



## Stakeholder Dialogue on Renewable Energy Cooperation in Africa

*In prelude to the 9th Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-IX)*

Santa Maria, Sal Island, Cabo Verde | 13 Sept. 2021

### CONCEPT NOTE

*Global energy poverty is now concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), home to roughly 75% of the world's population without electricity, according to the International Energy Agency ([IEA](#), 2019). The most recent calculations show that around 580 million people in SSA the region have no electricity, the largest concentration in a single part of the world. Furthermore, the economic decline and the redirection of resources associated with the COVID-19 pandemic has created a knock-on effect on countries' abilities to expand energy access. Consequently, the number of Sub-Saharan Africans without electricity is starting to rise again after years of steady decline from a peak of about 610 million in 2013. In addition to chronic electric power disruptions, a staggering 80% of the population lacks access to modern energy and relies on biomass products such as wood, charcoal, and dung to cook. Multiple factors are responsible for this state of energy poverty – from insufficient power generation capacity to difficulties in managing energy infrastructure, attracting investments in the sector and serving low-income users (Hafner, Tagliapietra and de Strasser, [2018](#)).*

*Sub-Saharan Africa's acute energy poverty affects many development and environmental outcomes negatively; notably health, household income, quality of life, access to modern services such as ICTs (Morrissey, [2017](#)), as well as human capital development, productive land use, and sustainable forest management. Across the continent, it is preventing women and children from leading more productive lives, expanding inequality gaps, and fomenting a wide range of social injustices. Both empirical science and policy analyses find links between low levels of energy access and human/economic underdevelopment in Africa, which is lowering the chance of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (Corfee-Morlot, et al. [nd](#)) and Africa's Agenda 2065.*

*Access to sustainable and modern energy services is needed to meet basic human needs and for economic and social development across Africa. Governments and other actors now recognise that renewable energy has the potential to expand access to those populations that are presently underserved or unserved by the grid. Increased access to energy, 'can unlock sustainable economic growth, improve human health and well-being and enable women and children to lead*

more productive lives. Beyond direct economic and social benefits, clean energy access will raise human security and build resilience in states and communities to help limit the risk of large scale migration across the African continent as well as accelerate the attainment of SDGs, Agenda 2063 goals and climate commitments under the Paris Agreement' (OECD, [nd](#)).

*Interest in the development of the renewable energy sector in Africa is growing.* In 2020, the African Coalition for Sustainable Energy and Access (ACSEA) and Germanwatch conducted a review of renewable energy initiatives and programmes in Africa. They found 58 officially launched, high-level multicountry programmes and initiatives active at the continental or regional level. The more prominent include the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), SE4All (Africa Hub), Africa Power Vision, and the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The authors noted that the count only included officially launched initiatives, those supported by Pan-African public actors and/or international development partners (donors and implementers), and those with high ambition in terms of anticipated results and confirmed funding. 'Traditional bilateral and multilateral international cooperation, conducted by implementers (i.e., technical assistance providers, development banks, consultants, civil society) on behalf of donors, which in and of itself represents a major component of official development assistance (ODA) in the African energy sector, was not included.'

*Lack of coordination hampers impact in the renewable energy sector in Africa.* The ACSEA-Germanwatch report concluded that the growing number of programs and initiatives and the absence of coordination 'creates a complex and increasingly confusing situation in the context of African energy.' One problem that is already emerging is the narrow focus of existing energy programs and initiatives and consequently their failure to cover the full breadth of Africa's energy challenge. Only a third of these initiatives focus on clean cooking despite the share number of people (about 900 million) that can be potentially impacted. Equally, most initiatives focus on grid-connected renewable energy solutions to the detriment of decentralised, standalone, off-grid solutions with deeper reach. And finally, programs and projects are concentrated in a few countries, producing a skewed image of progress.

*Advancing cooperation in the renewable energy sector in Africa is both critical and urgent for improving energy access and addressing the climate crisis and the continent's development challenges.* To trigger reflections and actions aimed at fostering more coordinated renewable energy developments in Africa, ACSEA, PACJA and WWF have partnered to convene a high-level multistakeholder dialogue in Santa Maria, Sal Island, Cabo Verde on 13 September 2021. The dialogue has been planned to run in prelude to the 9th Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-IX). The outcomes of the dialogue will feed into the CCDA-IX proceedings. Stakeholders will come from governments, multilateral agencies, the private sector, civil society, and grassroots movements.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- i. To raise awareness among key stakeholders on the importance and urgency of enhanced coordination in the renewable energy sector Africa.
- ii. To explore opportunities and mechanisms for such cooperation at sub-regional and regional levels.
- iii. To develop strategies for civil society engagement to influence energy governance reforms at national and regional levels.