE, AGE AND GENDER

by **Kenneth Amaeshi**

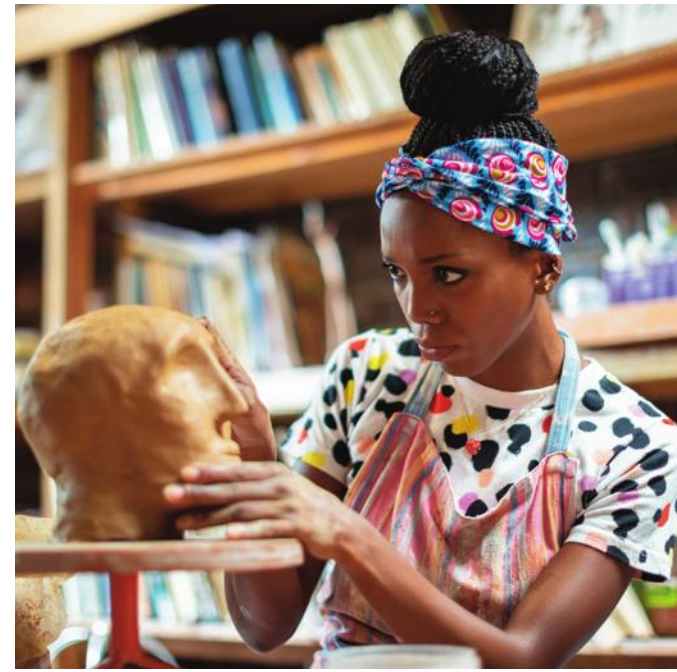
AS WE DISCUSS AFRICA'S ENERGY FUTURE, my hands-on experience and research highlight several pivotal considerations. In my dealings with large corporations—banks, in particular, from a West African, especially Nigerian perspective—I've observed that the energy transition debate isn't as captivating to them as one might expect. Their involvement in climate discussions often isn't driven by a zeal to save the planet. Rather, it's the allure of climate or green finance, dangled by the global north, that captures their attention. This funding is attractive, sure, but once it's in the hands of financial institutions, it's often redirected. When it comes to reporting



on climate impact, these banks can demonstrate compliance with remarkable adeptness. And here, I admit to a certain cynicism, especially regarding the banks.

Furthermore, the strategy of using doomsday scenarios to spur African action on climate change is ineffective. There's a local adage: 'He who is down fears no fall.' This encapsulates the current sentiment of many Africans. Threats of global collapse don't resonate with someone who feels they have little to lose. Instead, to genuinely engage Africans, we must address the continent's most pressing issues.

Take unemployment, a factor often overlooked in the climate discourse. With around 60% of African youth jobless, linking climate action to job creation, poverty reduction, and other local concerns is essential. Without this linkage, efforts are mere window dressing. People will find ways to tap into funds without truly tackling the energy transition and climate challenges that are of importance to external stakeholders. Lastly, the conversation needs expansion. The Global North has unintentionally framed the sustainability dialogue predominantly around climate. But sustainability encompasses more—social factors, governance, and more. And it's critical to widen the dialogue to include diverse perspectives, accounting for age and gender, to make the discourse far more inclusive and representative than it stands now.



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YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE

I've been reflecting on the necessity of integrating young voices into the sustainability dialogue, and I was struck by research from the Enel Foundation, which surveyed around 42,000 young people globally. Their findings are encapsulated in the Global Youth Energy Outlook, readily accessible online. I'd like to touch upon some key insights from this report, particularly through the lens of African youth.

Firstly, are the youths engaged with climate issues? Absolutely. The report shows that roughly 85 percent of young Africans are either moderately or deeply concerned about climate change. When queried about their countries' investment in combating climate change, a stark 69 percent believe there's a shortfall in investment, and another 14 percent feel there's been no investment whatsoever. As for their input being valued by those in power, only 35 percent feel that businesses heed their perspectives.

The report also explores whether there are substantial opportunities for youth to collaborate directly with policymakers on sustainable energy matters. About 40 percent affirm this is the case, with a slightly higher 46 percent for engagements with businesses. However, when it comes to accountability for reducing greenhouse emissions, young Africans look to their governments first, then industries. This is where I sense a troubling paradox. The same governments identified as the largest obstacles to sustainable energy transitions are also viewed as the bearers of solutions.

In my role advising a subnational government in Nigeria, I witness firsthand the challenges of integrating sustainability. Despite my efforts to foreground these concerns, they often fall on deaf ears. Nigeria's oil wealth presents a paradox central to the energy transition debate: the prevailing attitude is to exploit oil reserves now and face the consequences later.

Yet, there is hope in the actions of the youth. I know of a young African woman ambitiously aiming to produce indigenous solar solutions. Her journey is tough, with her products struggling to compete with cheaper imports from China and Europe. Another young African has taken a different route, using imported materials to meet local needs. These contrasting approaches show the range of strategies young Africans are adopting to address our energy challenges.

Despite the slow pace of the energy transition on the continent, we must not despair. With the right narratives, resources, and support, I'm confident that the energy transition in Africa can gain momentum and succeed.

We

KENNETH AMAESHI

Kenneth Amaeshi is a leading scholar on sustainable business and finance in the global south. He is the Chair in Business and Sustainable Development and Director Scaling Business in Africa at the University of Edinburgh. He is also a Visiting Professor of Leadership and Financial Markets in Africa at the London School of Economics. In addition, he is an Honorary Professor of Business in Africa at the Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town, South Africa, and Visiting Professor of Strategy and Governance at the Lagos Business School, Pan Atlantic University, Nigeria.



If Africans are to be motivated to address the challenge of climate change, we cannot ignore the fact that, in Africa, climate change is linked to other key issues such as social sustainability, employment, gender and age issues. Photo: sculptor at work in her studio.



Africa is home to some of the world's most populous cities. From Cairo and Lagos to Johannesburg and Kinshasa, the continent is experiencing a population boom in its urban centers. Photo: the twin towers of Sandton City. Located north of downtown Johannesburg, Sandton is a major commercial and financial hub and is home to the headquarters of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, South Africa.



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The European University Institute (EUI) in Florence is carrying out a leadership program for African professionals. The EUI itself is a crown jewel of the European Commission and their program is the only EU-funded leadership program for African leaders. This topic is particularly dear to us, as it pertains to the continent experiencing the most rapid demographic growth. Therefore, the perspectives of both young people and future generations are even more relevant.

FABRIZIO TASSINARI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SCHOOL OF TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNANCE, EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE



THE PERSPECTIVE OF YOUTH

SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND MENTORING

One of the significant challenges that we, as young Africans, face in our research on climate change and energy transition is the recognition and application of our work in political and industrial spheres. My personal experience as a PhD student in Dublin, where the university has committed €100,000 to my research, underscores the necessity for sustainable finance in Africa—not only for tangible projects but also for research and development. Such investment should ensure that research outputs are not just theoretical but can lead to practical applications, like developing prototypes, which in turn can foster innovation within Africa. Mentoring, a concept I came to appreciate fully only upon arrival in Europe, should be viewed as a lifelong endeavor rather than a short-term in-

tervention. True mentoring isn't about directive advice but about fostering independent thought and resilience in the face of potential challenges. It's about creating an environment where young people can excel. For Nigeria, and indeed for Africa, to secure a promising future, it's vital for our leaders to engage with the youth, to show them that their skills are valued, and to provide the space and opportunities necessary for growth. This includes committing to real, sustained mentoring that can help young Africans envision and work toward a future where they can contribute meaningfully to our continent's development.

STEPHEN AYODEJI, PHD CANDIDATE, DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY, IRELAND

OVERCOMING THE RESOURCE CURSE

The energy transition in Africa calls for a generational shift backed by decisive leadership. Key to this transition is the inclusion of youth in the dialogue and understanding the risks of their exclusion. Given that Africa has the youngest population globally, coupled with widespread energy poverty, we face the challenge of ensuring the young can reap the demographic dividend.

The demographic shift brings both risks and opportunities. Without recognition from political leaders and companies invested in Africa's growth, progress will stall. My research delves into overcoming the 'resource curse' to ensure Africa's natural wealth translates into tangible benefits, aiding efficient industrialization, fostering green economies, addressing the environmental Kuznets curve, and creating opportunities with a focus on effectiveness and transparency. I explore ESG criteria — examining environmental, social, and governance aspects — and the concept of fostering long-term shared value.

The business approach in Africa must be long-term. We need to consider how African enterprises, small and large, can navigate the challenges of a decarbonizing the economy without facing undue obstacles. We also need to ensure that young people gain from skills development related to renewable infrastructure.

It's commendable to offer hands-on experience during a four-year engineering degree. However, we must not overlook the many young Africans outside the formal education system. How do we capacitate them to recognize and connect with the transition's benefits sustainably?

Perceptions of the transition vary widely, from skepticism to acknowledging climate change as an issue not of our making, questioning why Africa should bear the brunt of the solutions. This mindset may stem from the narratives shaped by our leaders and the lack of visible transition benefits in communities. We need to engage the private sector in community and youth development programs to show tangible benefits of the transition. Ensuring that Africa's industrial and development goals align with the objectives and perspectives of the energy transition is crucial.

While countries like South Africa have developed renewable energy plans considering business development, the situation is markedly different in places like Nigeria. There, rising fossil fuel costs have driven people back to coal. These are the realities that need a deeper look.

Awareness of climate change, particularly in rural and agricultural communities, is not in question. The challenge lies in aligning their understanding with the benefits of engaging in the transition. Without this alignment, we risk a growing population with escalating energy demands and continued limited access to energy.

VINCENT OBISIE-ORLU, RESEARCHER AT GOOD GOVERNANCE AFRICA



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PEOPLE FIRST



by Sister Alessandra Smerilli

TO GUARANTEE AN ENERGY TRANSITION THAT RESPECTS HUMAN DIGNITY WE MUST LISTEN TO EVERYONE INVOLVED, ESPECIALLY THOSE LAST IN LINE, AND ENTER INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM. THERE IS NO ROOM FOR THE GLOBALIZATION OF INDIFFERENCE

AFRICA'S ENERGY TRANSITION is at the center of the current economic and political agenda – and indeed this is a crucial topic for the Catholic Church as well.

But what can the Church contribute to the debate?

We certainly do not have the technical skills or the scientific expertise needed to point the way.

What we can do is listen to, understand and accompany those who are the ultimate subjects of this transition: the people on the ground.

While we all agree that a just transition is needed, and that processes must ensure that the environmental and the social purposes of the transition are equally fulfilled, the real challenges are over how to do it rather than what to do.

Despite its abundance of natural resources and biodiversity, Africa remains one of the poorest regions of the world. This paradox should influence how we plan to fulfill our common responsibilities towards the planet and towards this part of humanity that, too often, suffers the most extreme consequences of our current extractive system.

Today, 15 of the 20 most fragile states belong to the African continent. These countries are facing violence and crises of various kinds. They may seem distant and remote, or too big to do anything about, or even secondary to the problems we face every day.

They are not.

Almost every day, we meet African bishops, priests, nuns and lay people who explain how the enormous natural resources their countries are blessed with turn into a curse, becoming a source of conflict, exploitation and suffering.

It would be naïve, to say the least, to believe that an energy transition in Africa can happen without taking into account the needs and legitimate desires of the African people.

Too often we believe that African problems can be solved in an international meeting or a panel of experts. We, too, have made the same mistakes many times here in Rome, at the Vatican. But when we listen to the local bishops' conferences, the difference between our thoughts and their reality is often striking.

AN INTEGRAL CONVERSATION

Today, for the Church in the world and in Africa, a integral conversation involves not only environmental issues but the

whole person. Integral ecology is about three closely connected fundamental relationships: the relationship with God, with our neighbor and with the earth. The seed of hope is based on the awakening of our consciences by sharing care for our common home and our brothers and sisters in other countries.

