

Concept Note

Side event for ARFSD-9

Title: Empowerment of Youth and women through a Just Transition for Sustainable Development in Africa

Note prepared by: UNEP Africa Office



Thematic focus: SDG 5, 7, 8, 9, 13.

A Just Transition in Africa is essential for human well-being, poverty alleviation and achieving multiple Sustainable Development Goals that affirms Africa's right to development and industrialization based on the Paris Agreement of equity and the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances. In line with this, COP 27 was deemed the African COP, where African governments were at the centre and aimed to dramatically increase their share of international climate finance flows given the scale of their adaptation needs, the renewable energy potential of the continent, and the need for a just transition. The Just Energy Transition is also aligned to resolving the triple planetary crisis – climate change, biodiversity/nature loss and pollution and Waste. Women and Youth play a fundamental role in strengthening and enabling the just transition to climate-resilient development in Africa through low carbon energy innovations, responsive policies, plans and programmes towards transformed economies, healthy ecosystems and human well-being that embody intersectional interventions. Women and youth are today the driving force of innovation, and social and economic change. The contribution of youth and women to the global energy sector is mandatory for a low carbon, resource efficient and Climate resilient society in Africa. Further, energy poverty is a worldwide phenomenon with a strong gender dimension. In African countries, lack of access to energy is an obstacle to women's and girls' well-being and economic opportunities, as it strongly affects their living conditions and time-use, including undermines their educational and economic opportunities.

Objectives of side event

It is against this backdrop that UNEP is organizing this side event with partners as a platform to engage African women and youth to share their best practices and experiences for a brighter and greener future for Africa in line with the theme of the forum "Accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063." As such, the side event will address various SDGs including SDG 5, 7, 8, 9 and 13. The specific objectives include: (1) Showcase the empowerment of women and Youth through addressing energy challenges in terms of contribution to increase access to electricity and drive productive uses in Africa; (2) Contribute to the advancement of and address knowledge gaps on energy insecurity in Africa, with a focus on renewable energy sources and the experience of women and youth; (3) Serve as a platform for knowledge exchange between institutions, African youth, policy makers and other key players promoting green energy action; and (4) Strengthen and enhance the better understanding of the contribution of renewable energy to the integrated approach and business models of "Water-Energy-Food" nexus in the context of achieving Sustainable development in Africa.

Organizer and Partners

UNEP Africa Office is organising the side event with the partners African Women Energy Entrepreneurship Framework (AWEEF) and African Youth Association.

Expected Participants

This Side Event is expected to bring together policy makers, technical experts, technology providers, private and public developers, and financiers, International and regional delegates as well as development partners who have been involved in the energy sector including the Just Transition in Africa. Participation of this side event will be by online registration.

Expected Output

(1) Empowerment of women and Youth through addressing energy challenges in terms of increase access to electricity and drive productive uses in Africa showcased; (2) Knowledge and best practices exchanged between institutions, African women and youth, policy makers and other key players promoting green energy action; (3) The entrepreneurial and scientific potential of youth and women in addressing energy challenges in Africa, through the development of forward-looking innovative environmental solutions shared; and (4) Strengthened and enhanced the better understanding of the contribution of renewable energy to the integrated approach and business models of "Water-Energy-Food" nexus in the context of achieving Sustainable development in Africa.

Tentative Programme

The side event will be held as a 1,5 hour Online Plenary session with a Moderator, Keynote speaker and Panellists. The panellists are AWEEF Members (representatives from West, East and Southern Africa) and African Youth Association (representatives from West, East and Southern Africa), with a keynote speech from Dr. Pacifica Ogola, Chair of AWAG.