

## **Putting youth innovation and entrepreneurship at the heart of Africa's low carbon transition**

**Date: 17 November 2022**

**Time: 11:00 – 12:30**

### **Africa Pavilion**

**Organisers: IDRC, UNECA, WRI, UNU-INRA**

#### **Background and Context**

The evidence that climate change will shape the future global society and economy is becoming more evident over the years. More effort is required to lower carbon emissions in order to minimize the average increase in the global mean temperature to well less than 2°C which demands drastic changes in energy transformation and use. Countries in the global south have greater opportunities for transformative investments in clean energy and emissions reduction. A shift to renewable energy sources in these countries demands accelerated efforts on social, economic and environmental sustainability targets.

Although clean energy uptake has been rapid, Africa's policy fragmentation and the dearth of adequate investments are leading stumbling blocks. Africa is 17% of global population but accounts for less than 4% primary energy consumption, less than 4% of greenhouse gas emissions, and close to 80% of the 733 million people globally without access to electricity and 37% of the 2.4 billion people without access to clean cooking solutions. The most adversely impacted populations are populations already disadvantaged by poverty and inequality – women, youth, and marginalized communities. A clean energy transition is central to achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals and is a key part of decarbonization strategies of many countries.

While this presents new opportunities, real progress can only be realized if the Continent harnesses the potential of its youth and women as key drivers of innovation and entrepreneurship for sustainable development solutions.

Africa's key asset is its youth. Seventy percent of Africans are below the age of 30. By 2040 Africa is predicted to have the largest workforce in the world – surpassing both China and India. Harnessing this potential will be key to shaping the future of the continent. This is particularly important as national leaders chart out pathways to decarbonize and pursue low carbon development. Young people need to take center

stage in discussions about climate actions that affect their lives, livelihoods, and futures and as innovators and entrepreneurs of solutions.

Conducive institutional frameworks, inclusive and sustainable business models and youth ownership and leadership are essential to scale up promising decentralized renewable energy solutions as they emerge.

### **Objectives of the event**

The overarching objective of the panel is to amplify the voices of young African women and men as key drivers of low carbon transition in the Continent.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify ways in which Africa can drive inclusive low carbon transition by harnessing the potential of its young women and men
2. Reflect on youth led innovations and opportunities for climate resilience and energy transitions
3. Establish how partnerships will bolster progress towards sustainable energy, with scaled-up investments and up-to-date local innovations
4. Learn about some of the impactful youth-led innovations and entrepreneurship on climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience
5. Foster dialogue between young people and policy makers

### **Draft Programme**

Moderator: Linus Mofor

Opening remarks (10 mins):

Dr Hanan Morsy, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECA

Erin Tansey, Director of Sustainable Inclusive Economies Division, IDRC

### **Youth Panel Discussion (40 mins)**

Moderator: Rebekah Shirley, Director of Research, Data & Innovation, World Resources Institute, Africa

*Speakers:*

**Marilyn Bongmo Jaff**, Ministry of Water Resources and Energy, Cameroon.

**Philippa Hamakasu**, Ministry of Green Economy and Environment, Zambia

**Lauritta Boniface**, Co-Founder, Ecocycle Ltd, Nigeria

**Brian Mkibuthu**, Africa Chapter Coordinator, Catalyst 2030, Kenya

**Madina Amin Hussein**, Managing Director, Global Nature Conservation, Kenya

**Thelma Arko**, Research Fellow, UNU-INRA

*Questions to be addressed during the panel discussion:*

- What type of innovative approaches may help to strengthen youth and women capacities to create new opportunities for the low carbon transition.
- What are some of the barriers to harnessing youth-led innovation and entrepreneurship in Africa?
- What are some of the impactful youth-led innovations on the continent so far?
- Who should do what to unleash the catalytic potential of Africa's youth and women for the energy transition and climate resilience?

Respondent:

**Brian Wambani**, Investment Director, Camco Clean Energy (5 mins)

**Dr Fatima Denton**, Director, UNU-INRA (5 mins)

Questions & Answers – 20 mins

Closing remarks: Linus Mofor