The Church cannot remain indifferent to any challenge, hope, disappointment or danger, that affects in particular those who lives at the margins of society. As a consequence, we believe that when discussing the energy transition in Africa we should necessarily include three considerations:

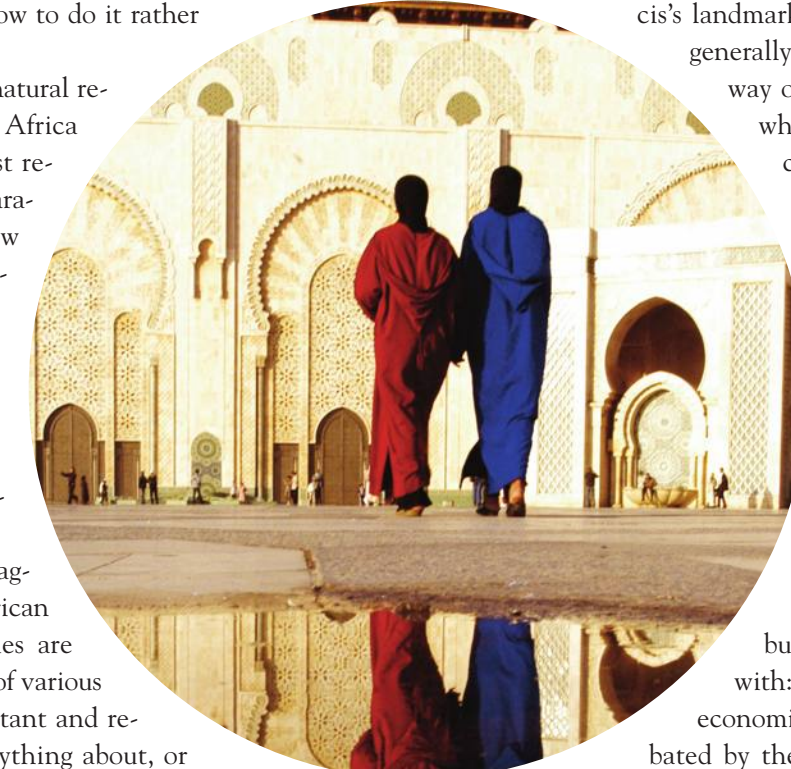
- Too often, decisions are made without consulting or involving local communities. As explained in Pope Francis's landmark encyclical *Laudato Si*, "[...] generally speaking, there is little in the way of clear awareness of problems which especially affect the excluded. Yet they are the majority of the planet's population, billions of people. [...] This is due partly to the fact that many professionals, opinion makers, communications media and centers of power, being located in affluent urban areas, are far removed from the poor, with little direct contact with their problems."

- We are not the main actors, but we can choose who to engage with: as John Paul II said, "Africa's economic problems have been exacerbated by the dishonest behavior of some corrupt rulers who, in complicity with local or foreign

private interests, squander national resources to their advantage, transferring public money to private accounts in foreign banks."

- The thirst for minerals to support the so-called green transition cannot be satisfied at the expense of those who live where these minerals are found: As Pope Francis reminds us in *L.S.* "we need to strengthen the awareness that we are one human family. There are no borders or political or social barriers that allow us to isolate ourselves, and therefore there is no room for the globalization of indifference" (LS52).

The weakness of the international political reaction to climate change is striking. We realize that economic interests are easily and almost always privileged over the common good. And we are assisting the manifestation of a 'curse' when areas rich in natural resources fall prey to conflict and threat and rural communities do not even benefit from extractive projects, as Pope



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Francis denounced during his latest trip to Africa. We must not become a part of the problem. Instead, we must support democracy and active participation in the management of public natural resources. This requires us to give priorities the voices coming from the ground up. For example, focusing on achieving universal energy access by 2030, scaling up investments accordingly, and supporting the establishment of a reliable grid infrastructure able to reach every person in the region. Another example would be focusing on increasing investment in clean energy projects. According to the IEA, given the urgent need for clean energy in Africa, there should be a goal

to more than double current investment levels in clean energy up to USD 90 billion by 2030.

LISTENING TO VOICES ON THE MARGINS

In conclusion, the entire magisterium of Pope Francis focuses on listening to the voices of the peripheries of our societies, the margins that must be taken at the center of our concerns. “We cannot be indifferent to suffering, and we cannot allow ourselves to be marginalized” (Fratelli Tutti, 68).

The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is at the service of the voices crying out from the margins of this

ambitious energy transition in today’s global agenda. It is indeed part of our mission to seriously address the obstacles to integral human development through a methodology of deep listening and the inclusion of unheard voices. This can be achieved by what we call ‘listening exercises’ involving bishops and churches all around the world.

The Dicastery, with its renewed service to the church of the world, will continue to listen to the challenges coming from the ground up, to make sure the agents of change in this important transition do not end up bearing the brunt of the changes.

We need to guarantee the respect of human dignity in this energy transition if we want to talk of a just transition, we need to listen to everyone involved in it and establish a solid partnership with them.

we

SUOR ALESSANDRA SMERILLI

A renowned economist, Sister Alessandra Smerilli is Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and a professor of political economy and statistics at the Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences Auxilium.



THE PRIORITIES

Priority refers to the state or quality of being deemed more important or more deserving of attention, resources or action than something else. A priority implies a choice, determining what needs to be addressed before everything else; each priority turns on a certain perspective, certain values, interests and responsibilities. We've long failed to recognize that energy transition must reconcile the different priorities, not only different between Africa and Europe but also within each of the two continents. The global energy transition, as multifaceted and layered as it is, is the perfect example of how the failure to consider and reconcile different priorities risks delaying the achievement of everyone's objectives. In this panel we will try to analyze what matters for specific African actors and what is actually being done about the different priorities, keeping in mind that despite the many differences among African countries, there are commonalities and emerging common positions on climate-related issues.

MADDALENA PROCOPIO, SENIOR POLICY FELLOW IN THE AFRICA PROGRAM, ECFR ITALY

MOBILIZING FINANCE: THE CHALLENGES FOR NIGERIA

Much remains to be done for the energy transition in Africa, starting with enhancing renewable energy infrastructure, which is mostly lacking. The new Nigerian government has said that it is not interested in renewable energy; it prefers to start the energy transition using gas, for which the infrastructure already exists. Another priority area is human capacity, including research on energy transition to promote collaboration with friends and colleagues from African universities (such as Ethiopia and its research centers) and beyond.

Then there are three important points related to the use of capital. Our priority is rural areas, where most people have no connection to the national grid. In Africa, generally 60 to 65 percent of the population lives outside urban centers, but young people want to move from the countryside to the city in part to have access to electricity, and this generates pressure on urban areas. Training our young people in the areas of energy transition is also a priority.

Africa faces general challenges: in Nigeria, for example, we have the problem of access to credit. Many investors consider it risky to finance electricity generation projects in Africa. The best way for Europe to help is through investment in renewable energy, the resources for which are abundant in Africa, and on the development of technologies and innovations, as well as micro-grid, mini-grid and off-grid solutions for rural areas. As for energy efficiency measures, in Africa energy resources are too often seen as government property, leading to waste: training and policy reforms are key. Not only that, but our governments also need support to promote the necessary reforms. Eni is certainly capable of interacting with government authorities, so we encourage all efforts in this regard. The development of cross-border energy projects—so that electricity generated in one region can be transported to other regions—is also crucial.

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PETER OLUSEYI, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA.



HOW CÔTE D'IVOIRE TACKLES THE ENERGY TRANSITION

Côte d'Ivoire, a Francophone West African country with a population of 29 million, enjoyed a robust economic growth of 6.7 percent in 2022. The nation's electricity generation is predominantly from thermal power plants running on fossil fuels—natural gas, diesel, and fuel oil—managed by four independent companies. Additionally, six operational hydropower plants were added by 2017. Annually, Côte d'Ivoire produces 11,000 gigawatt-hours (GWh), with thermal power plants contributing 77 percent and hydropower making up the remainder.

Regarding energy consumption, nearly all produced energy is used domestically, while six percent is exported to neighboring countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ghana. The electricity sector is responsible for 30 percent of the country's carbon emissions, with transportation being the largest contributor at 47 percent. However, emissions from the electricity sector saw a decline in 2017, thanks to the commissioning of new hydroelectric power stations.

The government has pledged to transition towards more sustainable energy and aims to lead the sub-Saharan African energy market by 2030. Its strategy encompasses aligning supply with demand, fostering renewable energy, revising institutional frameworks, and nurturing expertise. The energy transition's primary objectives include increasing energy access, enhancing sustainability, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, and boosting energy efficiency. By 2030, the nation aims to cut carbon emissions by 28 percent and to increase the share of renewables in the energy mix to 42 percent.

To achieve these targets, Côte d'Ivoire plans to augment hydropower's contribution and introduce solar photovoltaic (PV) and biomass into the energy portfolio. The country is well-endowed with resources: there is significant hydropower potential estimated at 2,500 megawatts (MW) for large hydro and 78 MW for small hydro, along with considerable solar resources, particularly in the north. Biomass resources are also abundant, with an annual yield of 16.7 million tons from agricultural products like coconut, cotton, rubber, and cashew nuts, potentially generating 1,645 MWe at 25 percent efficiency.

Several projects for new power plants are in the pipeline, with three expected to be operational by 2045: a 45-MW plant capable of powering 1,000 households, a 37.5-MW photovoltaic plant for 30,000 households, which will save 27 tons of CO₂ annually, and a 46-MW biomass plant designed to meet the needs of a city of 1.7 million people, with a reduction of 180,000 tons of CO₂ each year.

Advancing renewable energy in Côte d'Ivoire hinges on establishing supportive policies, enticing investment, and critically, cultivating a skilled workforce and fostering research and development within the sector. Numerous initiatives are in motion to bolster training and research, particularly in renewable energy and energy efficiency. These include developing professional communication tools and enhancing training programs, some in partnership with organizations like GIZ Germany.

Additionally, there is an energy development and efficiency program underway in collaboration with the government, alongside a certification program for solar photovoltaic energy efficiency. The academic sector is also contributing, with universities covering a wide range of topics related to renewable energy. Areas of focus include energy efficiency, biomass, and biofuels, with a strong emphasis on research aimed at improving the production of sustainable biofuels and deriving energy from biomass.

MOHAMMED KOITA SAKO, DIRECTOR OF THE ECOLE DE FORMATION CONTINUE ET DE PERFECTIONNEMENT DES CADRES, INSTITUT NATIONAL POLYTECHNIQUE FÉLIX HOUPHOUËT-BOIGNY, IVORY COAST

KENYA AND INNOVATION FOR ENERGY ACCESS

In 2010, only a quarter of Kenya's population had access to electricity. By 2019, this figure had increased to 70 percent, and it edged up to 71 percent in 2020. It's crucial to recognize that 29 percent of Kenyans remain without electricity, relying on non-clean fuels like coal and timber. There's still considerable work to be done.

Kenya is rich in potential for clean energy technologies, including wind, solar, geothermal, and hydropower. The country has committed to transitioning to these clean energy sources and aims to reduce emissions by 32 percent by 2032. This commitment is underpinned by supportive policies and incentives that encourage investment in renewable energy. Key policy achievements include the 2019 National Energy Policy, the 2018 National Electrification Strategy, the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy, and the sector's White Paper.

Significantly, the President of Kenya, at the African Climate Summit, pledged to attain 100 percent clean energy by 2040. This target aligns with the support for green industrialization. Two particular policies driving technological innovation are the 2021 Feed-in-Tariffs Policy and the Renewable Energy Auction Policy, which enhance private sector engagement. The recent Climate Change Amendment Act of 2023 is another critical development, fostering investment in carbon markets.

We now come to a key sector. We all know that the informal sector, or small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is essential to the transition to clean energy technologies, not only in Kenya but also throughout Africa. Through the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Kenya has developed what we can consider a pro-SME policy instrument that encourages small and medium-sized enterprises to consider renewable energy as a pathway to transitioning to green technologies. But that's not all: the government has noted the need to improve stakeholder attitudes toward the transition and has developed what we call a communication strategy for behavior change and green thinking. Today it is planning a national green thinking strategy that will promote the transition to clean energy technologies for stoves for heating and cooking. Kenya is also working on an investment plan in Kenya's energy transition, with support from the Sustainable Energy for All organization.

