

• Programme

sef: Policy Lunch

Just transition, just in time?

**Europe and Africa's shared path to
climate-neutral energy**

**14 November 2024
12:00 - 13:45 hrs (CET)**

Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU
Rue Montoyer 47
Brussels, Belgium

supported by

The State Government of
North Rhine-Westphalia



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BACKGROUND

The European Green Deal aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 and to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050. These ambitious goals stand strong also after the results of the European elections, as Commission President von der Leyen reaffirmed. To achieve them, a fast transition to green, renewable energy is key, as energy use causes about three quarters of European emissions.

Just across the Mediterranean Sea, Africa holds enormous potential for renewable energy production, boasting the world's best conditions for solar, wind, and hydrogen. The continent could generate 67 % of its power through local renewable energy by 2030. This transformation has the power to drive economic growth and deliver substantial social benefits, while protecting the climate at the same time.

Africa and Europe thus share the goal of making their energy production climate-neutral. A strong sustainable energy partnership between them could be a win-win situation: Europe depends on African support for a successful energy transition, while Africa could benefit from European investments in their energy sector. But how can this “just transition” be achieved in practice?

Making a transition “just” means jointly addressing economic, environmental and social issues, and equally recognizing the goals and responsibilities of both African and European actors. Yet, there are many challenges: Europeans are quick to criticize African leaders for expanding their fossil industries, while securing their own energy supplies through oil and gas in the face of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Too often, Africa is regarded as a source of raw materials, rather than a place of value creation. On the other hand, African leaders insist on their right to emit more greenhouse gases in the future (as Europeans have done unabashedly in the past), but fossil fuel profits rarely benefit the local population. Instead, fossil industries can severely damage the environment and societies, often driving conflict and corruption.

How can these challenges be overcome, and mutual trust be established? How can double standards be avoided and climate and development goals be reconciled? How successful – and “just” – are existing energy partnerships (such as the Just Energy Transition Partnerships/JETPs)? How can European investment into African renewable energy infrastructure be encouraged? We are looking forward to discussing these questions with international experts at the Policy Lunch 2024.

12:00 HRS REGISTRATION AND LIGHT LUNCH

12:30 HRS WELCOME

Reiner Steffens

Director, Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU, Brussels

Dr Marcus Kaplan

Executive Director, Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)

12:40 HRS ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Chigozie Nweke-Eze

CEO, Integrated Africa Power;
Visiting Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations (ECRF)

Hanne Knaepen

Head, Climate Action and Green Transition,
European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), Brussels

Julien Desmedt

Policy Officer for Sub-Saharan Africa,
Directorate General for Climate Action, European Commission

CHAIR

Dr Grace Mbugu

Head of Climate Change Program,
Africa Policy Research Institute (APRI), Berlin

followed by discussion with the audience

13.45 HRS END OF THE EVENT