

# AEEP Forum 2022

## SPOTLIGHT

### Advancing the Green Gateway Between Africa and Europe

Seizing COP27 for energy access and climate stability

The AEEP is supported by its Steering Group:



# AEEP Forum 2022

## Spotlight

### Advancing the Green Gateway Between Africa and Europe

#### Seizing COP27 for energy access and climate stability

Findings from the AEEP Forum on 7 September 2022

#### SUMMARY

To further align on the shared priorities between both Africa and Europe, the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) convened the second edition of the AEEP Forum on 7 September to discuss “Advancing the Green Gateway Between Africa and Europe – Seizing COP27 for energy access and climate stability”. The half-day event brought together key stakeholders from the energy and climate sectors, as well as participants from the public and private sector to discuss how to jointly achieve bicontinental energy and climate ambitions at COP27 and in the future. Organised shortly ahead of COP27, the AEEP Forum offered a unique opportunity to reflect on Africa and Europe’s longstanding partnership on energy and engage on key questions on how to realise future energy systems in Africa and Europe that will allow human prosperity in a climate-compatible way. Speakers highlighted that the partnership between Africa and European must be built on the basis of transparency, equity, and justice. The implications of the Russian aggression in Ukraine were discussed during an interactive panel discussion, where speakers shared priorities and aligned thoughts on energy security and the two continents’ energy transitions. Furthermore, two parallel roundtables, in English and French, focused on the financing needs for a future African energy system and the potential of green hydrogen and natural gas.

## INTRODUCTION

On the 7 September 2022, the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) convened the AEEP Forum 2022, under the theme “Advancing the Green Gateway Between Africa and Europe – Seizing COP27 for energy access and climate stability”. The half-day, online event attracted more than 650 participants, including representatives from the public and private sectors, NGOs and academia to engage in conversation on how to realise future energy systems in Africa and Europe that will allow human prosperity in a climate-compatible way. Seven thematic exchange allowed attendees to network and discuss with African and European initiatives and organisations working on different aspects of the energy transition, including energy financing, infrastructure development, energy regulation and youth participation.

Taking place just before the Conference of the Parties 27 (COP27) on 6 to 18 November 2022, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, the AEEP Forum provided participants with a unique opportunity to add their voice on how Africa and Europe can jointly achieve bicontinental energy and climate ambitions at COP27 and beyond.

A broad range of stakeholders were invited to share their perspectives on energy access and the road towards COP27. An interactive panel debate and two parallel roundtable discussions, in English and French, highlighted important topics in the energy sector, including the relevance of the partnership between Africa and Europe, the energy transitions’ financial challenges, and the potential of renewable hydrogen. Speakers and participants emphasised the added value of the AEEP Forum to re-align climate and energy agendas and priorities in the aftermath of the global pandemic and the Russian gas crisis.

The Forum was moderated by **Ms Christine Mhundwa**, an independent journalist and informed voice reporting on both the European and African continent.

## OPENING REMARKS

Opening the event, **H.E. Birgitte Markussen**, Ambassador, Head of the EU Delegation to the African Union, highlighted the ways in which the European Union (EU) is committed to working alongside Africa to realising SDG7 and contributing to the energy transition. Ms Markussen said that the EU’s Global Gateway Strategy is in line with the European Green Deal and will work to develop financing and de-risking instruments to attract additional investment from the private sector. She also mentioned the unique opportunity that the upcoming COP27 presents, and the importance of the AEEP’s work during this time.

In her opening remarks, **H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid**, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission, emphasised the potential to further strengthen partnerships and collaborations between Africa and Europe, especially around the already fruitful collaboration on promoting green energy. She highlighted the tangible impact of the AEEP, and initiatives supported by the EU such as the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM) and the Continental Master Plan (CMP).

