



Summit of the Future Action Days Side Event

[Youth in Front: Opportunities for African Youth in a Just Low-Carbon Transition]

[20th September 2024, 10 am EDT, Millennium Hilton New York One UN Plaza]

Organized by: [The Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the UN, International Development Research Centre, Nigeria's House Committee on Renewable Energy, UNDP, and INCLUDE knowledge platform,]

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TWO PAGE MAXIMUM

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Africa, while contributing minimally to global carbon emissions, is disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change. The continent faces significant challenges, including energy poverty, high levels of youth unemployment, and the effects of environmental degradation. However, Africa also possesses vast resources—such as arable land and critical minerals like cobalt and lithium—that are essential for the global low-carbon transition. This unique position presents both challenges and opportunities for the continent, particularly for its youth.

The global push towards a low-carbon economy offers a transformative opportunity for Africa to address these challenges. By adopting innovative, sustainable energy solutions, African nations can simultaneously combat climate change, bridge energy gaps, and create new economic opportunities. The youth, who make up a significant portion of the continent's population, are poised to be at the forefront of this transition. However, to fully realize this potential, there must be a concerted effort to equip young people with the skills necessary for green jobs, foster their innovative capacities, and retain talent within the

continent.

This panel discussion, "Youth in Front: Opportunities for African Youth in a Just Low-Carbon Transition," sought to explore these opportunities by bringing together youth leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders from various sectors. The discussion focused on how African youth can lead in the development of sustainable, equitable economic models that address both historical injustices and current socio-economic challenges. It also highlighted the importance of collaboration between the Global North and South, emphasizing the need for fair and inclusive practices in the low-carbon transition. In line with the principles of the Paris Agreement, the event emphasized the necessity of common but differentiated responsibilities, ensuring that African youth are not only beneficiaries but active contributors to a sustainable and just future.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Breaking the Barriers for Youth and Women: Marginalized voices—especially young people and women—are missing from the climate action conversation. It's time to break the barriers that exclude them from the low-carbon transition.
- Fossil Fuel Dependency is Holding Us Back: The stranglehold of fossil fuels is stifling renewable energy jobs and economic opportunities for Africa's youth. A greener path is possible if we shift the balance.
- Africa's Future Needs Green Skills Now: Without green skills in education, Africa's youth will miss the chance to lead in the global green economy. We need a training revolution today for tomorrow's leaders.
- Global Solutions, Local Leadership: Africa's youth can't tackle the climate crisis alone. Global partnerships and investments are essential to unlocking their leadership in the low-carbon transition.
- From Tokenism to True Youth Leadership: The time for lip service is over. True inclusion means giving youth real power and responsibility in shaping the policies that impact their future.
- Harnessing Africa's Energy for Youth Empowerment: Africa's vast renewable resources can fuel economic growth for young people if policies prioritize equitable and sustainable resource use.
- Unleashing Africa's Young Innovators: Young Africans are bursting with climate solutions, but lack the institutional support to thrive. With the right networks and funding, they can lead the charge.
- AfCFTA: The Gateway to Green Growth: Africa's youth can shape a low-carbon future if AfCFTA integrates green skills and opportunities into the continent's trade networks.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- **Invest in Africa's Green Generation:** Empower Africa's youth and women by creating labor-based incentives that put them at the heart of renewable energy industries.
- **Revolutionize Education with Green Skills:** Integrate climate-focused training into Africa's education systems to build a workforce ready to lead the global green economy.
- **Fuel the Transition with Global Partnerships:** Africa's youth are ready to lead, but need international cooperation, investment, and technical support to succeed.
- **Turn Words into Action: Youth Leadership Now:** Move beyond rhetoric—create institutional mechanisms that give young Africans real influence in policymaking and climate action.
- **Support Africa's Brightest Minds:** Provide mentorship, seed funding, and networks to nurture youth-led innovation and ensure the continent's talent remains home to power the green transition.
- **Leverage AfCFTA for Green Empowerment:** Use AfCFTA as a strategic tool to integrate green skills into Africa's trade, empowering youth to drive the continent's low-carbon future.

Webpage to find more information:

<https://includeplatform.net/news/join-us-at-the-un-future-summit-side-event/>