Another important point in this debate is the role of women in the energy transition. Investment for women has to come from communities, it has to come from Africans, not from the international community. We should not only think about who will benefit from the just energy transition without contributing towards it, but also focus on those who are directly involved in the business value chain, upstream and downstream, according to the principle of gender inclusiveness. So I would like to talk about what E-Safiri Charging Limited is doing for a just energy transition and the opportunities we are exploring. E-Safiri is a sustainable mobility company in the field of charging infrastructure for rural mobility. It harnesses solar and wind power to recharge motorcycles and cargo tricycles that are used to transport farm produce from farm to market, fish from beaches to markets and hotels; women also use them to take children to school and to transport wood and vegetables. This is what we do: we work with rural communities, empowering them by providing alternatives to internal combustion engine motorcycles. It is about sustainable mobility based on renewable energy.

Working with rural communities, we realized that we need to inform people on the benefits of gender inclusion, the benefits of renewable energy, and the advantages of transitioning from gasoline to electric motorcycles. This is a task that a small company can hardly accomplish on its own, so we enlist the help of the United Kingdom through the Energy Catalyst Fund; supporting such initiatives can also be an oppor-



tunity for Italian companies. We also receive help from the World Resources Institute. These are just the opportunities provided by the small space in which we work and we already support 1,200 women in the sector. This is how women can be empowered, enabling them to get out of the house and do something that is probably beyond their imagination. Therefore, sensitization and awareness are crucial and must be developed through financial levers that do not put small business owners at risk, given that their core business is still within the just energy transition.

E-Safiri's ownership is 67 percent women and its workforce is made up of 50 percent women. How did we achieve this? We worked with communities to develop locally the human resources we need. And it is essential that decision-making positions in the company be held by women. Thus, women's empowerment is not just about acquiring a title, which in itself has no impact, but rather and more importantly about empowering women to put their experience to use and make their own mark on the operation of the company. The workforce plays a key role in the value chain and in bridging the gender gap.

ANNE KINGIRI, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & INNOVATION AT THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR TECHNOLOGY STUDIES, KENYA



AN INCLUSIVE TRANSITION

African women collectively spend 40 billion hours annually on activities such as taking children to health centers, engaging in economic activities, and managing their homes and families. They, along with children, bear the brunt of energy poverty, feeling its impacts most acutely. The just transition offers a chance to address past inequities in energy access for women, recognizing that empowering women in areas like energy access, just transition, and emerging sectors such as e-mobility leads to broader community empowerment. Since women are often the primary caregivers within communities, their economic empowerment and integration into the just transition's value chain can uplift entire communities.

The United Nations report on Gender Equality in the Sustainable Energy Transition discusses many critical points, but the standout for me is gender-responsive budgeting. This approach integrates gender considerations into policies and budgets, al-

lowing for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of gender impacts and embedding gender equality and social inclusion objectives into governmental policies. Additionally, SMEs must also adopt frameworks for gender equality and social inclusion, and their community interactions and impacts are monitored as part of Project Impact.

An essential aspect of gender inclusivity is ensuring equal opportunities for women entrepreneurs. For instance, Kenya's Public Procurement Act mandates that women should receive 30 percent of procurement opportunities. While the policy's implementation may be imperfect, it presents a growth opportunity for women. As an entrepreneur, I've embedded gender equality and social inclusion policies within my company. Working with 1,200 women in rural areas, I've witnessed how providing appropriate tools and skills can transform communities.

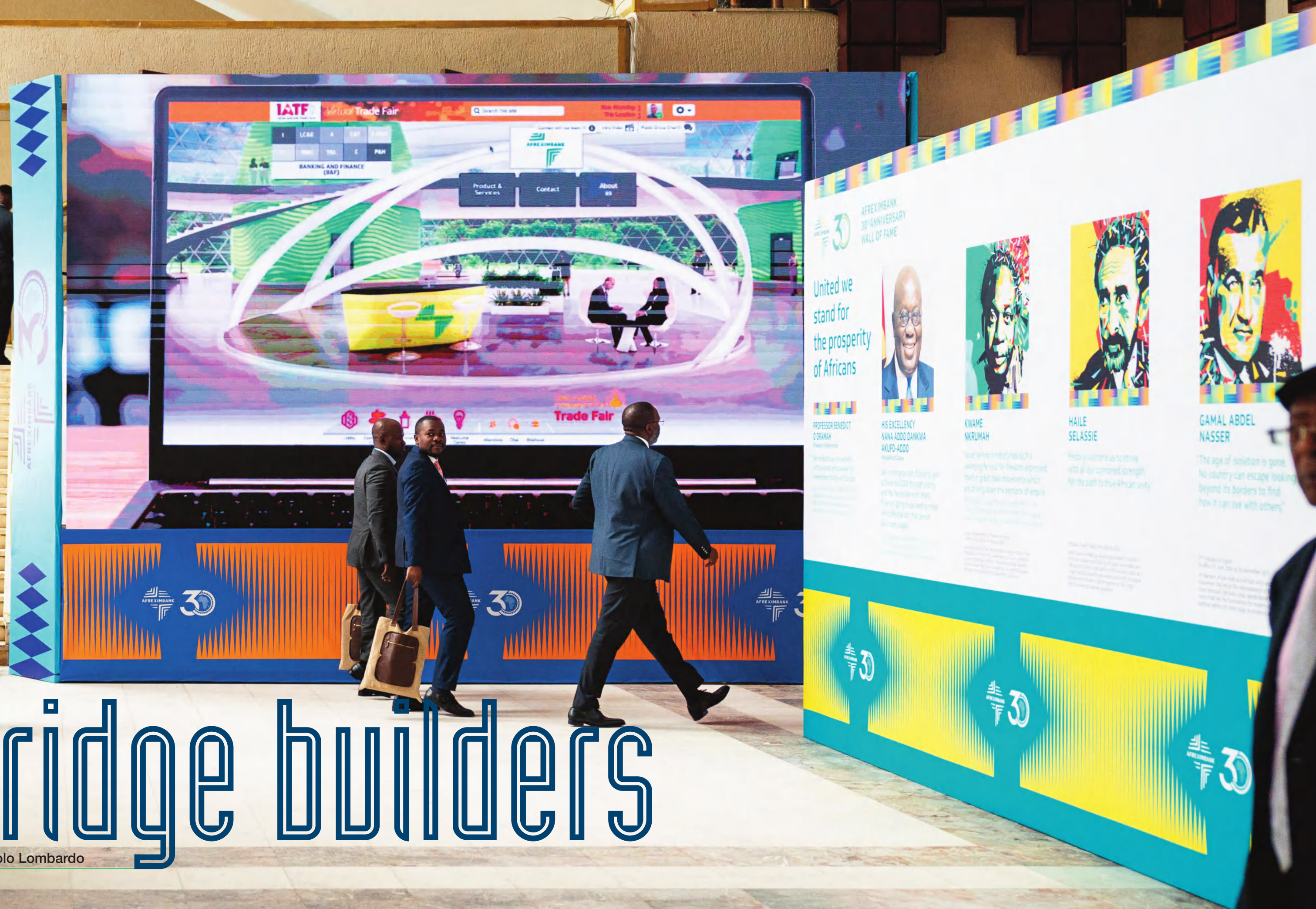
Kenya's renewable energy initiatives, often propelled by development aid and foreign direct investment, sometimes lead to tensions, challenges, and social conflicts. The focus on large-scale projects can overshadow the needs of the poor, especially women and rural communities, leading to their exclusion. Furthermore, there's palpable tension between the government and the private sector regarding the promotion of pro-poor, job-creating technologies.

The Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa, initiated by the African Development Bank in Denmark, is an ambitious project. Yet, it faces the dual challenge of bridging the green energy financing gap and overcoming the deterrent of low returns on green investments, which can discourage private sector involvement.

CAROL OFAFA, CEO E FONDATRICE DI E-SAFIRI, AZIENDA DI MOBILITÀ ELETTRICA OPERANTE IN KENYA

Bridge builders

by Paolo Lombardo



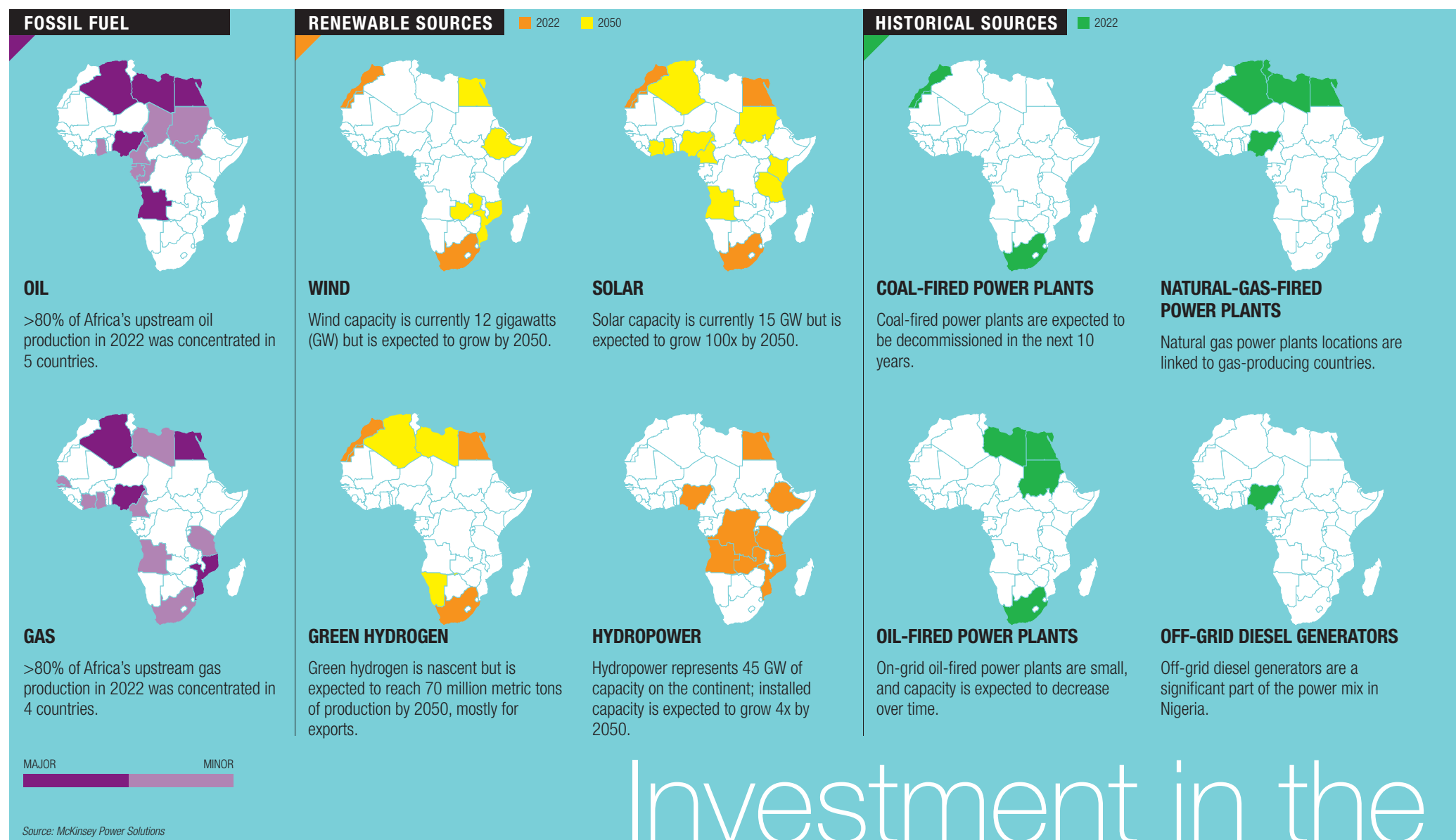
DEVELOPMENT FINANCE INSTITUTIONS PLAY A KEY ROLE IN AFRICA'S ENERGY TRANSITION: IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING FINANCING, THEY CREATE A LINK BETWEEN DONORS AND PARTNER COUNTRIES AND BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS. THE EXAMPLE OF CASSA DEPOSITI E PRESTITI

AFRICA'S ENERGY TRANSITION represents a major challenge that requires swift action, access to financial resources and innovative solutions. The African continent hosts almost 20 percent of the world's population but is responsible only for less than 4 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. In Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 50 percent of the people lack access to electricity, and only 15 percent have access to clean cooking fuels and technologies. Furthermore, Africa's population will increase almost two-fold by 2050, from 1.4 billion to 2.5 billion people: coupled with a GDP growth of 4 percent per year, this means a steep growth in African energy demand over the next 25 years. In most African countries, energy transition therefore is not about large-scale decarbonization of productive systems, like those we are seeing in some parts of Asia or Latin America. Energy transition in Africa often means designing energy production and consumption systems that are clean, efficient, and resilient, in other words "future-proof", while accounting for the peculiarity of each country. Energy transition should also be inclusive, providing affordable and clean energy also to people in remote locations, and just, supporting the re-skilling of the workforce from carbon-intensive to "green" industries. To meet those ambitious objectives, significant investments are required. The public sector cannot bear them alone: the capital needed to finance Africa's energy transition has been estimated at almost 3 trillion US dollars up to 2050. This highlights the urgent need to act quickly and to involve the private sector in Africa's energy transition, along with its financial, technological, and human resources.

