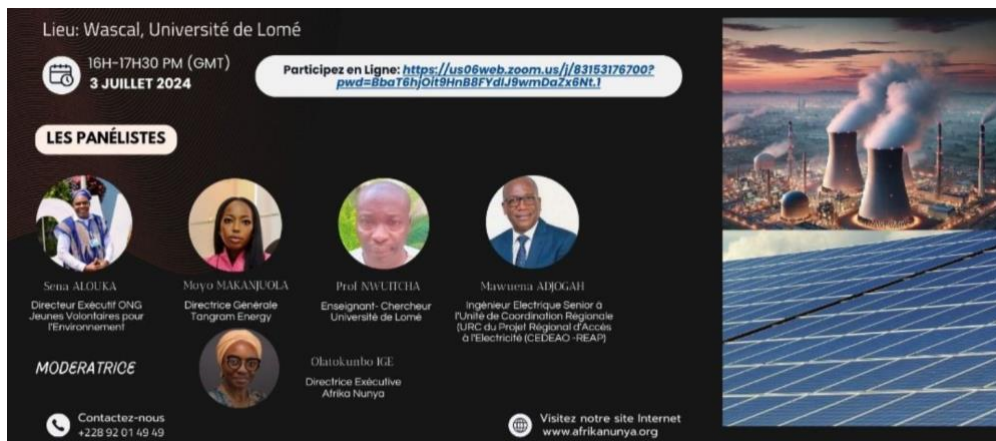


# Webinar Summary Report

Theme: *'Climatic Justice and Energy Transition'*



Lieu: Wascal, Université de Lomé

16H-17H30 PM (GMT)  
3 JUILLET 2024

Participez en Ligne: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83153176700?pwd=EBaT8hY0t9hnb8FYdU9wcmQzXz6Nt.1>

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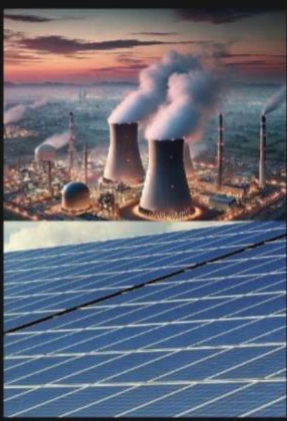
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The webinar took place on 3 July 2024. It was held at the West African Science Service Center on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL), based at the University of Lomé.

The aim of the webinar was to discuss Africa's role in causing and combating climate change, to highlight key issues and challenges related to the energy transition in Africa, and to propose solutions to the continent's decision-makers for an equitable and well-considered energy transition. The final part of the webinar was devoted to a discussion of the panelists' recommendations to enable African countries to manage their energy transition, taking into account the specific context of the continent.

The webinar was held in both remote and face-to-face modes, with a total of 70 participants (29 in person and 41 online).

*Moderator:* Ms. Olatokunbo IGE, Executive Director, Afrika Nunya

*Speakers:*

- Ms. Moyo MAKANJUOLA, Managing Director Tangram Energy Limited;
- Prof. Kokou N'WUTCHA, Professor, University Lomé;
- Mr. Séna ALOUKA, Chair, Energy Working Group, Climate Action Network (CAN International);
- Mr. Kwasi Mawuena ADJOGAH, Senior Power Engineer at the Regional Coordination Unit, Regional Electricity Access Project (ECOWAS-REAP).

## **THE ISSUE**

### *Energy transition in Africa*

The energy transition involves countries shifting from fossil fuel-heavy pathways to low-carbon pathways by changing their energy mix to increase the share of renewable energy. The world's first global stocktake set clear targets for the global energy transition: to triple the global use of renewable energy and to double energy efficiency by 2030.

COP 28 in Dubai represented a paradigm shift in international climate negotiations, as it was the first time that fossil fuels were explicitly mentioned in a COP agreement, reflecting the growing consensus on the need to phase out fossil fuels.

### *Climatic Justice*

Despite contributing less than 4% of global emissions, Africa is the continent most vulnerable to the consequences of global warming: 7 of the most vulnerable countries to climate change are in Africa. This unique situation puts into perspective the historical responsibility that developed countries have towards developing countries for their role in exacerbating climate change. In 2022 alone, climate change in the form of extreme weather events, as well as slow onset events, will cost the continent \$9 billion. Recovering from these shocks is expected to cost African countries 5-15% of GDP.

At the same time, many African countries have significant fossil fuel reserves or have recently made new discoveries (Senegal, Ivory Coast) and will be eager to benefit economically from these resources. Finally, an abrupt transition away from fossil fuels could depress economic activity and slow the industrialization of these countries.

### *Energy Transition as a health issue*

Today, indoor air pollution kills thousands of people (4,000 in Togo), more than HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that women are exposed to indoor pollution equivalent to 20 cigarettes a day.

Switching to cleaner forms of energy can have important positive public health outcomes for African nations. Reframing the debate from one of convenience and efficiency to one of health may be a better way to ensure consumer buy-in. Renewable energy stakeholders should therefore communicate extensively about the perceived health benefits of using renewable forms of energy, such as their impact on reducing indoor air pollution, in order to popularize them.

