



Declaration of the Conference

Dedicated to the vision of Agenda 2063 “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.”

We came together to discuss technical, economic and policy choices available to Africa to advance renewable energy research, innovation, financing, and implementation to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Africa.

Our shared understandings:

We understand that the 6th African Union - European Union Summit will take place from 17-18 February 2022 with sustainable development and renewable energy priority concerns.

SDG7 calls for “ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all” to be achieved by 2030 and this goal is incorporated in the plans of the African Union, the EU, the UN, World Bank, and other international organizations and partners.

We are very concerned that the COVID-19 crisis has negatively impacted plans to achieve universal access to electricity by 2030 and that current forecasts by the IEA show 600 million people without access to electricity by 2030 of which 560 million are forecast to be in Sub-Saharan Africa, with most of them in rural areas.

Rising climate-change linked threats increase the vulnerability of people without access to electricity while access to electricity enables further development steps. It is extremely important that the AU and EU Partnership address this issue, taking all feasible measures to assure access to electricity for all in Africa by 2030.

The Africa-EU partnership, together with other international partners, member states, academia, NGOs, and business have the knowledge and the capacity to achieve SDG7 despite current, real-world forecasts of likely failure.

Education, training and other human development are critically important to address the electricity access challenge. The costs of solar energy conversion and storage systems are forecast to continue to decline and financing is available for any feasible energy project across Africa. People are needed to define, finance, and develop small and medium-scale (SMS) energy projects, focusing on rural areas.

Large renewable energy projects are being implemented at an increasing tempo purely based on business feasibility. The greatest challenge and greatest opportunity is across vast rural regions of Sub-Saharan Africa without infrastructure. Boot-strapping solutions with mini-grids using solar, wind, hydro and biogas to provide power have been demonstrated. People need to be educated to boot-strap and develop Small and Medium Scale (SMS) micro-grids that can open opportunities for a widening array of job-creating businesses, especially for the African Youth. This will contribute to mitigating emigration/immigration issues.



While focussed on the near-term goal of universal access to electricity in Africa by 2030 we need to be mindful of what needs to be done to achieve Agenda 2063 goals. Motivation to achieve the near term 2030 goals will be strengthened by awareness of how this enables meeting the greater challenges that lie ahead.

Finally, we would like to point out that one of the most powerful synergies is when photovoltaics is partnered together with water treatment technologies for the provision of clean drinking water – breaking out of the water-energy nexus paradigm. The gains made above with regard to SDG6 can leverage further impacts on a much wider range of SDGs including clean water (SDG6), gender equality (SDG5), education (SDG4) and health (SDG3). We believe that small-scale and modular technologies (photovoltaics, energy storage, and membrane filtration modules) enable technologies that can reach the remote populations of Africa who otherwise may not see an electricity grid or water distribution pipes in their village in this lifetime.

We recommend these actions:

- The EU Commission should develop a Sustainable Development Action corps (SDA) that would train and send qualified EU citizen-volunteers and African ex-pats to work with communities in Sub-Saharan Africa to develop job-creating micro-grid systems to provide access to affordable reliable electricity and create small business opportunities for those served.
- The AU Commission and member states should support the SDA.
- The AU Commission working with member states and their higher Education systems Institutions (HEIs) and universities in the EU, with support from the EU Commission develop training programs to provide sufficient human resources to enable universal access to electricity across Africa by 2030.
- The EU-Commission in partnership with the AU Commission should develop an EU-AU Partnership R&D program drawing on elements of the Horizon Europe research program to build long term research capacity in Africa linked to Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 aspirational goals. To address the human development challenge MSCA Actions, particularly the MSCA Staff Exchange, can be adapted to address research priorities of interest to both the EU and the AU such as improving solar energy conversion and related technologies – including energy storage and water treatment – to address the need to more rapidly develop access to electricity in Africa. In addition, the budget for building capacity in higher education in Africa under the ERASMUS+¹ programme should be increased to ensure significant impact on SDG 5: good quality education for all.
- The EU Commission, in Partnership with the AU Commission, should encourage production of equipment in Africa for energy conversion, energy storage and water treatment technologies – including providing research and innovation support. Bearing mind that Sub-Saharan Africa is a major source of critical materials for

¹ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>



alternative energy technologies this would be in the long-term interests of both the EU and the AU.

- The Africa-EU Summit should consider continuation of the AEEP Topics and Activities.
- Promote the production, in Africa, of energy conversion and energy storage equipment, considering that Africa is a major source of materials for alternative energy technologies.
- Review and Launch a Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme (RECP) to 2030 (RECP Strategy 2030)
- Within a RECP strategy 2030:
 - Continue to promote and increase funding for Renewable Energy Research and Innovation in African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) between and amongst African and EU Researchers.
 - Encourage African member states to dedicate a reasonable share of their GDP to Renewable Energy Research and Innovation to build a long-term research capacity in Africa linked to the SDG and Agenda 2063.
 - Create a Platform for African NGO involve in Renewable Energy Research and Innovation.
 - Promote boot-strapping solutions: defining, developing, and financing Small and Medium Scale projects of Renewable Energies-powered mini grid for rural electrification in Africa, to expand opportunities for job-creating businesses, especially for African Youths, as a strategy to curb emigration of skilled people from the continent, long term research capacity in Africa linked to the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

ANSOLE will seek to review progress towards realization of goals and recommendations in this Declaration at subsequent conferences.

A²IOC 2022 Conference Participants