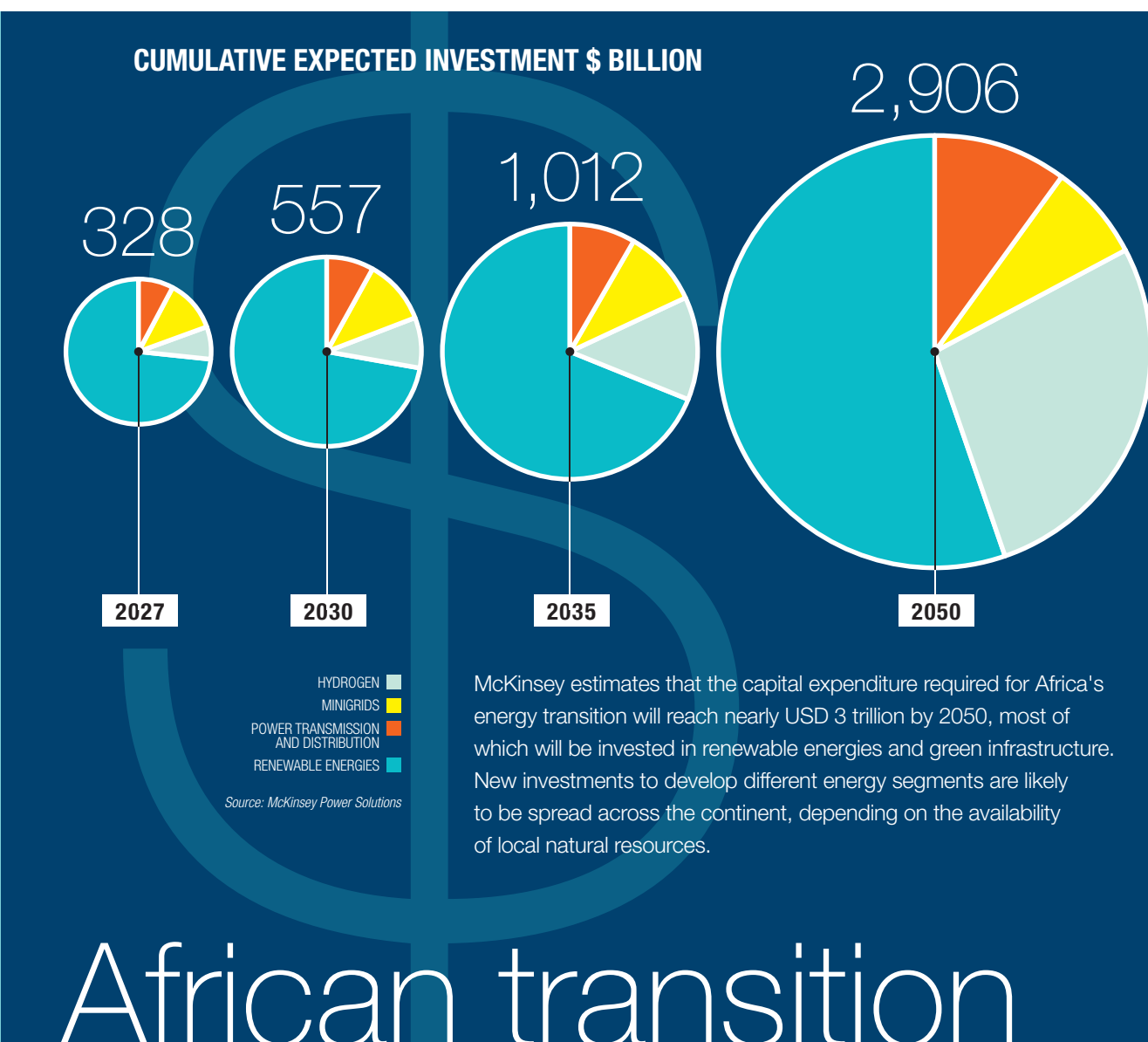
THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT FINANCE INSTITUTIONS

In the context, characterized by a need for urgent action and very sizeable investment and financing needs, international Development Finance Institutions – or DFIs – like Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP) play a fundamental role. International DFIs act

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Investment in the African transition



not only as providers of finance but also as bridge builders between donors and partner countries, and between the public and private sectors. International DFIs also act as enablers of high-impact projects, making them possible by improving their bankability.

For over a decade CDP, in addition to its role as Italy's National Promotional Institution, has taken over the role of Italy's International Development Finance Institution, to support the sustainable, economic, and social development in emerging markets and developing countries across the globe, in line with the priorities of the Italian Government and in coordination with the Italian System for International Development Cooperation.

In this context, Africa represents a high-priority region for CDP, in line with Italy's foreign policy priorities. Today, Africa represents more than half of CDP's international development finance portfolio, with investments there worth more than 600 million euro over the past few years. Going forward, CDP will

commit to contributing even more to "future-proofing" sustainable growth of the African continent by deploying our financial and non-financial instruments on innovative and high-impact projects.

CDP'S COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE ACTION

Energy transition is a basic building block of climate action, also a high priority area for CDP. Half of CDP's international development finance portfolio is green energy, green infrastructure and green finance projects.

Additionally, to enhance Africa's energy transition, CDP together with other DFIs and multilateral development banks, provides patient capital through long term loans or equity investments. In the framework of energy transition, for example, CDP provides loans to developers of solar parks or wind farms, or loans to state-owned companies to develop electricity networks. CDP also lends to financial intermediaries and invests in thematic funds, which in turn finance energy transition pro-

jects. To help solve this issue, DFIs like CDP manage technical assistance programs aimed at accompanying financial interventions with.

THE RISE PROGRAM

CDP will also support energy transition in Africa through a new and innovative blended finance program that combines de-risking and technical assistance called RISE standing for Renewable Infrastructure & Sustainable Energy. This program, financed by the European Commission and co-led by CDP and the European Investment Bank, is entirely dedicated to supporting private sector investments in renewable energy projects in Africa. RISE is a one-stop-shop that supports the private sector in designing, financing and implementing renewable energy initiatives in Africa, working on the two fronts of de-risking and technical assistance.

On the de-risking front, the European Commission provides a credit enhancement envelope to support renewable energy projects in Africa. This will be done through various instruments: liquidity support, to protect the private investor for a certain period in case the off-taker does not pay; political risk guarantees; and quasi-equity instruments. On the technical assistance front, the Commission will provide an envelope to support the development of a pipeline of bankable projects.

CDP is strongly committed to Africa and to global climate action, making the African Energy Transition is a key issue. Its strong commitment to sound financial innovation, capacity building, knowledge-sharing and technology transfer will help kickstarting a virtuous cycle in the African energy transition leading to improved energy security, higher energy affordability, and quality job creation while continuing building on other essential African priorities which span from food security and social infrastructures.

We

PAOLO LOMBARDO

Head of International Cooperation and Development Finance at Cassa di Risparmio di Padova e Rovigo, Paolo Lombardo has held positions of responsibility in Eni, S.G. Warburg, Asian Development Bank and ABB Structured Finance. He joined the European Investment Bank in 2002 and in recent years has served at the EIB as Director of the Credit Risk Department, Head of Project and Financial Monitoring - Operations in emerging markets and, most recently, Head of EIB's Regional Representation for East Africa.



GOVERNMENTS & PRIVATE

THE ENERGY TRANSITION IN MOZAMBIQUE

Many believe that establishing an energy policy, underpinned by corresponding legislation, can catalyze an energy transition. This suggests that countries with such policies are more inclined to implement and invest in green energy systems, such as solar photovoltaics, facilitating a swifter shift to renewable energy. When we consider Mozambique, does this hypothesis hold true? What role does community energy regulation play in the energy transition?

Let's look at the numbers. World Bank data from 2020 shows that only 31 percent of Mozambique's population had access to electricity. By April of this year, the government announced that this figure had risen to 43 percent. Hydropower is the dominant source, accounting for 64 percent of electricity generation. The country also utilizes gas- and solar-powered thermoelectric generators, introduced under the 2013 independent power generation legislation. Independent Power Producers (IPPs) are key players, generating electricity that feeds into the national grid, which is state-owned. Mozambique boasts several solar plants, including the 40-megawatt facility in Mocuba, central Mozambique, and others in Cuamba and Metoro. The international energy company Eni started exporting gas in 2022, primarily to Europe, positioning Mozambique as an alternative supplier amidst the shortages due to the Russo-Ukrainian war.

The 2021 legislation aims to set standards for community and private electricity supply, allowing small private enterprises to deliver power in off-grid areas. It also promotes the setup of solar photovoltaic systems up to ten

megawatts to address energy poverty. However, this law is relatively new, enacted in December 2021, and is not fully implemented, with ancillary instruments still pending government approval.

Tax incentives, such as VAT reductions on solar panel imports and other tax exemptions, are designed to lower electricity costs for end consumers, particularly those with limited means. Without full implementation of these measures, many households will struggle to afford grid connection costs.

The main energy players in Mozambique include the government, responsible for 52 percent of the electricity, and the state utility company, contributing an additional 12 percent. While solar energy's potential is not yet fully harnessed, it, along with gas, is expected to be pivotal in Mozambique's energy future. The country exports gas to the EU and supplies domestic IPPs with gas from Sasol in the south. This energy mix not only addresses local energy poverty but also supports exports to South Africa.

With substantial hydro and gas resources, Mozambique could potentially power not only itself but also neighboring Southern African countries. International stakeholders, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Germany, play a significant role at the geopolitical level. In summary, Mozambique's energy landscape is shaped by a combination of independent private sector power producers, small operators, and major international entities, all influencing the nation's energy policy framework.

CARLOS SHENGA, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH
ON GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT, MOZAMBIQUE



CHALLENGES FACED IN THE TRANSITION

The acute issue of energy poverty in Africa, with an estimated 600 million people lacking access to electricity, poses substantial barriers to industrialization, job creation, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development. Compounded by demographic shifts, rapid population growth, and urbanization, the continent's demand for energy is surging, while the current energy supply remains critically constrained.

It's essential for Africa to adopt a pragmatic approach to the energy transition, taking specific contexts into account. For example, Kenya, with over 80 percent of its energy mix from renewable sources, may find the net zero target achievable. On the other hand, for Nigeria, where renewables constitute a minor fraction, and with vast natural gas reserves, striving for net zero without integrating renewables is unrealistic. Nigeria needs to balance its natural gas utilization with a progressive shift toward renewable energy sources to improve overall energy access.