## **OBSTACLES TO ENERGY TRANSITION IN AFRICA**

### *Energy Access*

Access to energy remains a challenge for much of Africa. Today, 600 million people in Africa lack access to energy, severely hampering economic development and

activity. There is a debate as to whether the issue of energy access should take precedence over the issue of energy transition in Africa.

### *Cultural Acceptance and Resistance to change*

The energy transition faces cultural resistance at first. In the collective consciousness, the color and taste of food cooked on charcoal is considered superior to that of food cooked on gas or electric stoves. There are still barriers to widespread acceptance of biogas because of the stigma associated with using an energy source derived from human waste.

### *Africa's Two track Energy Transition*

Today, Africa is caught in the urgency of now. On the one hand, it is essential not to move too quickly to a low-carbon path, as this will negatively affect economic outcomes, job creation and wealth creation.

At the same time, Africa must also take the long view: putting in place the necessary infrastructure, frameworks and technologies to effect a transition to these low-carbon systems in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities that will be created. A balance must be struck between the present and the future.

### *The cost of renewable energy*

Another issue is the cost of these new technologies. Many of them are imported, which contributes to their high price. Today, the price of a gas stove or solar panel is prohibitive, creating a financial barrier for Africans who want to make the transition to more environmentally friendly forms of energy.

### *Funding*

For Africa to successfully achieve its energy transformation goals, significant financial resources will need to be mobilized. Today, renewable energy is a small part of the energy mix in most African countries, and to increase the share of renewable energy, African countries will need to invest heavily. The energy transition poses a number of challenges for African countries; many are already heavily indebted and will need to take on more debt to finance renewable energy projects.

Today, global climate finance needs are estimated at around \$8.6 trillion. The international community has fallen short of its commitment to mobilize USD 100 billion per year by 2030. There is therefore scepticism that it will be able to mobilize the necessary funds. But the resources are available and can be mobilized through various channels, including air and sea transport, control of tax evasion, or the mining industry. These are all sectors or industries that could generate funds to bridge the climate finance gap. USD 9 trillion is roughly what the world already spends annually on fossil fuel subsidies. So the money to meet the global climate finance needs is there, but the political will is still lacking.

This is in part due to the issue of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. This principle is used by developing countries to argue for the need for increased financial support from developed countries, based on their historical contribution to and responsibility for climate change, and on the limited capacity of developing countries to adapt to and finance climate action. Developed countries, on the other hand, resist the principle because they do not want their historical responsibility to become synonymous with unlimited financial liability.

Ultimately, domestic resource mobilization will be key for African countries to bridge the climate finance gap.

#### *The gap between research and real-life needs*

Human capacity remains the biggest obstacle to achieving energy transformation in Africa. There are still too few researchers and students engaged in energy efficiency and renewable energy research and education compared to the need. It is important that universities are not isolated chambers of theory, but problem-solving centers that provide practical solutions to the challenges faced by actors in the energy transition.

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

### *Multi-Actor Approach*

The energy transition is not one-dimensional. It is important to create a synergy between different actors and a multidisciplinary approach to achieve a change of mindset. Synergy between different actors (government decision makers, entrepreneurs, civil society, universities, etc.) needs to be strengthened.

Community involvement in the development of solutions is key. An example of technology adapted to the local context is the case of cookstoves, which have been adapted to larger sizes with larger burners for communal cooking, which is more in line with African realities.

### *The role of women*

Women play an important role as change agents. By involving them throughout the value change process. Leverage their unique position in households and communities to drive sustainable change. For example, women are the biggest stakeholders in the area of cookstoves and managing household energy needs. Their involvement ensures that solutions are effectively used and culturally accepted. Women's buy-in ensures that people in the community buy into initiatives.

### *Universities*

Universities and research centers can play an important role in creating discussion platforms, bringing together different actors to develop plans and ideas,

but also in educating young people and coordinating the debate on energy transition.

Universities should also be at the forefront of research on energy transitions adapted to Africa. Universities such as the University of Lomé are conducting studies on the materials used to build stoves and are experimenting with alternatives such as palm nut shells to improve energy efficiency.

### *The importance of Awareness Campaigns*

The level of awareness of the energy transition among renewable energy actors varies widely. It is therefore crucial that messages on the key issues of climate justice and energy transition are consistently repeated to raise awareness among all groups and actors. Ensuring that all actors are aware and knowledgeable about just transition issues will ensure that discussions between stakeholders are effective and positive, and that they do not talk past each other.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. It's important to understand that the energy transition is not just about energy. The approach must be multi-sectoral, involving other sectors such as health, business, industry and so on.
2. Universities should play a key role as laboratories for the development of context-based technologies for energy transformation in Africa.
3. Africa should make women and other marginalized groups key actors in discussions on efficiency and energy transition.
4. It's important to explore innovative ways to mobilize resources for energy transformation and climate finance.
5. Governments should promote a public-private partnership that prioritizes local businesses and promotes local expertise.