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## INTERACTIVE PANEL: ALIGNMENT AND CONVERGENCE BETWEEN AGENDA 2063, THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND THE AFRICA-EU GREEN ENERGY INITIATIVE

An interactive panel comprising of African and European institutions and initiatives such as the **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**, **Sustainable Energy for All (SEforAll)**, the **European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships**, **African Union Commission (AUC)**, and **REN21**, discussed the alignment and convergence between Agenda 2063, the Paris Agreement and the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative. The panel was moderated by journalist **Ms Christine Mhundwa**.

**Dr Jürgen Zattler**, Director-General for International development policy, 2030 Agenda and climate at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), opened the panel debate by emphasising the importance of recognising the different paces of development in Africa and Europe. Europe has access to more funds and technology, but they also have an increased responsibility to make sure other countries have access to the same technological advances. Africa has a different development pace, so aligning the two continents' agendas will only work if the differences in capabilities are recognised.

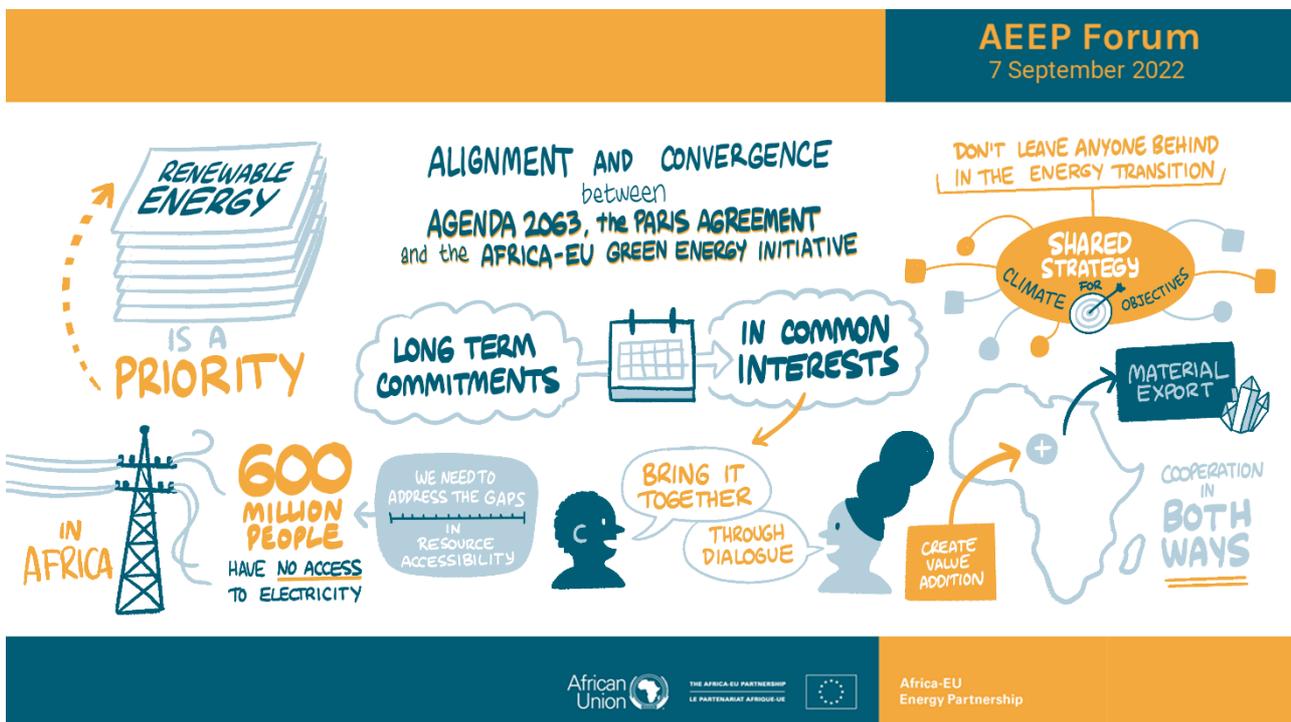
**Ms Carla Montesi**, Director for Green Deal and Digital Agenda, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, DG INTPA, EC, agreed that both continents face different starting points, but underlined that it does not mean it is one versus the other, but rather, it means there has to be a shared strategy through adapted tactics and mutually shared climate objectives.

