



COP 28 POLICY IDEAS

Africa-Europe Foundation and Friends of Europe

Overview

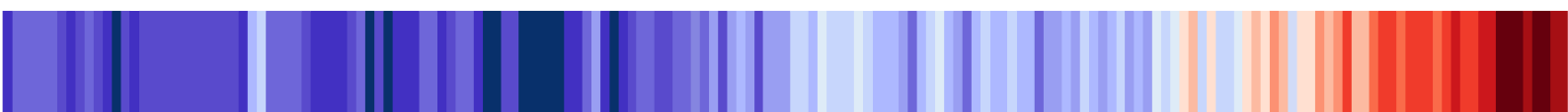
As the two continents gear-up for COP28 in Dubai, it is high-time to act boldly and to reinforce the Africa-Europe partnership as part of the broader commitment to multilateralism.

COP28 marks the first Global Stocktake (GST) since the Paris Agreement in 2015, and given how fragmented our world is, it is imperative that Africa and Europe realise joint aspirations for an accelerated path towards universal access to energy, tripling renewable energy capacity, doubling the rate of energy efficiency improvements, ramping-up sustainable raw materials and manufacturing value chains, to spur industrialisation in Africa and decarbonisation in Europe.

In November 2023, the world remains well off-track to limiting warming to under 2°C, let alone 1.5°C, as the recent UNEP report details in stark and vivid terms. However, we are seeing important changes in global energy systems. As highlighted in the 2023 World Energy Outlook, it is projected that the global share of fossil fuels in electricity generation will continue to fall over time, and it is also highlighted that, today, for every \$1 invested in fossil fuels, \$1.8 is invested in clean technology alternatives. While these are positive indicators, the pace of change is inadequate and the scale of government fossil fuel subsidies – estimated at €1 trillion – is hampering the energy transformation further.

We are fast approaching the mid-term of the decade of decisive climate action. We need implementation of the many pledges that have been made at international gatherings of COPs in the past. Recent data from the [OECD](#) show that, while there is an upward trend in the total amount of climate finance provided and mobilised by developed countries for developing countries, the \$100 billion mark has not been met. This pledge was agreed by parties in 2009, fourteen years ago. In terms of the international availability of finance, this is a drop in the ocean and a small fraction of what was mobilised in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The question of finance provision and mobilisation will indeed be an important issue at COP28 and the impact of increased distribution of climate finance, is difficult to overstate.



A moment of truth for EU-AU accountability on climate and development action:

COP28 marks the mid-point of the 3-year cycle of the European-Union - African-Union (EU-AU) Summit. As such, it provides a unique opportunity to assess progress against commitments of the 'revised' climate partnership, as well as to recall the implications of the current geopolitical context and its effects on both the roll-out of the EU-Africa Global Gateway and its flagships.

The Joint Vision of the 6th EU-AU Summit, outlined in February 2022, stressed that the two continents will 'recommit to the full implementation of the Paris Agreement and the outcomes of the COPs' and 'recognise that Africa's energy transition is vital for its industrialisation and to bridge the energy gap'. It also highlighted that Europe 'will support Africa in its transition to foster just and sustainable pathways towards climate neutrality' [...] 'recognising the importance of making use of available natural resources within that energy transition process'.

COP28 also provides a platform for dialogue as well as a space to advance a common vision founded on co-benefits and mutual self-interest. As part of the Africa-Europe Foundation's (AEF) and Friends of Europe's work towards COP28, a set of policy ideas on the key themes below have been identified and should be considered by decision-makers from Africa and Europe:

- Strengthening climate and energy diplomacy in a fractured world
- Establishing a structured EU-AU platform for energy and climate coordination and action
- Targeting investment to ensure that we triple renewable capacity and double energy efficiency measures, by 2030
- Re-imagining the role of fossil fuels in the new energy landscape. Phase-down and phase-out
- Assessing the results of the first Global Stocktake and elevating the bar politically and financially on adaptation
- Aligning the Post-2030 SDG Framework with the EU's Green Deal and AU's Agenda 2063
- Rebooting political and financial leadership towards clean cooking solutions
- Unlocking institutional capital and addressing the issue of access and cost of finance

Strengthening climate and energy diplomacy in a fractured world

COP28 takes place at a time of huge challenges and opportunities for energy systems in Europe and Africa, which are confronted by a multifactor crisis of rare magnitude, affecting both Europeans and Africans. Africa is confronted by both low energy access, including clean cooking solutions, and a difficult regulatory and financial situation with many indebted countries finding it hard to drive policy changes and generate the finance for a just and equitable energy transition. The EU has its own energy challenges, which include the legally binding obligation to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and a war at its border which has had major impacts on energy prices and security of supply.

