



ENERGY TRANSITION

SERIES OF DIALOGUES ON THE ENERGY
TRANSITION IN AFRICA



The inaugural session highlights the urgency of establishing a pan-African energy transition agenda

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- The main stakeholders on the continent have no doubts: coordination will be crucial for taking advantage of opportunities and mitigating potential risks arising from the energy transition agenda. This was one of the key messages highlighted in the inaugural session of the series of monthly dialogues on the “Implications of the Energy Transition in the African Political Economy” held on the 30th of March by the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD), in partnership with the Africa Institute for Environmental Law (AIEL) and the Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW).





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Mutuso Dliwayo

In a virtual format, the inaugural session promoted a discussion on “Africa and the value chain of critical minerals: Opportunities, Threats and Risks” and was attended by experts from civil society, representatives of the private sector, academics, and policymakers at the continent level.

Speaking at the opening of the debate, the Director of the *Africa Institute for Environmental Law* (AIL), Mutuso Dliwayo, highlighted the need for a fair and equitable energy transition agenda that promotes the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process.

For Mutuso Dliwayo, the global energy transition agenda brings with it a series of issues that still need to be discussed at the continent level, especially regarding opportunities, threats and risks. The adequacy of the regulatory framework,

strategies to avoid negative social and environmental effects, the inclusion of affected communities, as well as the need to promote transparency in the planning, procurement *and* regulation process of the mining industry value chain are some of the issues which, for Mutuso Dliwayo, lack greater articulation and coordination at the continent level.

It is precisely to help answer these questions that the initiative “Implications of the Energy Transition in the African Political Economy” emerges as a multisectoral and independent forum that aims to facilitate the sharing of multidisciplinary knowledge and learning conducive to the formulation of quality policies, programmatic implementation and research on the implications of the energy transition on the African political economy.



Marit Kitaw

“We have to work together so that we can speak with one voice”, Marit Kitaw, Acting Director of the AMDC

There is no doubt among the main stakeholders across the continent: coordination will be crucial to seizing opportunities and mitigating potential risks. A process that necessarily involves capitalizing on existing guiding and coordination instruments, such as the African Vision for the Mining Sector (AMV).

For Marit Kitaw, Acting Director of the African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC)¹, there is a unique opportunity to leverage AMV to promote a just and inclusive energy transition on the continent: “The Africa Mining Vision constitutes the ‘action plan’ for Africa’s minerals to contribute to sustainable development”.

The AMV outlines how minerals can lead to sustainable development and inclusive growth across the entire mining industry value chain on the continent, starting with the regulatory framework, revenue streams, geological information systems, social and environmental impacts, governance, linkages with the rest of the econo-

my (beneficiation and local content), small-scale artisanal mining, to capacity building across the value chain.

Critical minerals for the global agenda of decarbonizing energy systems are dispersed across the continent. Therefore, as explained by Kitaw, a collaboration between countries, through the capitalization of AMV and the African Continental Free Trade Area, for example, emerges as imperative. The recently signed financing agreement between Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)² for the pre-feasibility study for the creation of special economic zones dedicated to the Electric Vehicle Battery Value Chain is an example of a concrete step toward the development of the minerals value chain on the continent through a collaborative effort.

Alongside the opportunities that should arise with the increased demand for minerals to support initiatives to decarbonize energy systems, threats, and risks are also expected. The lack of

¹ AMDC is a specialized agency of the African Union dedicated to harnessing Africa’s mineral resources for sustainable development and structural transformation on the continent through the implementation of the African Vision for the Mining Sector (AMV).

² “Feasibility study for electric car batteries in Zambia and the DRC”, available at: <https://www.commonwealthunion.com/feasibility-study-for-electric-car-batteries-in-zambia-and-the-drc/>

transparency and the perpetuation of exploitation with negative social and environmental impacts without adding value to the economy are, for Kitaw, the main risks and threats of the global rush for minerals.

The fact is that minerals that are considered by other countries to be “critical” due to their rarity and growing demand for the energy transition agenda and military applications are considered “strategic” for African economies. This is due not

only to the fact that they have important reserves of these minerals but also because they are expected to play an important role in promoting economic and social growth and development in the region.

“We have to be quick to seize opportunities, but more than that, ensure that the intensification of mining and the energy transition agenda on the continent will be socially and environmentally beneficial for the region’s economies”.

“A total paradigm shift is needed on the continent”, Claude Kabemba, Executive Director of SARW



Claude Kabemba

For Claude Kabemba, Executive Director of Southern Africa Resource Watch, more than coordination, the continent needs a total paradigm shift to a situation where African countries maximize even more control and ownership of their

resources. The case of battery precursor production in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo should be understood as the beginning of this paradigm shift. The countries must further develop the mining industry value chain.

Mineral resources must be used to support the continent’s industrialization process. “Most countries use natural resources to build new technologies and industrialize, but also to build mega-infrastructures around these minerals that the continent needs so much to absorb unemployment and fight poverty”, he argued.

Due to its abundant reserves, the African continent is expected to play a strategic and important role in responding to the growing demand for renewable energy technologies and thus promote the industrialization and economic development of the region’s economies. However, as highlighted by Claude Kabemba, there is a set of preconditions for the existing potential to be effectively exploited, which involves, among other aspects, the need to renegotiate existing contracts with multinationals to promote the aggregation of value of resources at the domestic level, as well as greater integration among the continent’s economies to harmonize mining policies.



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