Furthermore, **Mr Kamugisha Kazaura**, DIE Director, AUC, added that in terms of convergence, both continents want to achieve their priorities. For Europe this means clean energy systems, and for Africa it may mean relying on both renewable and non-renewable sources during a transitional phase to address existing energy gaps.

**Ms Jennifer Morgan**, Special Envoy for International Climate Action, Germany, and former Executive Director, Greenpeace International, addressed the panellists and participants of the event via a pre-recorded video message. She emphasised the need to work together to ensure everyone has access to the benefits of green development. Ms Morgan shared her view on the potential renewables have in Africa, particularly solar projects, and their potential for job creation, especially for qualified women. She also brought to light the current challenges surrounding energy financing, and how the financing that does flow into projects is dominated by loans, which increases African dependency on international aid.

The panel also addressed the Russian gas crisis as one of the most pressing contemporary energy issues. Both Africa and Europe are facing a scarcity of energy supply, and now both continents must find ways to ramp-up the supply, explained **Ms Rana Adib**, Executive Director, REN2. Ms Montesi added that the Russian aggression on Ukraine and its impacts have reminded the international community how dangerous the dependence on fossil fuels is, and how the EU's response, the REPowerEU plan, is supporting the phasing out of fossil fuels.

**Ms Damilola Ogunbiyi**, CEO, Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), in a second pre-recorded video, reminded the audience that although energy is critical for every-day life, for many in Africa it is still not a reality. Without access to sufficient energy, progress on all other development goals fall behind. Ms Ogunbiyi said that through partnerships like the AEEP, Africa and Europe can remain optimistic and ambitious towards successfully creating a just, inclusive, and equitable transition.



Finally, panellists emphasised the many ways in which Africa and Europe can align their joint priorities ahead of COP27. Creating spaces where actors can address the different realities that both continents face enables the opportunity to bridge Africa and Europe's polarised entry points and enables the two continents to find viable energy opportunities, said Mr Adib. **Dr Kande Yumkella**, Co-Chair of the Africa Europe Foundation Strategy Group on Energy and former CEO of Sustainable Energy for All, remarked on the importance of adding hydrogen,

renewables, and gas to the international energy discussion. He said that only by utilising all resources available will Africa be able to grow and create wealth for its people. He went on to note that the partnership between Africa and Europe must be a long-term partnership of equals where Africa can play an active role by providing the materials Europe needs to fast-track its transition. Mr Yumkella also stressed that the partnership must focus on creating regulatory frameworks, which will be crucial to attract private investment.

As the panel closed, **Dr Antonio Maria Afonso Pedro**, Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), reflected on how energy access is a priority to achieve the acceleration needed to realise both Agenda 2030, and the African development goals outlined in Agenda 2063. Dr Afonso Pedro highlighted four pillars upon which Africa and Europe can build a green gateway: large scale investments, reliable access to finance, technology transfer and capacity building, and finally, investing in sustainable value chains.

## KEYNOTE

**Dr Yasmine Fouad**, Minister of Environment, Egypt delivered the keynote speech at the AEEP Forum and expressed Egypt's desire to keep the 1.5 goal of the Paris Agreement alive by focusing on mitigation and adaptation which may result in climate resilient communities. Dr Fouad highlighted the Egyptian COP27 presidency, and the number of thematic days under the climate agenda. As examples, she mentioned the Finance Day, Adaptation and Agriculture Day, Decarbonization Day and Energy Day. Emphasising the Energy Day, Dr Fouad said Egypt is focused on showcasing Africa's united voice on ensuring an affordable energy transition for the continent. She called upon EU colleagues to support the ambitions of a just and ambitious energy transition. Finally, Dr Fouad informed about a new Egyptian initiative to develop the energy transition in Africa by supplying energy from renewable sources. The initiative, developed in cooperation with the AU and African energy ministers, will be launched during COP27.