COP28 offers a moment to reflect jointly on the state of the Africa-Europe Partnership, and explore multiple avenues to reinforce cross-continental cooperation at a time when the international situation is enflamed by global inflation, debt distress, climate change, and conflicts in Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Building on the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, and now COP28, regular dialogues are needed to bring both African and European energy and climate pathways closer together. Similarly, it is necessary to provide a safe space for technical and political negotiators from the EU and the Africa Group to develop a common understanding so the two groups can work towards convergence, as opposed to contestation. At UN discussions, regrettably, the two usually end up focusing on areas of difference rather than where there is convergence of views and areas for joint initiative. COP28 should lay the foundation for stronger alliances through dialogue, listening and strengthening 'a mutually beneficial partnership which focuses on common issues for Europe and Africa'.

Establishing a structured EU-AU platform for energy and climate coordination and action

COP28 offers a promising platform for European and African countries to demonstrate climate leadership, and climate investment statesmanship. As such, the two continents should take this opportunity to take stock of progress to date on climate and energy cooperation, building on commitments made at the 6th African Union- European Union Summit in February 2022, and reiterated at major climate events, including COP27, the Paris Summit for A New Global Financing Pact, the Africa Climate Action Summit, and the Climate Ambition Summit at the United Nations General Assembly.

As the two continents gear-up for COP28 in Dubai, it will be essential to review progress made towards agreed targets, including tracking how far commitments made are carried through. Furthermore, the global context of constant disruptions, given a series of external shocks (climate, conflict, covid-19, cost of living) over the past few years, point to the benefits from a much closer partnership between the neighbouring continents. Currently, there are only limited structured conversations between Africa and Europe on energy access and transition. At COP28 in Dubai, Africa and Europe should fix this fragmentation and establish a constructive space for Africa and Europe to plan a shared, prosperous, decarbonised future compatible with climate goals.

The African continent continues to offer Europe and the broader global economy a wide range of potential “solutions” to the climate emergency. Africa could become a green manufacturing hub for global decarbonisation, as well as continue to serve as a major sink for carbon removals.

Targeting investment to ensure that we triple renewable capacity and double energy efficiency measures, by 2030

The International Energy Agency's (IEA) 2023 World Energy Outlook (WEO) outlines a global energy market that is undergoing profound change. Indeed, it is widely accepted that energy systems of 2030 will look very different to those of 2023. It also calls for two clear policy solutions for leaders to adopt at COP28, namely to triple renewable capacity and double energy efficiency measures by 2030.

The EU's State of the Energy Union report shows that net greenhouse gas emissions, which represent 8% of the global total, decreased by 3% in 2022, reaching a reduction of 32.5%, compared to 1990 [levels](#). In light of the recent gas crisis, where Europe was the epicentre, this progress illustrates the importance of renewables in achieving a secure, low carbon energy system. In comparison, greenhouse gas emissions from the African continent represent less than 4% of the annual global volume, but energy demand is set to quadruple in the next 20 years. New policies and actions on both sides are needed to accelerate the pace of decarbonisation of the power sector.

Diverse energy patterns across Africa and Europe demand different approaches, given each country's own energy assets and knowledge. Matchmaking of who has what, and how to support each other's energy transformations could greatly enhance the cross-continental partnership, including attainment of SDG7 by 2030.

To be prepared for the energy system of 2030, political leaders need to ensure that grid capacity is strengthened, wind and solar infrastructure is constructed, and reforms enacted to enhance efficiency, particularly in the transport and building sectors. Agreement on practical measures to bolster investment in decarbonising the power sector will be an indicator of success at COP28.

Re-imagining the role of fossil fuels in the new energy landscape. Phase-down and phase-out

Trends in renewable capacity, energy efficiency, and the substantial growth in electric vehicle markets will all have major ramifications for global oil markets. These structural changes are happening because of relative price shifts in favour of low carbon options, and will continue regardless of additional policy actions needed to align with the Paris climate commitments. However, policy can make these changes happen much faster.

As highlighted in the 2023 WEO, we are already seeing important developments when it comes to fossil fuel trends – for every \$1 invested in fossil fuels, \$1.8 is invested in clean technology alternatives. However, today, governments around the world are still paying out over 1000 billion euro in fossil fuel subsidies. Without these subsidies, the shift of investment to low carbon alternatives would be much swifter.

