



COP 27 – Energy Day

Keynote Remarks of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat

Chairperson of the African Union Commission

**Delivered by H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner
for Infrastructure and Energy (AUC)**

15 November 2022

Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

His Excellency, Dr Mohamed Shaker El Markabi, Honourable Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy of the Arab Republic of Egypt,

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocols Observed:

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, I greet you all and welcome you to one of the most important days of COP27, **Energy Day**.

I would like to thank H.E. Abdel Fatah El Sisi President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the people of Egypt for their hospitality welcoming the largest number of participants and for hosting an excellent COP focusing on implementation and action. You are making our Africa proud.

I wish to also thank the global community for its continued efforts to address the twin challenges of development and climate change.

I am really delighted to be with you here today for three reasons.

First, because this is a very important day. Ensuring access to efficient, reliable, modern and sustainable energy for all Africans is critical to achieving transformative and inclusive development that promotes and enhances economic, human and social development in our Continent. I wish here to express my appreciation to Egypt for championing Africa's common position for universal access to energy and just and equitable transition throughout this world gathering.

Second, what I witnessed throughout last week made me more optimistic and indeed there is a good reason for the title and focus of this COP to be implementation and action. The multitude of initiatives and actions launched last week - many addressing Africa's challenges, and the active presence of stakeholders and partners in such impressive numbers are strong signs that the world is coming together despite successive crises.

As the African saying goes: “many hands make light work”. We MUST make light work. And to make it work fast, at scale and for everyone.

Third, Africa’s huge and relatively untapped energy resources are opportunities waiting to happen. They could drive the energy access and transition agenda at all levels including regional, national and local levels. This will be important to address the twin challenges of energy development and climate change on the continent.

Excellencies

Distinguished participants

We in Africa are committed to following a low carbon pathway, despite accounting for only 3% of global GHG emissions as evidenced by our regional and national plans and in our renewable energy commitments and targets in African initiatives like the Geothermal Risk Mitigation Program in East Africa, the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), our several energy generations and regional transmission projects in our Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) programme.

As we develop renewable energy, we must, however, recognize that Africa cannot be powered only by renewable energy due to their intermittency. Natural gas must remain a critical part of the energy mix for Africa in the short and medium term, to ensure the reliability, affordability, and security of energy supplies and to power clean cooking. The war in Europe has shown the need to be practical and realistic when it comes to the energy transition.

We should therefore prioritize and support the development of all African energy resources and infrastructure to expedite universal access, provide clean cooking build solid energy systems.

That said we must keep our eyes, collectively, on a greener future. We must not lose focus from meeting the Paris Agreement commitments to keep the world’s temperature to not more than 1.5c degrees above the pre-industrial level.

Excellencies

Distinguished participants,

Achieving Africa's clean energy transition agenda is a huge task, but it is not impossible. What is needed as a first step is a political leadership and commitment at the global level driven by concrete actions and strategies as well as financial and technical resources for implementation. The COP27 presents the opportunity for global stakeholders to consider the unique realities and needs of Africa, and equally important to honour their commitments.

The AU Member States also have deepened the mainstreaming of climate actions and energy transition principles into their national energy development plans and priorities. This is necessary to ensure ownership as well as harmonized ambitions and strategies towards an integrated and data-driven approach to addressing energy and climate change challenges, which will in turn lead to the development of needs-based policies and financial instruments for an effective energy transition.

The African Union Commission, as mandated by the AU Heads of State and Government, is continuously working to address the persistent barriers to energy development on the continent including the markets, financial, technical, policy and regulatory barriers.

One of the key strategies of the Commission in the energy sector is to focus on regional energy infrastructure development. This will help to create large-scale and competitive markets for infrastructure services while at the same time facilitating regional cooperation and energy security amongst Member States. The priority plans in the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) aim to build 19 regional hydropower plants by 2040, adding 54 GW of hydropower capacity to the regional grids.

Another key strategy for the African Union Commission is to facilitate and accelerate the uptake of renewable energy systems in our Member States including bioenergy, solar, wind, geothermal, and green hydrogen systems to develop both on-grid and off-grid systems to provide sustainable energy services in both urban and rural areas.

The Commission is also working on the harmonisation of policies and regulatory frameworks at the continental and regional levels, intending to create an African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM). Achieving Africa's energy transition agenda requires the implementation of adequate policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks that are needed to create a conducive environment for businesses as well as consumers. There is a need to harmonise policies across African countries and regions to create large markets, mobilise investments and increase the affordability of modern energy services. The Continental Power System Master Plan (CMP) initiative also aims to develop and integrate renewable energy with smart transmission and distribution infrastructure to connect countries and regions across the continent.

Excellencies;

Distinguished Delegates;

Achieving net zero emissions cannot be achieved with zero financing. African countries need significant financial resources to deliver just energy transition estimated at 130 billion USD a year, with a financial gap of 90 billion USD a year. We need to leverage resources, grants and guarantees to mobilize the funding needed to implement the political commitments on just energy transition.

Closing this gap requires the mobilisation of significant financial resources from both domestic and international public and private sources, in addition to the establishment of innovative financing mechanisms that will attract investments.

I would like to use this opportunity to call upon all stakeholders including financial institutions, the private and public sectors, civil societies, and research institutions, amongst others, from all parts of the world to join us in the implementation of the clean energy agenda in Africa.

I would also like to use this opportunity to call upon the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt to continue to champion and promote African initiatives on energy access and transition during COP27 and beyond.