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## INTERACTIVE ROUNDTABLES: ADVANCING THE GREEN GATEWAY BETWEEN AFRICA AND EUROPE

The Forum convened two multi-stakeholder roundtables, in English and French, with representatives from international organisations, civil society and the private sector to discuss perspectives on “Advancing the Green Gateway Between Africa and Europe”.

### English Roundtable

The English roundtable discussion, moderated by **Mr Johan van den Berg**, Head of Secretariat, Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP), tapped into the expertise of the five panellists, who all used their unique backgrounds to discuss “*Realising the Future African Energy System: infrastructure development and financing needs*”.

**Mr Mohamed Osama Essa**, Head of Central Administration for International Cooperation and Agreements, Ministry of Electricity & Renewable Energy, Egypt, opened the discussion by pointing towards Africa’s vast low-carbon and renewable energy potential, and the significant opportunities renewable energy markets provide for countries to work together. He underlined Egypt’s efforts to improve energy efficiency. Furthermore, he said Egypt is committed to paving way for a low-carbon Africa, especially considering the upcoming COP27.

The discussion then turned to the role of the Continental Power System Masterplan (CMP) in the broader African infrastructure development. **Dr Asami Miketa**, Senior Programme Officer, Power Sector Investment Planning, IRENA, began by addressing her institution’s role within the initiative as a modelling partner who provides modelling tools and trainings to African institutions, and works alongside experts from AUDA-NEPAD. She explained that IRENA’s goal is

to build sufficient institutional capacity to develop the CMP and consolidate regional and national electricity masterplans, thereby strengthening the planning in the energy sector.

Picking up on Dr Miketa's points, **Dr Thyrsos Hadjicostas**, Team Leader, EU G-TAF Support for Modelling Continental Power System Master Plan (CMP), stressed the importance of improving physical electricity interconnections through the initiative, which will be the blueprint towards an African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM). Dr Hadjicostas compared Europe's situation to that of Africa. He explained that although Europe has an adequate grid in place, the continent needs to modernise the grid as the share of renewables increases. Dr Hadjicostas also said that since both continents face an energy shortage challenge, this opportunity can be crucial for the partnership.

**Dr Towela Nyirenda-Jere**, Head of Economic Integration Division, AUDA-NEPAD said that by engaging with the work on the CMP AUDA NEPAD is contributing towards development on the continent and ensuring access to reliable energy for all Africans. She explained that the CMP is very deliberate in looking at how issues of energy affect the just transition. AUDA-NEPAD is supporting several studies that look at solar, wind, geothermal and hydro, as critical elements in making sure that the CMP responds to Africa's energy aspirations in a way that ensures climate resilience and affordability.