Oil and gas industry representatives often argue that these fossil fuels will be essential in driving critical economic growth in emerging economies. However, it is a fallacy to argue that, just because coal, oil and gas drove Europe's economic growth in the past, new fossil fuel development is the key to unlocking economic potential elsewhere, including in Africa.

The African Common Position on Energy Access and Just Transition, adopted in July 2022, paves the way for a comprehensive approach to charting Africa's short, medium, and long-term energy development, to accelerate universal energy access and transition to low carbon without compromising the continent's development imperatives.

One way in which the oil and gas industry could play a more constructive role in limiting greenhouse gas emissions is by drastically curbing methane emissions from their activities.

Methane is a powerful short-lived greenhouse gas and at COP26, the [Global Methane Pledge](#) was launched. Countries joining the pledge make up 45% of global methane emissions and have committed to take voluntary actions to reduce such emissions by 30% from 2020 levels by 2030. The oil and gas industry can go much further, much faster. The IEA recommends that oil and gas companies agree to cut methane emissions by 75% by the end of this decade. At COP28, the oil and gas industry will be well represented, so this upcoming meeting in Dubai is a great opportunity for oil and gas companies to match promises with action.

We are moving to a new energy era – the IEA projects that we are on track to see use of all fossil fuels peak before 2030. Still, this development will not be sufficient to meet our binding climate commitments, and we will need to see the orderly phase-down and phase-out of fossil fuels.

Assessing the results of the first Global Stocktake and elevating the bar politically and financially on adaptation

The first Global Stocktake will demonstrate the large gap between current climate action and what is needed to keep global temperatures well below 2°C. It is hoped that the political phase will also deliver a strong message on adaptation, and ensure that work done by developing countries is sufficiently considered, analysed and synthesized into the adaptation process. The Global Stocktake should prompt the EU to reaffirm its commitments on adaptation, find ways to mainstream adaptation within the cross-continental partnership, and deliver greater climate finance towards Africa.

At COP27, some stakeholders were concerned that the campaign around loss and damage would take precedence over voices on adaptation. It is paramount to understand that lack of progress on adaptation is a big loss for Africa, and one which could lead to greater instability and conflict. It is hoped that the Global Stocktake political phase delivers a strong message on moving beyond warm rhetoric to concrete action on the ground.

The UN's new Adaptation Gap report shows yet again how far adrift we are from meeting the finance needs of the most vulnerable parts of the world. The gap is growing and is currently estimated globally at US\$387 billion per year.

There is a unique opportunity in 2024, for reinvigorating adaptation action, with the review and potential renewal of the NAP process (2024-2025 NAPs Review). Although not on everyone's radar, it offers a good opportunity for countries to share NAP process experiences and use these inputs to improve their adaptation frameworks. Another important thing to consider is the review of the UNFCCC/LEG Guidelines for NAPs as well as the Biannual Transparency Reports (BTRs) which are due by the end of 2024, which constitute yet other processes through which countries can share lessons leading to improved actions.

Aligning the Post-2030 SDG Framework with the EU's Green Deal and AU's Agenda 2063

While significant work on implementing the SDG 2030 agenda remains to be done, it is also important to consider the post-2030 framework. Interim climate targets between now and mid-century are important for benchmarking progress on implementing climate action.

The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC) has been clear when communicating the climate science: there is a very narrow pathway to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees in this century. However, meeting this objective, while demanding, is still possible.

The post-2030 climate action framework will need to be driven by bold and committed policy leadership. In Q1 2024, the EU will adopt its 2040 climate targets, which will be supported by updated legislation to ensure that the Union's ambition of reaching climate-neutrality by 2050 remains feasible. This will be an important development for the EU's climate framework in the next decade but, without coordinated and shared international commitments to climate action, the 2030s will not usher in the changes needed to meet global climate commitments agreed at Paris. We need strong international climate diplomacy if we are to meet our collective obligations and curb runaway climate change.

At the last SDG summit during UNGA78, leaders reconfirmed their commitments to the 2030 Agenda and announced new initiatives to accelerate implementation. This represented a valuable opportunity to re-ignite EU and AU commitments to advance the SDGs. Aligned with the EU's own Green Deal and the AU's Agenda 2063, Agenda 2030 currently serves as the best plan for global peace and development. It should be the starting point when the EU engages with Africa.

Despite being at very different stages in their transitions, the two continents can support each other by working together, notably on issues related to investment climate, securing access to critical minerals, building a just and equitable energy future, and forging a joint platform for cooperation on ocean governance and blue economy. Both sides could benefit from EU expertise around climate, development and trade-related policy, and its available capital for investment combined with Africa's enormous potential.