African countries are at a political crossroads: should they invest solely in domains like natural gas, where they hold a comparative advantage, or diversify? Given Africa's vulnerability to climate change, there is a pressing need for increased renewable energy investments to augment energy access.

Significant strides have been made by international institutions and the private sector in enhancing renewable energy options, particularly solar energy. Organizations like the World Bank and the African Development Bank are providing technical aid and low-interest concessional financing to boost rapid solar investments. IRENA is aiding in crafting renewable energy roadmaps, and companies like Eni are pioneering in biofuels development across several African nations, including Kenya.

Yet, the scale of these investments is insufficient for extensive energy access across the continent. Africa still requires substantial financial resources, technical assistance, and has not fully embraced renewable technologies. To truly enable Africans to lead their energy transition, we must bolster capacity building, research, and knowledge sharing.

What Africa needs are solutions devised for its unique context, accelerated private sector investments, foreign direct investment in rural areas, and technology transfers. Such technology transfers are vital for Africa's effective adoption of renewable energy technologies. Targeted investments should focus on enhancing the adoption of renewable energy technologies, ensuring a transition tailored to Africa's diverse needs and circumstances.

CHUKWUKA ONYEKWENA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ECONOMIES OF AFRICA, NIGERIA



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IS THERE A RISK OF SELECTING AID RECIPIENTS BASED ON GEOPOLITICAL CRITERIA?

The European view of Africa is certainly distorted by political narratives and superficial media portrayals. Africans generally have a more nuanced understanding of European-African dynamics. Europeans too often fall into the trap of believing they know what's best for Africa, but in Africa everything moves at a speed that Europeans may find challenging to comprehend, where numerous experts work and are actively engaged across the 55 countries on the continent. The last two decades have seen Africa transform into the stage of strong economic competition, challenging long-held neo-colonial stereotypes and persistent condescending attitudes. Interestingly, this shift coincided with China's significant entry into Africa at the turn of the millennium, marking the start of Africa's robust and unstoppable growth.

Reflecting on the past seventy years, it's evident that First World solidarity and international cooperation often overlooked the critical need for infrastructure and technology transfer to foster Africa's industrialization. Companies like Eni are exceptions to this trend. Now, in a world where Western dominance is diminishing and multipolarity is rising, Africa has a spectrum of partners to choose from, fueling a sort of race for influence on the continent that involves various global players – Russian, European, Chinese, Indonesian – spanning political to technical collaborations.

The European Union's Global Gateway initiative, launched as a counter to China's growing presence in Africa, came almost a decade later, representing a reactive rather than proactive strategy. As Chinese and Western investments in Africa wane, a new cadre of middle-income countries is entering the fray. Concurrently, the African Union and regional economic communities face internal challenges due to political shifts, particularly in West Africa.

Now might be the ideal moment to initiate proactive development projects in countries where the current leadership lacks official recognition. Nations like Burkina Faso and Mali, despite recent coups, are actively seeking new partnerships. Engaging with them through various diplomatic channels, including city diplomacy or regional cooperation, could build bridges during political transitions. The alternative is a potential exclusion by European and Western partners, who might prefer working with ideologically similar nations, neglecting those with complex issues or unstable conditions.

Moreover, the distribution of official development aid from OECD countries underscores global inequalities, with financial instruments sometimes being wielded geopolitically rather than for solidarity. There's a looming concern that Africa could become a theater for a new type of Cold War, with proxy conflicts arising from geopolitical tensions. To avert this, we need to forge innovative partnerships and diplomatic connections beyond traditional bilateral and multilateral engagements.

MARCO MASSONI, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, LUISS UNIVERSITY

AFRICA NEEDS INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO CARRY OUT ITS ENERGY PLANS, HOWEVER THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE CONTINENT IS WILLING TO TOLERATE SELFISH OR HYPOCRITICAL BEHAVIOR FROM WESTERN COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY EUROPE

the CONTRADICTION of the West

by Massimo Zaurrini

WE CANNOT ASK AFRICA to stop its economic and social progress to solve global climate change challenges which it did not cause. Africa cannot develop without access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all its citizens". The words of Kevin Chika Urama, chief economist and vice president of African Development Bank (AfDB), at a recent speech in Korea, call on international actors to recognize the distinctiveness of African transition needs. Africans grasp the challenges posed by climate change better than most, and particularly the urgent need for a green transition in energy. Africa is among the areas that have experienced the consequences of significant unprecedented changes



earlier and more intensely than other parts of the world in the past decade.

Over the past decade, Africa has experienced the consequences of significant and unprecedented changes earlier and more intensely than other parts of the world. Climate change is detrimentally impacting Africa's economic growth, with estimates suggesting a substantial impact, ranging from a 5 to 15 percent reduction in annual per capita GDP growth. Additionally, climate change in Africa contributes to increased mortality rates, conflicts related to climate issues, displacement, and migration. The continent faces challenges such as droughts, floods, coastal erosion, encroaching deserts, and intensifying extreme weather events like cyclones.

In a continent where agriculture is still heavily dependent on weather conditions, these ongoing disruptions not only impact people's immediate well-being but also have long-term consequences for both GDP and food security. AfDB reports have identified climate change as the most urgent existential threat to Africa's development in reports over the last two years.

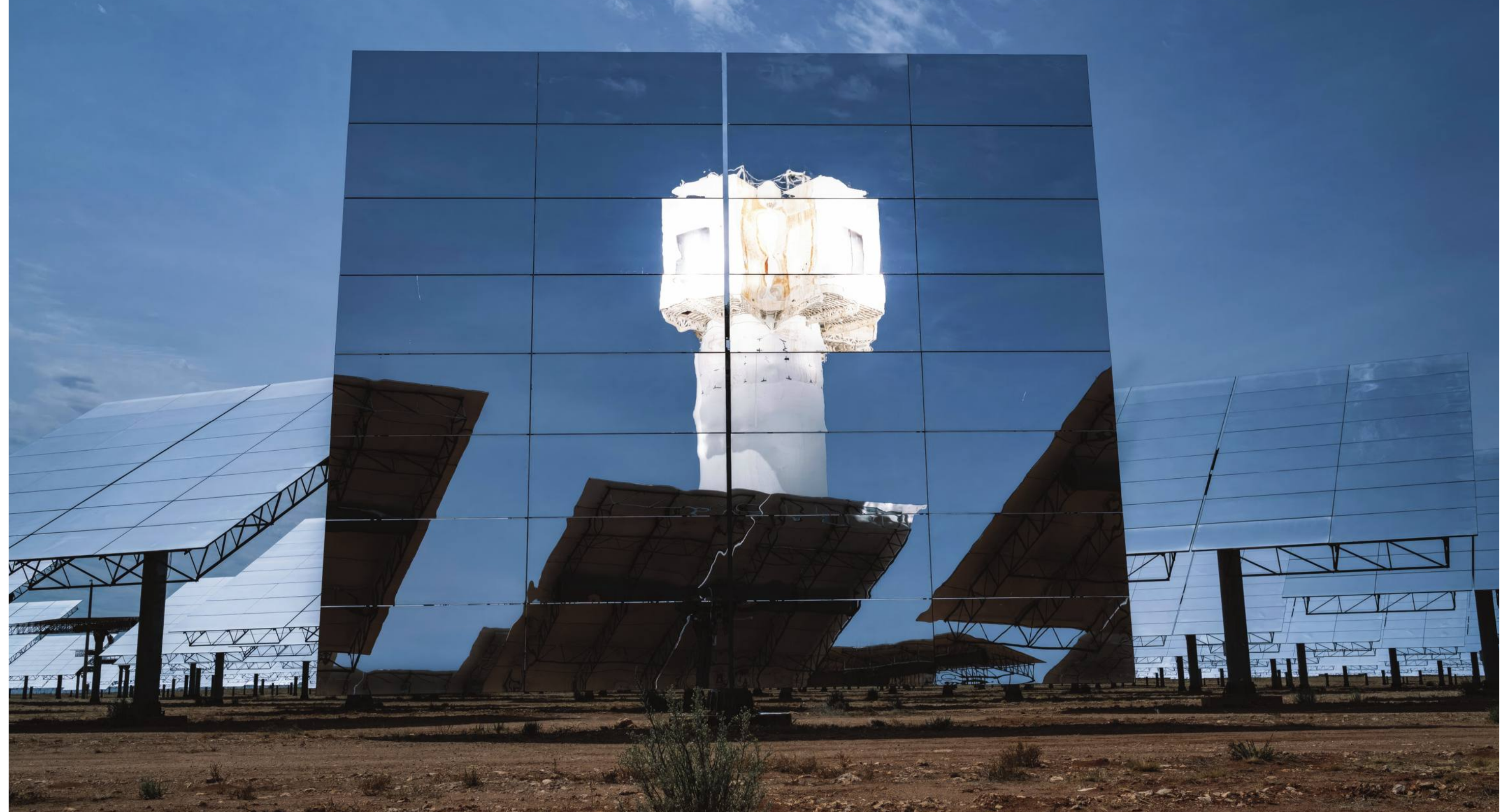
Finding policies that facilitate economic growth while adapting to climate change effects and reducing greenhouse gas emissions remains one of the most enduring policy challenges for Africa. The concept of the Just Energy Transition is crucial in the pursuit of economic growth with a low carbon footprint, referring to the process of identifying energy pathways that are technologically appropriate, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable in the long term.

Despite Africa's commitment to embracing clean energy sources, a pressing need exists to sustain its development trajectory. First, the continent boasts an average per capita carbon footprint of 0.95 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂eq), well below the 2.0 tCO₂eq required to achieve the net-zero emissions transition goal. Second, approximately 85 percent of the "global carbon budget" has already been consumed, primarily by developed countries.

In stark contrast to regions like North America, where the per capita carbon footprint reaches up to 14 tCO₂eq, Africa enjoys a significant "carbon advantage." This positions the continent to foster economic growth while adhering to its carbon budget.

Africa's 3 percent share of global emissions is a consequence of a continent where around 600 million people lack consistent access to electricity, and full industrial development remains unrealized.

Africa grapples with unprecedented challenges, including population growth and urbanization, necessitating an expedited industrial development. This imperative extends beyond economic growth; it is crucial to generate employment opportunities for the hundreds of millions of young Africans who will contribute to increasing the continent's overall population to at least 2.5 billion in the next 25 years.



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The KHI Solar One plant in Upington, South Africa. This solar thermal plant has a capacity of 50 MW, and contains around 4,000 mirrors that rotate according to the position of the sun to reflect and concentrate sunlight onto the tower. Here water is heated to evaporation and, through turbines, becomes energy.

GAS FOR THE TRANSITION

In many instances, Africa is not urged to undergo a green transition simply because it doesn't need to shift from one energy production system to another. The primary goal is to initiate energy production, given that renewables are already widespread across the continent. These renewable sources play a vital role in supplying energy to remote rural areas that would otherwise be challenging to reach due to Africa's vast size and the impractical costs of building distribution networks.

Island and off-the-grid systems enable small islands in Lake Victoria or villages on the shores of the Saharan Great Sand Sea to power schools, dispensaries, homes, and small businesses, in-

cluding refrigeration plants for fish. However, the critical issue is that Africa requires energy to fuel industries that must multiply to provide jobs for its young population. These industries need stable and powerful energy sources.

Chika Urama, of the African Development Bank (AfDB), emphasizes the importance of historical, distributive, moral, and economic justice in guiding a just energy transition. He stresses that Africa should not be asked to halt its economic and social progress to address global climate change challenges it did not cause. Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all citizens is vital for Africa's development.

For years, Africa has been considered the new gas frontier, with

continuous discoveries and serving as an alternative for Europe, especially amid the need to replace imports from Russia. However, concerns arose when the West, notably Europe, considered blocking funding for gas due to environmental concerns. African leaders highlighted that the continent's priority is not necessarily an energy transition but the production of energy itself.

Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU, the World Bank, and others' actions raised alarms among African leaders. Without international funding, they would be unable to proceed with gas-related energy development projects. African heads of state emphasized the urgency of focusing on energy produc-



Africa is the area of the world that has begun to pay a higher price for the epochal changes taking place and earlier than others in the last decade. Africa is already losing between 5 and 15 percent of its annual per capita growth in GDP due to climate change, which is causing—to cite only the most macroscopic events—droughts, floods, cyclones, coastal erosion and desert advancement. Photo: Lake Victoria, as seen from the shores of Kenya.

tion, as there was no coal- or oil-fired power plants to transition away from. It's worth noting that Africa, over the past few decades, reduced the proportion of coal in its energy mix by nearly 50 percent, outpacing the reductions achieved by China and India. The African Development Bank suggests that natural gas should serve as a transition fuel for Africa, allowing the continent to gradually reduce coal in its energy mix while investing in renewable energy value chains during the transition period for a just and effective energy transition.

THE DOUBLE STANDARDS OF THE WEST

The West long seemed indifferent to African concerns, primar-

ily focused on its own green initiatives. This perception led many Africans to view the West, especially Europe, as self-centered. However, the dynamics swiftly changed following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Green Europe hastily adjusted its stance on green initiatives, including green taxonomy and gas criticism. Some countries even hastily reactivated coal-fired power plants they had pledged to decommission. In Africa, the West altered its narrative, engaging in collaborative projects to secure gas, a resource it had seemingly disregarded just weeks earlier. This abrupt change, particularly in Europe, has fueled African perceptions of Western hypocrisy.

As a result, many Africans are now demanding compensation

for the West's emissions over the past decades. They insist on the need to exploit and finance the substantial gas potential that could drive the continent's economic growth in the coming decades. The current attitude of the West, especially Europe, on energy transition is seen by Africans as "selfish and hypocritical."

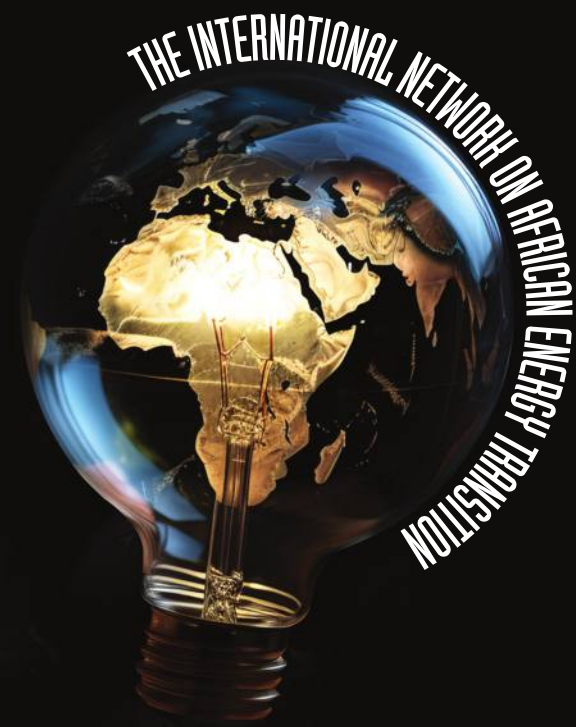
This sentiment highlights the urgency for the West to fully understand African reasons. Failure to do so risks the loss of influence in Africa to other international players like China, Russia, India, and Gulf countries, currently active and effective in the region, poised to play a primary role in the medium term. While Africa seeks international financial support for its energy production and transition plans, that does not imply Africans

will forget attitudes they perceive as selfish and hypocritical. The continent is unwilling to succumb to what it views as "blackmail." The stage is set with multiple players around the table, preparing for what lies ahead.

We

MASSIMO ZAURRINI

Since 2012, he has been editor-in-chief of two specialist news providers on Africa: the InfoAfrica news agency and the monthly *Africa e Affari*, dedicated to economic, political and social developments in Africa, with particular focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. Previously, Zaurrini worked as a professional journalist for the Missionary International Service News Agency (MISNA).



ROME • NOVEMBER, 16/17, 2023

A POLICY THAT HINDERS
AFRICANS' ACCESS TO
HYDROCARBONS IS ONE THAT ACHIEVES
MINUSCULE CLIMATE GAINS AT HUGE
DEVELOPMENT COSTS FOR THE WORLD'S
POOREST PEOPLE

Who will finance the energy development?

by Moisés Naím

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600,000 Africans who die each year due to indoor air pollution caused by cooking with charcoal to the difficulties sustaining the cold-storage capacities needed to keep vaccines viable.

THE WESTERN INSTITUTIONS' RELUCTANCE

Africa faces a golden chance at leap-frogging some of today's most polluting technologies: there is simply no place to open new coal developments in the continent. But while solar and wind options will be viable and attractive in many parts of Africa, we know from our own experience that a modern grid needs a thermal generation backbone to remain balanced and stable. Thankfully, Africa has plenty of oil and gas to supply it. Except, more and more, Western partners don't want to touch those kinds of investments, preferring a renewables-only approach that sounds good on paper, but creates serious problems in practice.

Rather than going all out to bring Africans the power they need, Western development finance institutions increasingly look askance at any project relying on fossil fuels, even when developing such projects is the simplest route to bringing badly needed power to Africa. It is natural that we all share concerns over projects that will add new sources of emissions. But such concerns have to be balanced off against Africa's pressing needs.

More than anything, we need to ask: is it reasonable to expect the poorest people in the world to pay the price for addressing a problem they did not create? And would the gains even be worth it?

As Benjamin Attia and Morgan Bazilian have pointed out, Africa's current emissions are so low that even if they hypothetically (and implausibly) tripled overnight, global emissions would only rise by 0.6 percent, a level comparable to the U.S. state of Louisiana.

It is an ongoing reality that liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons are uniquely energy-dense, transportable, and deployable. In developed countries, with access to sophisticated generation

and transmissions infrastructure, the relative ease of use of oil and gas products is not a top-line concern. But in infrastructure-poor Africa, the ease with which hydrocarbons can be moved and used are a major consideration.

A policy that hinders Africans' access to hydrocarbons is one that achieves minuscule climate gains at huge development costs for the world's poorest people. At its worst, vetoing all oil and gas projects in Africa looks like a kind of green neocolonialism — with former colonial powers still holding the final say over what Africans can and can't do.

Many African leaders hear Western leaders' pious lectures about climate change with deep suspicion. Plenty are beginning to suspect that the west, having climbed up to the top of the development wall, is now happy to "kick away the ladder" — making it impossible for less developed countries to follow them.

THE NEW FINANCIERS

At any rate, western failure to finance Africa's oil and gas projects will not put a stop to them. In today's world, African countries have choices when it comes to financing development projects. Turkey, Israel, Brazil, and India are all actively investing in developing oil and gas resources on the continent, bringing not just financing but engineering, environmental and legal know-how to complex Oil & Gas projects.

Their contribution, however, is relatively modest compared to the biggest new financier of African energy: China.

Upstream and downstream, offshore and on, Chinese companies are now among the biggest players in Africa, including ambitious infrastructure projects like the 1,980-kilometer pipeline CNPC is building from the Agadem oilfield in Niger to the port of Seme in Benin. The East African Crude Oil Pipeline linking Uganda's oil fields to Tanzania's shipping terminals is being built at a cost of \$1.8 billion even after most Western partners refused to back it: the money will come from China instead. The west's reluctance to participate in such projects doesn't stop them, it hands them over to partners who care little about safeguards for environmental protection, for transparency and for the rule of law.

In practice, the West is following a policy that merely cedes the field to Chinese capital. As China expands its influence throughout the continent, its willingness to fund the kinds of oil & gas projects western partners won't touch is just one more weapon in its diplomatic toolkit.

Ironically, the good will China generates in this way ends up helping it achieve a second strategic objective: cornering the market for supplies of the kinds of rare earth minerals needed to dominate renewable energy and battery-manufacturing supply chains.

We all share a desperate need to abet emissions at a global level. But as the COP28 summit made clear, that goal must be bal-

anced with the continued need for hydrocarbons for the next several decades. Excluding Africa from developing its own resources makes Western policy makers feel good at an exorbitant cost in African well-being.

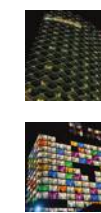
Africans did not cause the climate disaster now stalking the planet, and they are among the most vulnerable people to its effects. The cost of addressing this crisis must not be shifted onto the people least able to afford it. We need to be smarter than that. Banning Western capital from developing Africa's oil and gas is just neocolonialism masquerading as environmental virtue.

we

MOISÉS NAÏM

He is a Distinguished Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C. and a founding member of WE's editorial board. His most recent book is *The Revenge of Power: How Autocrats are Reinventing Politics for the 21st Century*.

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Western inability to finance Africa's oil and gas projects will not stop the countries on the continent: Turkey, Israel, Brazil and India are actively investing in the development of oil and gas resources in Africa, bringing not only financing but also engineering, environmental and legal know-how to complex projects in the sector. Photo: the Sheraton Annaba Hotel and the Hotel Seybouse International, in Annaba, Algeria.





CHALLENGES INTERCONNECTED

by Luca Cinciripini

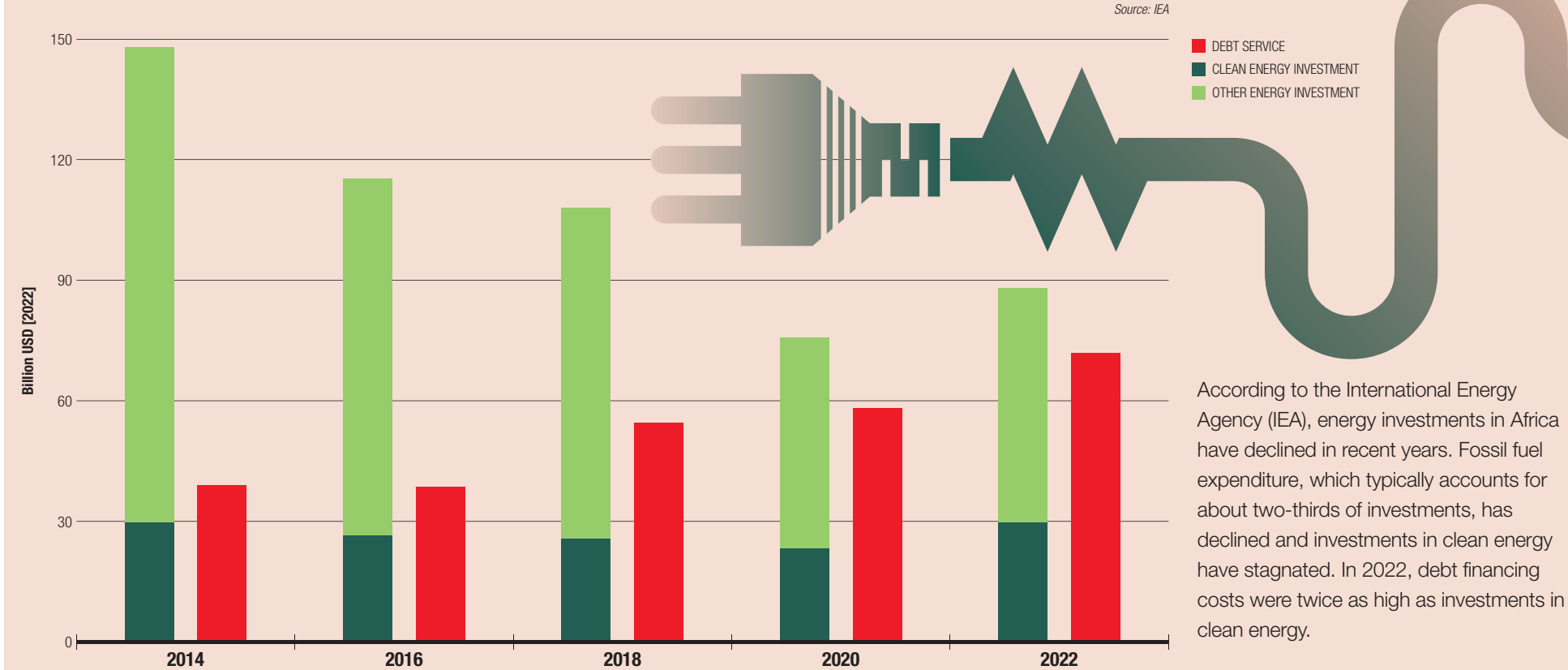
THE CLIMATE CRISIS IS A MULTIFACETED ISSUE THAT INTERSECTS WITH MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS, REQUIRING A NUANCED UNDERSTANDING OF ITS COMPLEXITY. IT CALLS FOR A BROADENING OF THE POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE AND DEMANDS INNOVATIVE RESPONSES ON A MULTILATERAL LEVEL

THE IMPACT of climate change on global security and stability is now at the center of international political debate. Broadening our understanding of security to include more than just military concerns, the multifaceted nature of the climate crisis becomes clear. It intersects with various aspects such as food security, energy access, migration patterns, and regional institutional governance. These challenges are interlinked and demand a nuanced appreciation of their complexity. Consequently, there is a need to expand political and institutional discourse and to devise innovative, multilateral responses. Sub-Saharan Africa exemplifies a region where the intricate interaction of these issues is particularly significant, necessitating effective coordination among local, national, regional, and international stakeholders. The economic strain on African countries, already struggling with the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic, has been exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This conflict has driven up the prices of food, energy, and other commodities. These multidimensional challenges have strained the energy systems in African countries, worsened their financial difficulties, and led to a marked increase in extreme poverty and food shortages across many Sub-Saharan nations. It is imperative for the international community to progressively adapt its policies to better recognize and tackle the complexities of these challenges.