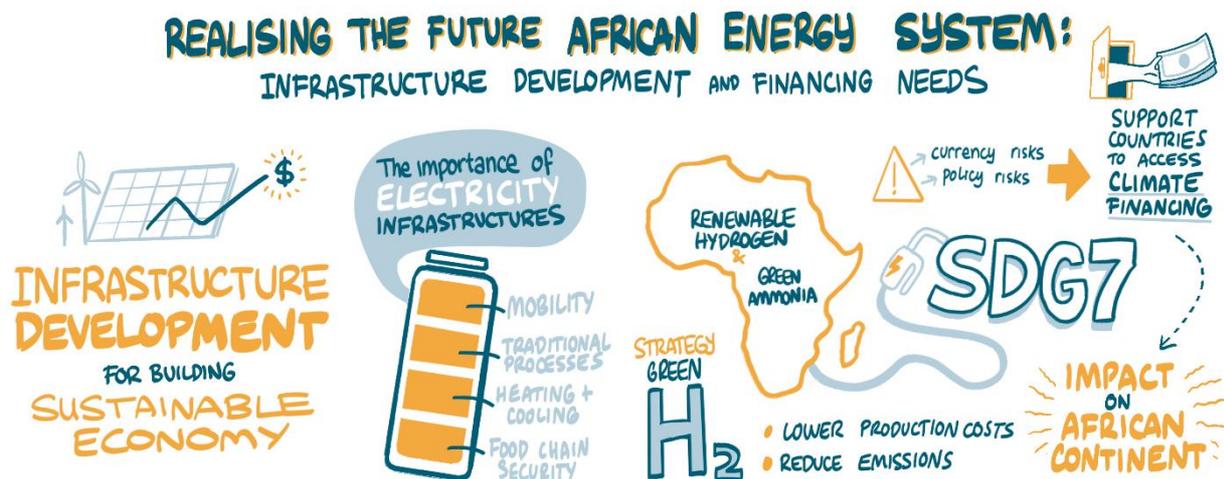
**Jesse Scott**, former Director for the International Programme at AGORA, said that the energy transition conversations are headed in the right direction. These conversations should start with the electricity grid infrastructure to enable reliable access to clean energy. She, however, continued by noting that the importance of using energy for mobility, heating and cooling, food security, and resilience, should not be overlooked. Ms Scott echoed Dr Hadjicostas's view on Europe and added that as the energy demand on the continent grows and the shares of renewables in the grid increases, Europe will face the challenge of rolling out new infrastructure. Finally, Ms Scott stressed that it is becoming clear to European leaders that both continents face many of the same challenges in achieve their energy transitions, which is why it is important that the African and European partnership is working together to achieve their common goal.

**Ms Ikaba Koyi**, Freelance Reporter & Producer at BBC, addressed Africa's financial challenges regarding the realisation of a future energy system. She explained that all countries are bound by the resources they have access to, and renewable energy is still a resource that is not readily accessible in Africa. This is, however, not due to a lack of interest, but rather due to the lack of available financing and incentives. Ms Koyi highlighted that developed countries should provide their share of financial support, only then will initiatives such as the CMP and AfSEM be successful. Mr Hadjicostas added that the entirety of the CMP would need 6 trillion USD in capital investments within the span of the Agenda 2063. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, the estimate investment need is around 50 billion USD per year.

The panel went on to discuss the role of green hydrogen and ammonia in Africa. Ms Scott said it is becoming increasingly clear that green hydrogen will be needed on both continents. There must, however, be flexibility on the European side regarding what constitutes green hydrogen and green ammonia, because what may be possible in the European context may take longer for African counterparts. Ms Scott also noted that with time it will be increasingly difficult to invest in fossil fuels because renewable energy sources will become more affordable, but there is still much work to be done to reach that point.

In closing, Mr van den Berg asked panellists to briefly describe what role the EU and the international community should play in advancing an African energy system. Dr Nyirenda-Jere remarked on the importance of unlocking funding for African projects and initiatives. She explained that one of the main challenges projects in the energy sector face is the difficulty in reaching bankability, and the large number of resources needed to do so. Ms Koyi agreed that more resources need to be allocated to projects. Additionally, energy financing must be looked at in a case-by-case basis because not all countries have the same funding capabilities, she explained. Finally, Dr Miketa highlighted how the CMP is a great example of international cooperation - not only is it producing the blueprint for the AfSEM - it is also giving the partnership an opportunity to raise awareness and highlight the importance of the governance related to energy sector planning. Dr Miketa also examined the idea of institutionalising the CMP to ensure the initiative follows a detailed framework and operates within specific regulations.

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### French Roundtable

The French-speaking roundtable, moderated by **Ms Alexandra Niez**, Country Coordinator, GET.invest Burundi, discussed “A people centred energy transition in Africa: Natural gas and green gases within Just Energy Transition Pathways”. The expert speakers first gave their perspectives on driving an energy transition while seeking to link socio-economic needs with climate objectives.

**Dr Rabia Ferroukhi**, Director of the Knowledge, Policy and Finance Centre, IRENA, highlighted the positive aspects of an energy transition, and correlated energy access with higher indices of happiness, higher GDP, and better employment rates. Dr Ferroukhi said there are two key factors needed for a just energy transition: integrated and global energy policies alongside well-tailored industrial policies, and the reliable flow of international financial support.

