

Africa's energy transition must focus on fairness, wealth creation, jobs

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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Africa has the will to transition to more sustainable energy, but the emphasis must be on a just process that will create wealth and jobs for the people of the continent.



Kandeh Yumkella

Rwanda, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Ethiopia and South Africa are likely to achieve universal access by 2030, other countries are lagging. The continent is still far from close to reaching Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all," Kandeh Yumkella, economist and advisor to the International Energy Agency (IEA) on Africa told the Africa Energy Indaba in Cape Town.

“ 6-7 African countries will achieve universal access by 2030 according to Kandeh Yumkella [@EnergyIndaba](#) [#energy](#) [@Bizcommunity](#)— Bizcom Energy & Mining ([@Biz_Energy](#)) [March 3, 2020](#) ”

Over 600-million people are without access to electricity and another one-billion people will be added to the population by 2050. In addition, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agenda 2063 aims at industrialisation and creating 11-million jobs a year, so an integrated energy transition cannot be ruled out.

" Financing in Africa carries high risk, but we need \$100bn investment every year to meet SDG7 and Agenda 2063. I don't see enough global effort to manage the fair transition for Africa.

The role of gas

"While in Europe they talk about gas, in Africa they say it should be solar photovoltaic (PV). Electrification by renewables is the ultimate to help Africa decarbonise, but we need gas as well. We want a circular economy, but Africa needs power to power growth and opportunity and become the next frontier of development.

"The tendency is to push for renewables in Africa rather than gas, but Africa needs to use all of its resources, including natural gas. Forty percent of new gas discoveries are in Africa. Institutions such as the World Bank more reluctant to give loans for gas than for renewables in African countries,"

Yumkella pointed out an interesting dilemma. While the continent is being pressurised into going the sustainable energy route, it also houses the largest concentration of minerals the rest of the world needs to implement green technology. The only way to get those out of the ground will be by using traditional energy sources. "The choices Africa makes will determine how the world goes [in transitioning to sustainable energy]," he said.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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