

UNU-INRA Africa Climate Week 2023 Side-Event Proposal

Co-conveners: United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA)

Event title:

All aboard! Energy, green minerals, planning processes for a just transition in Africa.

Date: Friday, 8 September

Time: 09:00 - 10:00

Room: Karre Mountain

Event description (min 50 words; max 200 words):

The global drive towards net zero necessitates rapid transition to clean energy systems. Without specific efforts to ensure an equitable transition, existing injustices in the current energy systems will be exacerbated, resulting in winners and losers.

Africa remains the biggest potential clean energy and green transitions growth pole with critical minerals for the global green and digital transitions. However, Africa is still energy poor, and despite contributing the least emissions, Africa is suffering the worst impacts of climate change.

The continent needs \$1.4 trillion to implement the NDCs, but only receives 3% of global climate finance, leaving an annual financing gap of \$99.9–\$127.2 billion. Yet, the continent is making important strides towards investing in large-scale green energy projects. Recent investments include a US\$10 billion green hydrogen project in Namibia.

But, right now, Africa is underprepared for this transition for several reasons. Most significantly, a disconnect between science and policy means many African institutions are unable to tackle the challenges around a post-carbon economy.

The side-event will explore new investments in the energy sector, current dynamics related to critical green minerals and identify how policy priorities can enable credible planning processes for a low carbon development.

What would you like the outcome of your event to be? (max 100 words):

1. Compare and contrast green energy projects in Africa to identify best practice cases and challenges.
2. Explore the dynamics of critical green minerals development.
3. Analyse the nuances of just transitions in Africa, power-imbalances between the global North and South, and ways to minimise economic losses from the transition.
4. Garner participation and partnership for UNU-INRA's new initiative: The African Facility for Transitions Research (AFTER-Carbon), a Policy to Research Hub connecting

experts to share knowledge and solve problems, relating in particular to post-carbon barriers within the energy, cities, and agriculture sectors.

Speakers:

Dr. Fatima Denton (virtual)

Dr. Vanessa Ushie - Acting Director, African Natural Resources Management and Investment Centre, African Development Bank Group

Dr. James Murombedzi - Director, Africa Climate Policy Centre, UNECA

Dr. Marit Kitaw (virtual) - Interim Director African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC), African Union Commission

Dr. Calude Kabemba (virtual) - Executive Director, Southern African Resource Watch

Moderator: Dr. Linus Mofor (UNECA)

Guiding themes:

1. Climate justice, just transitions and power imbalances.
2. Sustainable energy investments across Africa and ways to incentivise the private sector.
3. Green hydrogen project in Namibia, financing issues, how to de-risk the debt.
4. Mining energy investments–renewables vs coal– and the Zambia/DRC battery factory project.
5. Climate finance and regional integration, as well as women’s integration into green transition process.