

Technology key to Africa's just energy transition

In the face of a global recession, rising poverty, unemployment and falling revenue, Africa's just energy transition ambitions are being tested. Energy experts at Enlit Africa 2023, however, agreed that technology is key to achieving the continent's goals.



Energy experts from across Africa agreed that technology is key to the continent's just energy transition. Source: [@AlexKWachira/Twitter](#)

Speaking during a keynote session at the conference in Cape Town, Alex Wachira, principal secretary in the Kenyan Ministry of Energy & Petroleum, said Africans need to do the energy transition for themselves.

"One of our main challenges is attracting investments, but we cannot keep complaining. It's about time that as Africa, we get our hands dirty and walk towards the transition from fossil fuels to green energy."

'Capitalise on each other's potential'

He said that Kenya was currently generating about 92% of its energy through renewable energy from hydropower, geothermal, wind and solar energy, and that, as a continent, Africa had the potential to generate up to 350GW from hydropower, 10TW of solar and 150GW of wind power.

“If Africa can work together and ensure that we develop...and we actionalise what we call the African market through modernisation and the African power pools...then we should be able to capitalise on each other’s potential.”

He used Morocco as an example, saying it was developing about 10,000MW of solar plants and about 3,800km of LVDC power. “The mission of Morocco is to sell that power to Europe, to Spain and all the way to the UK. There is no reason why Africa should not be able to do the same, to put up such infrastructure and sell power to each and everyone.”

“Kenya is consuming about 200MW from hydropower from the Great Renaissance Dam in the middle of Ethiopia. We have built a regional connector to Ethiopia. Therefore, Africa needs to embrace technology and attract investment, no more complaining,” Wachira said.



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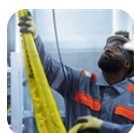


Power pools

Abel Tella, secretary general of the Association of Power Utilities of Africa (APUA) based in Cote d'Ivoire, said the current five power pools on the continent were helping to integrate renewables into the regional grids more quickly and assist in meeting the net-zero targets of 2030.

“Leapfrogging is happening in energy too,” he said.

The continent’s five power pools are the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP), Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP), Central African Power Pool (CAPP), West African Power Pool (WAPP) and North African Power Pool (NAPP).



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Marc Thiriet 22 Mar 2023



Access first point of just transition

“Technology will be fundamental for the just energy transition,” Sabine Dall'Omo, CEO of Siemens South Africa agreed, adding that “many solutions have already been developed on the continent”.

However, she emphasised that “providing access to electricity to everybody, to the 600 million on the continent who don’t have access, to the women who can’t cook with clean sources...is the first point of making the transition just.”

Added Dall'Omo: “Looking at the just transition in general, there are a lot of discussions around hydrogen, but it is not a cheap solution and only for very dedicated industries. It is not a fit for all. When I look at ‘just’, it is how we can industrialise the continent through the green transition.”

Enlit Africa 2023 is on at the CTICC in Cape Town until Thursday, 18 May.