Building on this point, **Mr Callixte Kambanda**, Manager for Energy Policy and Regulation, African Development Bank (AfDB), identified four drivers for a just energy transition:

- *Political will*: where policies need to be aligned with the engagement of the countries in the energy transition.
- *Financial flows*: Once policies are in place, they need to be supported by financing for the development of infrastructures and the implementation of reforms.
- *Adequate energy resources*: Mechanisms should be created to allow countries endowed with large renewable resources to provide electricity to fossil-dependant countries.
- *Technological knowledge and job creation*: to ensure the sustainability of the electrical infrastructure, knowledge transfer is required.

Mr Kambanda also noted that the African energy transition is well underway, and the AfDB is committed to supporting countries reach their energy goals.

**Mr Augustine B Njamnshi**, CO Founder and Chair of Political & Technical Affairs of Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, Continental Coordinator of the African Coalition for Sustainable Energy and Access (ACSEA), defined energy access as a basic human right. He noted that those who do not have access to energy suffer the worst from the effects of climate change, and a just transition must accommodate even those who cannot afford electricity. Njamnshi urged for energy democracy, in other words, the possibility for less-favoured people to participate in the decision-making process regarding energy planning and regulation.

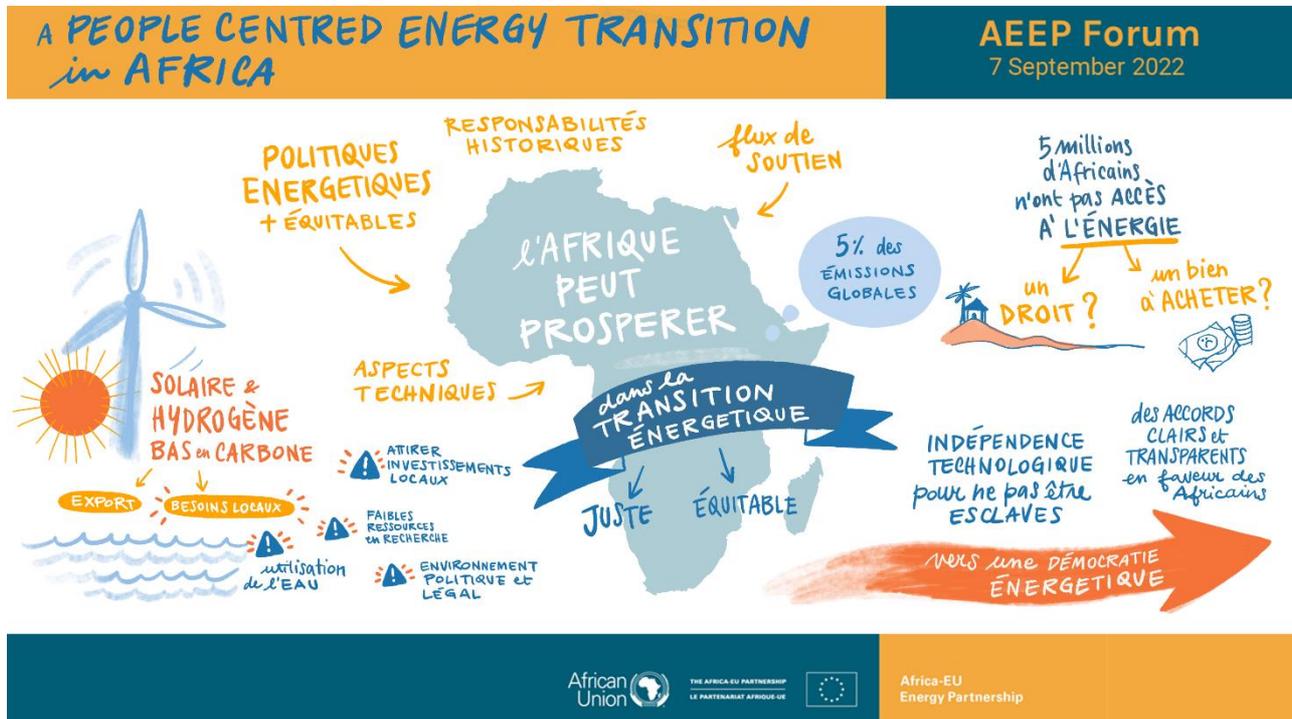
The panel then turned its attention to the potential of renewable hydrogen for economic development in Africa and Europe. **Ms Rita Madeira**, Africa Program Officer, IEA, highlighted how global declines in the cost of hydrogen production could allow Africa to deliver renewable hydrogen to Europe at internationally competitive prices by 2030. She noted that the IEA's [Africa Energy Outlook 2022](#) shows it is possible to produce up to 5000 mt/green H<sub>2</sub> per year for less than \$2/kg - an amount of hydrogen-based energy that is more than the total energy supply today. According to Ms Madeira, there are, of course, some uncertainties, such as the pace at which the international market for hydrogen will develop or questions of standardisation and certification. Hydrogen is a long-term opportunity and hopefully harnessing it will bring interesting prospects for the continent.