As Africa and Europe, we need to find a shared language of trust and delivery to enable us to work towards the same goals. The Global Gateway – if well explained and planned effectively with partners – can become much more than a European project, and could shift the focus to actions of common interest to deliver global public goods in view of the post-2030 agenda.

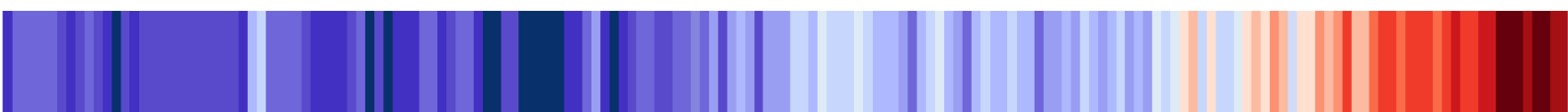
Rebooting political and financial leadership towards clean cooking solutions

The IEA recently shared that €4bn would be enough to solve the issue clean cooking in Africa. However, ambitious commitments and concrete actions to achieve universal access to clean cooking are still lacking, despite providing powerful levers to achieving climate, environment, health, and development goals. To date, the level of political commitment and investment in clean cooking has not matched the global magnitude of the challenge. With fewer than ten years until we reach 2030, the first International Summit on Clean Cooking for Africa in Spring 2024, announced by the IEA ahead of COP28, represents a unique opportunity to ratchet-up action and support for clean cooking solutions and SDG7.

It is increasingly recognised that safeguarding nature is critical to addressing climate change and protecting billions of the most vulnerable people around the world. Yet, as governments, donors and investors look for ways to protect and restore nature, and improve the global health system, they often overlook one of the most accessible and impactful solutions: clean cooking. Nearly 1 billion people still lack access to modern cooking solutions in Sub-Saharan Africa, and almost 500,000 Africans die prematurely due to household air pollution every year. Considering the annual toll on human health, forests, climate and local economies, clean cooking solutions should be central to national climate, health and development strategies.

National and continental political leaders must take bold action to ensure the 940 million Africans who currently lack clean cooking solutions have the means to prepare food in a safe, clean and affordable way. Such measures would greatly contribute to ecosystem recovery, regenerative livelihoods, clean air and community health, and female empowerment. It is imperative to build on the momentum provided by the Africa Climate Summit (ACS) to create and resource governmental clean cooking 'delivery units' to lead and coordinate clean cooking efforts across agencies and departments. Kenya and Sierra Leone announced at ACS that such clean cooking delivery units will be established at the presidential level.

These 'delivery units' should help shape funding and action alongside the adoption of robust policy frameworks. The EU and the international community must commit the resources – both financial and technical support - to support African governments to set up these 'delivery units', invest in funding for successful delivery of ambitious policies and programmes, and help meet the commitments made by national governments in partnership with these 'delivery units'.



Unlocking institutional capital and addressing the issue of access and cost of finance

Throughout the last few years, we have been concerned by the very serious problems faced by many African countries in accessing affordable finance and investment funds, aggravated by rising debt distress, huge increases in interest rates and the impossible burden of debt servicing. Massive increases in funding are urgently needed from both public and private sectors to deliver infrastructure, energy, and water access across Africa, and address an acceleration of climate and biodiversity impacts.

There is a huge difference in borrowing costs faced by African countries, in comparison with their European peers, with up to 10-point differences in interest rates, while access to capital is also drying up as investors seek safe havens. African countries themselves need to increase domestic resource mobilisation by broadening fiscal measures and curbing illicit financial flows.

The two continents should work further on the private finance needed to deliver a just and equitable energy future. While JETPs provide much needed public investment through bilateral sources and Multilateral Development Banks, institutional funds and private sector capital also need to be mobilised at speed and scale for sufficient funds to be invested in making progress towards the energy transition.

Large volumes of institutional capital from Africa and Europe will need to be mobilised to achieve the investment levels required and close the financing gap for energy access and transition. The Africa Climate Summit, the recent G20 Leaders' Meeting, and the Autumn Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund demonstrate that the energy transition requires new approaches and far greater ambition to financing and governance.

As Africa and Europe, it is time to agree on a new approach and narrative, if we are to make the most of Africa's competitive advantage in offering solutions to global climate change. Together, our two continents should co-define an investment roadmap and structured capital allocation plan, attract and leverage existing sources of capital across both continents, and drive both low-carbon energy transitions and green industrialisation for the benefit of our people





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