

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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African Union's Landmark G20 Engagement: Shaping Global Energy Transition and Driving Sustainability



In a landmark moment for Africa, the African Union (AU) is actively engaging in the G20 Meetings following its official admission, marking a new era of representation for the continent in global governance and agenda setting. The AU's inclusion in the G20 is historic, solidifying Africa's role in addressing critical global issues such as economic development, energy transitions, and sustainability. The African Union Commission has already begun participating in various G20 activities under the 2024 Brazilian Presidency, which has prioritized advancing social inclusion and combating hunger and poverty, facilitating sustainable energy transitions, and reforming global governance institutions.

In line with these priorities, the African Union delegation, led by H.E. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy & Digitalisation, played a pivotal role in the G20 Energy Transition Ministerial Meeting in Foz do Iguacu, Brazil. The AU's participation highlighted Africa's unique energy landscape and its potential to contribute significantly to global sustainability efforts. Africa, with its abundant renewable energy resources and growing population, is positioned to offer critical insights into achieving a just and equitable energy transition that benefits all.

In her remarks, Commissioner Abou-Zeid addressed the significant financial barriers that African countries face in accessing capital for energy investments despite having abundant energy resources. *"The AU welcomes and supports the priority on accelerating finance for energy access and energy transitions in developing countries. A faster, more steady and predictable flow of investments is urgently required"*, she said.

She urged the G20 to leverage its influence to transform the project financing landscape, stating that *“a commitment to facilitating investments in Africa’s energy sector would be pivotal for advancing global energy transitions.”*

Commissioner Abou-Zeid also underlined the importance of innovation as a driver for Africa’s energy transition, particularly in sustainable fuels. She emphasised the African Union’s collaborative efforts with the African Civil Aviation Commission and AU Member States to advance the development of sustainable aviation fuels, an area where partnerships, policy harmonization, and capacity-building are crucial. *“Africa has immense potential to become a leader in the production and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels, but this requires the right policies, partnerships, and knowledge exchange between global leaders,”* she remarked.

She also called on the G20 to facilitate frameworks that encourage technology transfer and collaboration between developed and developing countries, particularly in research and development. These efforts would not only support Africa’s energy transition but also help drive down the costs of sustainable fuels globally, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and sustainable energy future.

The Brazilian presidency of the G20 has placed the social dimension of the global energy transition at the core of its agenda, recognizing energy’s pivotal role in improving quality of life, supporting livelihoods, and fostering economic prosperity. Central to this approach is the need to ensure that the transition leaves no one behind, with a particular focus on regions like Africa, which face unique energy challenges but also hold immense potential for driving a balanced and fair global energy transition.

As part of this commitment, the Brazil-Africa Energy Transition Ministerial Dialogue, co-hosted by Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) and the G20 Presidency, provided a platform for the African Union as well as African and G20 energy ministers to engage in meaningful discussions. The dialogue focused on fostering cooperation, accelerating financing for energy transitions in developing countries, and addressing the urgent need for energy access across Africa. One of the critical outcomes of the meeting was the establishment of an Outcome Document, which was agreed upon by all participants. This document will serve as a roadmap for future collaboration and investment, guiding efforts towards a more equitable and sustainable energy future for Africa and beyond.

Commissioner Abou-Zeid welcomed the G20’s commitment to the social aspects of energy transitions, particularly the emphasis on clean cooking but underscored the importance of aligning G20 initiatives with AU efforts to ensure coordinated actions and prevent duplication. *“While welcoming the proposed clean cooking roadmap, it is imperative that the African Union plays the overall leading and coordination role, using its convening power to bring all the other players together”*, she stated.

The G20 Energy Transitions Ministerial Outcome Statement, adopted on October 4, 2024, outlines the commitment of G20 energy ministers to accelerate clean, sustainable, and inclusive energy transitions while addressing the critical need for increased investments in energy infrastructure, particularly in developing countries. The statement includes fostering cooperation, enhancing energy security, and achieving universal access to clean cooking by 2030, along with endorsing principles for just energy transitions and recognising the importance of technological innovation in meeting global sustainability goals.

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