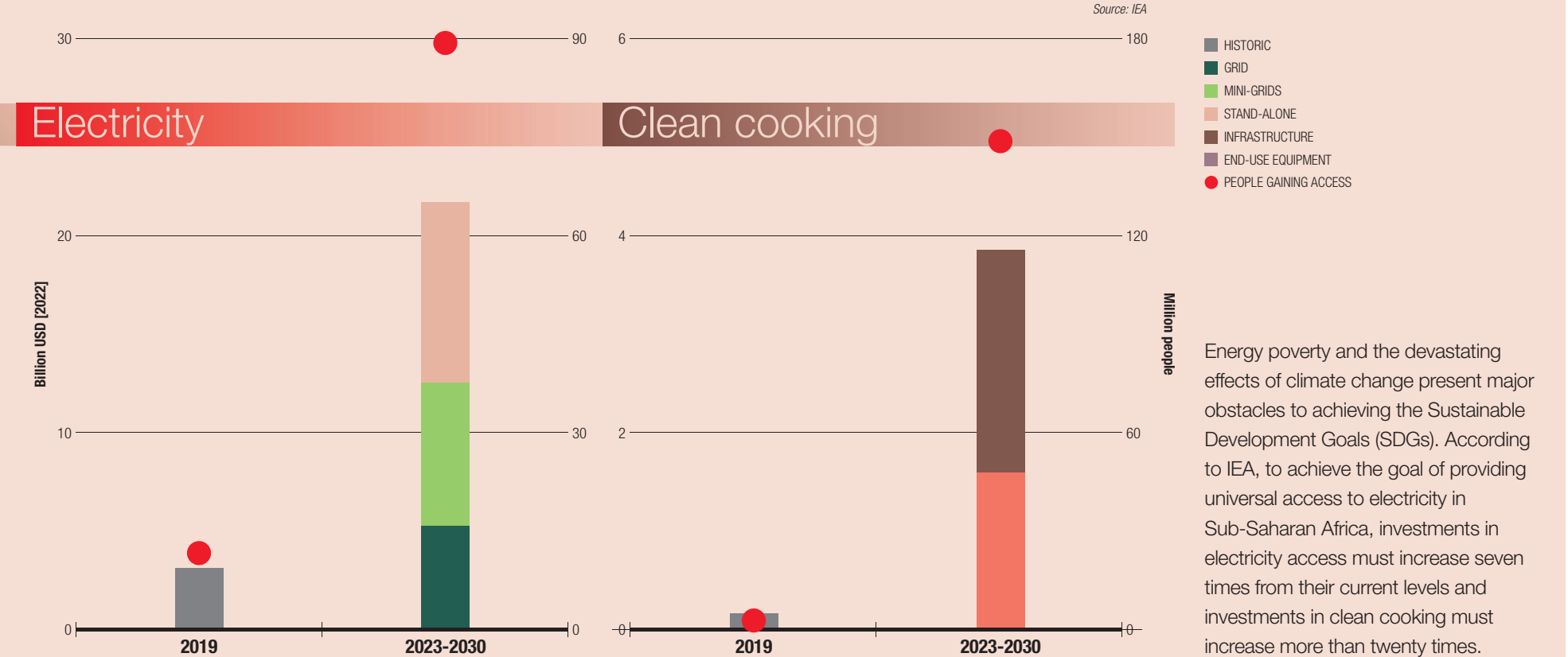
VULNERABLE FOUNDATIONS

Global efforts towards decarbonization are contingent upon a diverse set of conditions that vary based on the region in question. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, these efforts are built on especially precarious foundations. A significant challenge in this context is the widespread energy poverty. Notably, around 600 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa alone lack access to electricity. This stark reality underscores the unique obstacles faced in this region as the world moves towards a decarbonized future. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), energy investments in Africa have declined in recent years. There has been a notable decline in spending on fossil fuels, which traditionally make up about two-thirds of the continent's energy investments. Furthermore, investments in

THE DECLINE IN ENERGY INVESTMENT



ANNUAL INVESTMENT IN ELECTRICITY AND CLEAN COOKING



clean energy have not seen significant growth. This stagnation is particularly striking given that Africa is home to 20 percent of the world's population yet attracts less than 2 percent of global clean energy expenditure and accounts for under 3 percent of jobs in the renewable energy sector. A combination of real and perceived risks associated with African projects, exacerbated by heightened financing costs due to the pandemic and the geopolitical impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has resulted in a scarcity of accessible financing on the continent, as per the IEA. Additionally, poor infrastructure poses a major barrier to energy access in Africa, leading to vast disparities between countries and severely restricting electricity availability. Given these challenges, the current investment approach, which aims to enhance access to the cleanest possible energy, is evidently inadequate.

Despite contributing minimally to global climate change, with just about 4 percent of total CO₂ emissions, Africa stands among the continents most severely impacted by it. The World Bank estimates that Sub-Saharan Africa will be among the regions hardest hit by climate change, particularly in terms of an increase in the number of people living below the absolute poverty line. The most evident manifestation of these interconnected crises is in food security. According to estimates by the OECD and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), only a marginal increase in agricultural production is anticipated in

Sub-Saharan Africa in the coming years. The situation is expected to be more dire in the Sahel region, where crop yields are estimated to drop by 11.3 percent by 2050. Climate crises not only unfold alongside challenges to human security but also act as crisis multipliers, intensifying these challenges. Compounding the issue is the weakness, or in some cases absence, of local institutions capable of effectively addressing population needs and managing various emergencies. This lack of institutional capacity contributes significantly to the deterioration of the social and economic framework, further exacerbating the vulnerability, instability, and mobility of the region's people.

Africa's extraordinary diversity extends to its vast array of natural resources, including wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal energy. Despite having 60 percent of the world's most potent solar resources, the continent currently taps into just 1 percent of global installed photovoltaic capacity. Moreover, natural gas plays a crucial role in expanding energy access across the continent. Notably, central and southern Africa are rich in mineral resources essential for manufacturing batteries, wind turbines, and other key technologies crucial for the transition to low-carbon energy. The future challenge lies in fully integrating Africa into the global value chains. This integration would enable African countries to move beyond their current role as mere exporters of raw materials. It's imperative to empower

these nations to actively participate in and contribute significantly to the development of green value chains, thereby reshaping their role in the global energy landscape.

AN OBSTACLE TO ACHIEVING THE SDGS

Decarbonization and energy security in Sub-Saharan Africa are major challenges, set against the backdrop of a particularly vulnerable context. Take the Sahel region, for instance, where 180 million people currently live, 70 percent of whom are in rural areas. UN projections indicate that this population could surge to between 370 and 415 million by 2045, exacerbating the issue of energy poverty in the region. Over the past two years, countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Chad, and Mauritania have seen their average energy demand grow by around 4 percent annually, yet they continue to face a substantial gap in meeting these energy needs. The socio-economic implications of this situation are profound: a lack of access to clean cooking fuels, for example, is linked to 3.7 million premature deaths annually in Africa, with women and children disproportionately affected. Compounding these challenges is the lack of robust governance structures, making the development of sustainable solutions to these complex and interlinked crises increasingly difficult. Furthermore, the presence of violent non-state actors controlling territories adds another layer of threat to local populations.

Energy poverty and the severe impacts of climate change pose significant barriers to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with implications extending well beyond environmental issues. Urgent investments in clean energy access and targeted climate finance for adaptation are essential, especially in regions disproportionately affected by climate change. For many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, adaptation is not just a policy choice but a critical necessity.

In advocating for these measures, it's vital for stakeholders to recognize the multifaceted and interconnected nature of the challenges in the region, encompassing security, development, human mobility, adaptation, and climate mitigation. Developing synergistic strategies that address these intersecting issues is key. In fragile contexts like Sub-Saharan Africa, establishing effective cooperation mechanisms through constructive dialogue among diverse stakeholders is crucial for devising adequate solutions. The complex interplay of climate change and local crises necessitates innovative, integrated approaches to effectively address these converging challenges.

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A RENEWED ALLIANCE

IN 2024, A NEW PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WILL ENTER INTO FORCE BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND 48 AFRICAN COUNTRIES, AIMING TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY TO ADDRESS GLOBAL CHALLENGES TOGETHER

by Roberto Di Giovan Paolo

IN 2024, THE SAMOA AGREEMENT—which covers two billion people and is the legal and political framework for relations over the next 20 years between the European Union and 79 countries—including 48 in Africa—will become operational. The framework, which replaces the landmark Cotonou Agreement of 2000, is aimed at allowing the EU to play a geopolitical role in

Africa, but also to set the stage for a change in the way Europeans look at the continent, going beyond cultural stereotypes and a pessimism rooted in the distant past.

THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE AGREEMENT

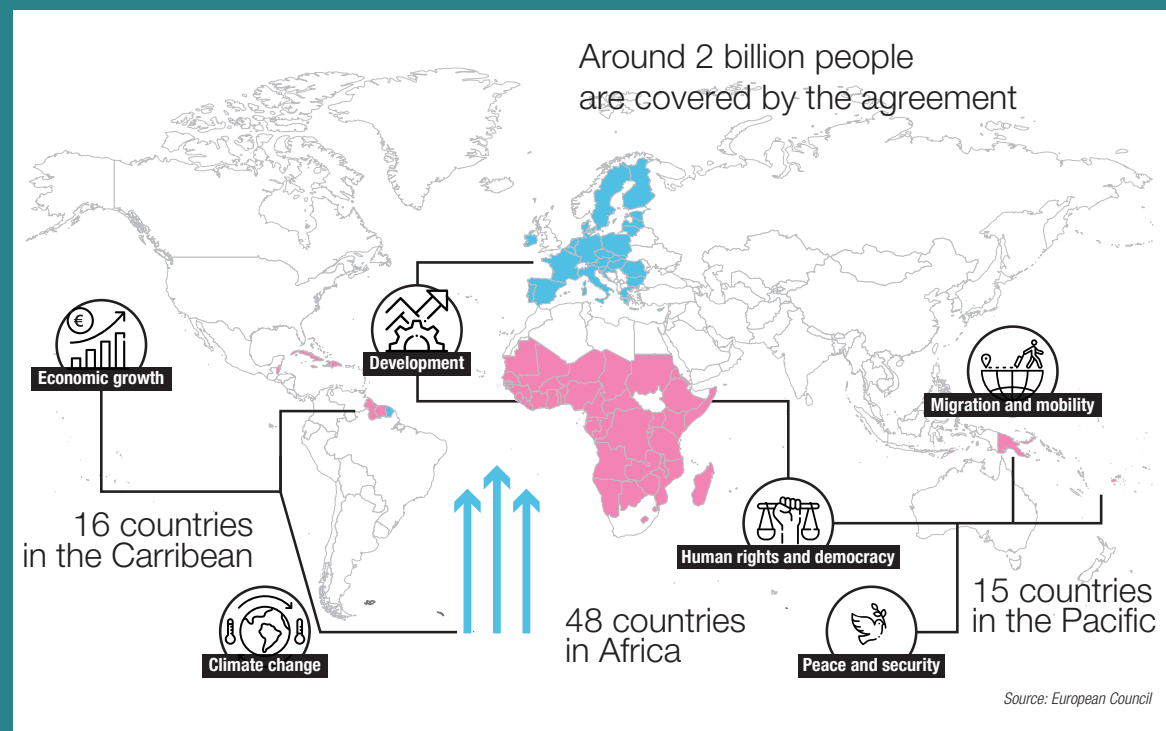
To grasp the EU's approach to Africa, the starting point is a re-

view of its sectoral policies on cross-cutting issues like climate change and gender equality, alongside policies targeting specific areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa.