Additionally, **Mr Mamadou Diakhite**, Acting Head of Environmental Sustainability at the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), reflected on the importance of creating an environment that encourages investments in renewable hydrogen, capacity building, and in skills development. He proposed programmes targeted at governments and local communities to help them understand the benefits of the energy transition for the economy. He also called on international financiers and the private sector to invest their funds in the continent.

Addressing Europe's and Africa's gas partnership, Mr Njamnshi asked who would benefit from gas, and who would benefit from renewable hydrogen? He noted the importance of a bi-continental partnership built on transparency, equity, and justice. Dr Ferroukhi emphasised the need to move away from projects that benefit others and strip Africa of its resources. She highlighted the need to ensure that Africa's energy resources bring an added value to the local population and to the entire continent.

Finally, the panel considered what actions are needed at COP27 to promote a just and equitable energy transition. Dr Ferroukhi underlined the potential of the European Green Deal. She also

expressed the need for investments that benefit local communities, rather than particular, isolated interests. Mr Kambanda added that there is a need to engage in debates that promote clearly defined plans to finance the energy transition. Mr Diakhité echoed the inputs of the previous panellists, and stressed the importance of considering adaptation, mitigation, and resilience within energy finance planning.



## THE CLIMATE AND ENERGY NEXUS AND ROAD AHEAD FOR AFRICA AND EUROPE

The key take away from both discussions were summarised by **Mr Johan van den Berg**, Head of Secretariat, Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP), and **Mr Gildas Siggini**, Technical Advisor, GET.transform. Mr Siggini noted that the French language roundtable arrived at the conclusion that the first point of a just energy transition is putting the right policies in place to enable the transition. Secondly, the speakers stressed enabling funding mechanisms to aid in the development of Africa’s energy market. Thirdly, and finally, the French speaking panellists underlined the transfer of knowledge and technology into Africa. Furthermore, Mr Siggini noted that the speakers all agreed there is great potential for developing green hydrogen in Africa. Mr Siggini also emphasised that the speakers were eager to see energy financing pathways and climate-compatible topics discussed at COP27.

Mr van den Berg summarised the outcomes of the English roundtable and pointed to the high-level of ambition and preparation present in the planning of an African energy system. He, however, noted that the investment costs for a future African energy system remain considerable, and although it’s a long journey to achieve said cost, it is still achievable and worthwhile. Ultimately, the panellists agreed on ways in which Africa and Europe can assist each other, such as collaborating on Green Hydrogen, and working together to develop the CMP and AfSEM. As a closing note, Mr van den Berg remarked on how much the conversation around energy has changed in one year since the AEEP Forum 2021. This year climate and

energy are discussed together and treated as inseparable. He summarised, that the recent geopolitical developments have created a shared sense of energy fragility in Africa and Europe that can form the basis for deeper collaboration in a partnership of equals.