All EU members have agreed to the goals of its sectoral policy, and these can serve as a basis for comparison with African states. For instance, Europe is advanced in the field of decar-

bonization and on increasing women's participation in the workforce. On strategic raw materials, the EU aims to regulate the sourcing of the 34 materials that it considers crucial for innovation, including the 17 Rare Earths, some of which are concentrated in a few African countries.

Alongside these cross-cutting priorities, there are the EU's na-



The Samoa Agreement

The European Union has established a comprehensive partnership with 79 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries, impacting approximately 2 billion people. This agreement, signed on November 15, 2023, in Samoa, is designed to enhance joint capacity to tackle global challenges. It encompasses six key areas: democracy and human rights, economic growth and development, climate action, social advancement, peace and security, and migration.

This pact activates provisionally from the start of the second month following its signing. It succeeds the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, which itself replaced the 1975 Lomé Convention. The Cotonou Agreement, initially set to expire in February 2020, continued in effect until this new framework was established. Its goal was to diminish poverty and foster the ACP countries' progressive inclusion in the global economy.



With the Samoa agreement, the European Union seeks to play a geopolitical role in Africa, but also to create the conditions for a change in the way Europeans look at the continent, which is too often with cultural stereotypes and a pessimism that are rooted in the distant past. Photo: a covered elevated walkway in the La Defense district, Paris.

tional or regional programs—such as the one for Sub-Saharan Africa—through which it aims to combat poverty and ensure access to basic services such as health and education. Country programs vary according to the situation of the individual beneficiary states: in Burkina Faso, for instance, the focus is on peace and social cohesion with an initial commitment of EUR 384 million for the three-year period 2021-2024, while in comparatively more developed South Africa, the European Union takes a 'multidimensional' approach, implying a smaller economic but a greater focus on industrial partnerships and trade. This approach includes ending customs duties on more than 98 percent of imports from South Africa and the strengthening of already considerable economic ties: in 2022, EU countries imported goods worth almost EUR 30 billion from South

Africa and exports were worth almost EUR 27 billion. Indeed, South Africa's trade in goods has increased by about 120 percent since the signing of the Cotonou Agreement in 2000; and where—despite remaining pockets of extreme poverty—foreign investment has increased fivefold.

WHAT IS THE POLITICAL ROLE FOR EUROPE?

From a policy standpoint, the European Union's engagement with Africa focuses on tangible economic support, social cooperation, and shared objectives. Geopolitically, however, the situation is more complex. The African states have emerged from the colonial era with both persistent challenges and notable progress. The EU acknowledges Africa's crucial role in economic growth and as a source of key materials for technological and ecological innovations. This recognition comes amid a broader geopolitical contest involving major powers. The U.S. has shifted its stance, showing increased interest under President Biden. Russia, under Putin, is active with both economic and military aid. China has been a consistent presence with its regional economic endeavors for nearly a quarter-century. Additionally, Arab and Asian nations are emerging as competitors to China, positioning themselves as financial investors, models of production, and innovation leaders. Against this backdrop, the EU's approach sometimes appears overly tentative, marred by dated and hard-to-shake stereotypes of the African continent.

BEYOND STEREOTYPES

Beyond the prevailing image of an impoverished Africa lies a continent of dynamic small and medium-sized businesses flourishing in politically stable countries. The EU's focus should be on these enterprises by engaging in dialogue with governments, making on-the-ground investments, and sustaining diplomatic efforts to cultivate a more beneficial relationship.

Assessing which community, voluntary, and private cooperation projects have succeeded—or failed—can spur growth in Africa's burgeoning digital sector. After all this is a region where, for years, smartphone connectivity has surpassed that of some remote parts of European.

Europe must embrace a pragmatic, realpolitik approach to a diverse continent of 54 nations, each with its own identity. This realism extends to Europe's self-perception, especially as it aims to leverage African partnerships as a catalyst for innovation, development, and a stable, enduring rise akin to Asia's economic expansion over the last two decades.

we

ROBERTO DI GIOVAN PAOLO

A journalist, he has written for, among others, *ANSA*, *Avvenire* and *Famiglia Cristiana*. He was Secretary General of the Italian Association for the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, and he is a lecturer at the University of International Studies of Rome.

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DAKAR FASHION WEEK SERVES AS A TESTAMENT TO AFRICA'S BURGEONING PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE. IN ITS INAUGURAL YEAR, THE EVENT FEATURED ONLY A HANDFUL OF DESIGNERS WHO HELD THEIR RUNWAY SHOWS IN RUN-DOWN HOTELS. FAST FORWARD TO ITS 21ST EDITION LAST DECEMBER, IT HAS EVOLVED INTO ONE OF AFRICA'S MOST ESTEEMED AND RENOWNED FASHION EXHIBITIONS. NOW, DOZENS OF DESIGNERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD COME TO TAKE PART. FASHION WEEK IN SENEGAL TRANSCENDS MERE STYLE; ACCORDING

PHOTO GALLERY DAKAR

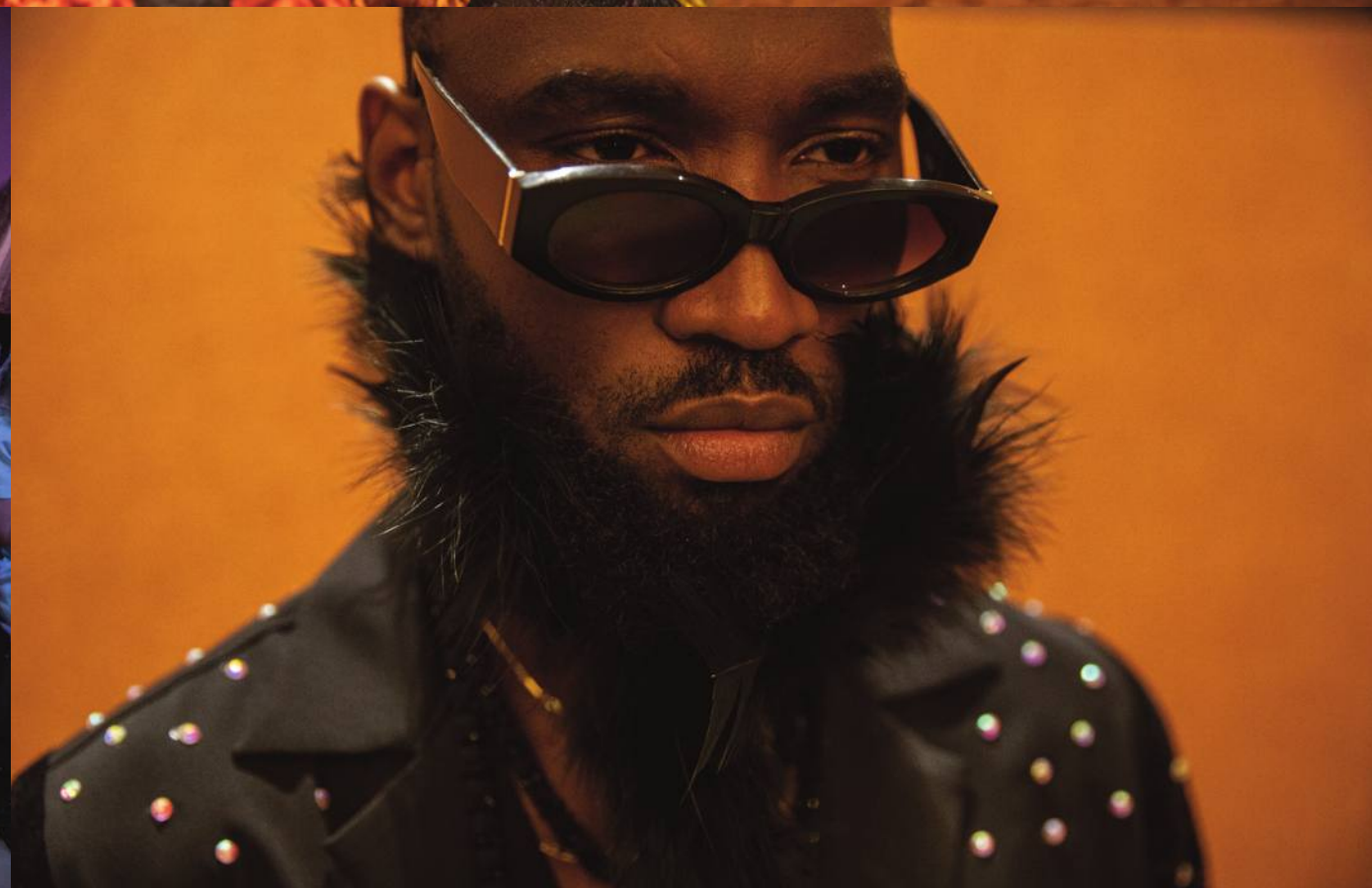
fashion week

DI ALESSIO PADUANO

Originally from Naples, Alessio Paduano pursued his studies in sociology, splitting his time between Paris and Naples. In 2007 he started working as an editor and photographer with various Italian newspapers. In 2010 he studied photojournalism at Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli. Some of his work has been exhibited at PAN-Palazzo Arti Napoli (Italy), Visa pour l'image (France), Palm Springs Photo Festival (California), Historical Museum (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Tel Aviv Photo Fair (Israel), ICA Space (Japan), and Photolux Festival (Italy), among other venues. His photographs have been published in major national and international newspapers and magazines, including Time, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, National Geographic, Spiegel, El Pais, Le Monde, The Guardian, Internazionale, and La Stampa. He has earned recognition for his work through awards such as the Picture of the Year (POY), the Krzysztofa Miller Prize, the Kolga Tbilisi Photo Award, and the Siena International Photo Award.

TO ADAMA PARIS HERSELF, FOUNDER OF THE EVENT, DAKAR FASHION WEEK HAS EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS INTO A CATALYST FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT. IN FACT, IT HAS NOT ONLY SHAPED FASHION TRENDS BUT HAS BECOME AN ECONOMIC DRIVER, GARNERING ATTENTION FROM SIGNIFICANT INVESTORS AND SPONSORS. THIS YEAR, FRENCH RETAIL CHAIN GALERIE LAFAYETTE AND VISA (A CREDIT CARD COMPANY) FINANCED THE EVENT. THE RUNWAY SHOWS ARE NOW HELD IN PRESTIGIOUS HOTELS, ATTRACTING MANY TOURISTS AND PROVIDING CRUCIAL VISIBILITY FOR AFRICAN SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES SHOWCASING THEIR GARMENTS. THIS INCREASED PROMINENCE ALSO BENEFITS MODELS, OFFERING THEM MORE VISIBILITY AND THE POTENTIAL TO ASPIRE TO WALK FOR EUROPEAN HAUTE COUTURE FASHION HOUSES IN THE FUTURE.









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Passion for Italy

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