## THEMATIC EXCHANGES

The AEEP Forum also hosted seven Thematic Exchange that showcased 16 African and European initiatives and institutions, which represented different aspects of the African energy transition. **AUDA-NEPAD**, **Africa Renewable Energy initiative (AREI)**, and **EU GTAF** hosted an exchange on “Building the Infrastructure for Africa’s Green Future”, while **GET.invest**, and **Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA)** provided information on “Accelerating Financial Flows on SDG7 to Africa”. **Egypt** and **SEforALL** organised an exchange about “Converging Climate Ambitions Ahead of COP27”, whereas the **African Forum for Utility Regulators (AFUR)**, **Power Futures Lab (University of Cape Town)**, and **GET.transform** shared insights on “Preparing the Regulatory Framework for Africa’s Energy Sector”. The AEEP Forum was happy to welcome back Student Energy and SDG7 Youth Constituency, this time with an exchange on “Acting for the Future: African and European Youth”. The potential of hydrogen was highlighted in an exchange between **African Hydrogen Partnership**, and the **EU Clean Hydrogen Alliance** under the headline “Powering the Bi-Continental Energy Future with Renewable Hydrogen”. Finally, the **Florence School of Regulation**, alongside the **African School of Regulation** provided information on “Creating a Transformative African School of Regulation by Leveraging Partnership and Learning”.

## AEEP FORUM 2022 – KEY TAKEAWAYS

- All speakers emphasised the **value of an African and European partnership of equals** to aid the energy transitions on both continents. In particular, the speakers analysed how the existing long-standing partnership can be leveraged to support the bi-continental climate and energy goals. The partnership between Africa and European must be built on the basis of **transparency, equity, and justice**.
- Africa and Europe must, however, also approach the energy transitions from their unique perspectives considering available funding, resources, and level of development. This means that **the energy transition will not look the same in Africa and Europe**. This is, however, according to the panellists not a hinderance for continued close collaboration.
- The discussion at the AEEP Forum emphasised the many **ways in which Africa and Europe can align their joint agendas** ahead of COP27 in Egypt, in November 2022. Suggestions included creating space for an open discussion about the different realities facing both continents, the need for investments, which can benefit local communities, and the importance of considering adaptation, mitigation, and resilience within energy finance planning. Egypt’s Minister of Environment, Yasmine Fouad, expressed Egypt’s desire to showcase a united African voice on ensuring an affordable energy transition for the continent, and called upon EU colleagues to support this.
- AEEP Forum participants also stressed the **future African energy system’s financial challenges**. Energy financing must be looked at on a case-by-case basis because not all countries have the same funding capabilities. Additionally, regulatory policies will prove key to attract private investment to the continent. Once said policies are in place, they need to be supported by financing for the development of infrastructure and the implementation of reforms. **Speakers also highlighted the Global Gateway**, and its role in developing financing and de-risking instruments to attract additional investments from the private sector.
- **The potential of hydrogen, renewable energy and the role of natural gas** was addressed in all sessions, much due to the ongoing international energy crisis. Speakers underlined that only by utilising all resources available will Africa be able to grow and create wealth for its people. Furthermore, there was agreement that creating an environment that encourages investments in green hydrogen, capacity building, and skills development, will be an important aspect of Africa’s development.

Visit the event page to access recordings of the live panels and speeches: <https://africa-eu-energy-partnership.org/aEEP-forum/>.

### About

The Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) is Africa and Europe’s gateway for joint action on a green energy future. With an unmatched overview of the political processes and initiatives across both continents, the AEEP maps, monitors and convenes the actions and stakeholders that drive the African and European energy transformation. Providing a forum for political dialogue, knowledge sharing and peer connections, it enables Africa and Europe to make progress on their path to a sustainable energy future.

### Tap into more information

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-  [info@aep-secretariat.org](mailto:info@aep-secretariat.org)
-  [@AfricaEUEnergy](https://twitter.com/AfricaEUEnergy)

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