

Africa and the EU are tackling energy challenges together

African and European policy and business leaders meet at the Second High Level Meeting of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership



From 11 to 13 February, high level delegates involved in the energy sector found a platform for extensive dialogue on challenges and opportunities for the energy-focused partnership between Africa and the EU, established under the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

The Second High Level Meeting (HLM) of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) was jointly hosted by the Ethiopian Government and the African Union Commission (AUC), and organized by the EU Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility (EUEI PDF) serving as the AEEP Secretariat.

The Meeting served as a forum for all actors being strongly involved in paving the way for enhanced cooperation between the two continents, aiming at clean, affordable, and wide-spread energy access in African countries. More than 450 participants joined from Africa and Europe to engage in the event and target the vast number of remaining hurdles which have to be overcome to grant all African citizens a life with daily use of energy.

On the first day of the Meeting, participants could meet in practice-oriented side events on topics such as the role of the civil society, renewable-energy cooperation, or technical tools such as mini-grids. In these fora, core issues were put in focus and aligned with a discussion on niche topics to include these in the wider picture.

Main conclusions drawn during the side events were that the role of the civil society must be seen as strategic to the development of energy in Africa, that particularly women were victims of the lack of energy access due to their functions in African households, and that the technical means having been found so far would be very useful for the increasing implementation of renewable energy sources in remote areas.

The second day of the conference shed a light on achievements during the AEEP's first years of action and on the pre-conditions for investments in the energy sector. This day's sessions were mainly based on panel discussions, featuring prominent actors such as politicians, private company representatives, or public society stakeholders.

Financial investments were found to be a core prerequisite for the expansion of grids, for the deployment of installations, and for the collection of data on existing systems. Nevertheless, it was resumed that events like this year's High Level Meeting were having an important function for bringing actors together to trigger their willingness and ability for financial commitments. Building a bridge between companies, political representatives, and non-governmental organizations, was a central objective of this Meeting which could be achieved very successfully.

One major sign for the practical success of the partnership was the high resonance for the Call for Actions and Commitments, which collected more than hundred and fifty success stories on where actions had been taken by the involved parties.



The last day of the conference served as a stage for a large number of high-level representatives and delegates, such as ministers, directors, and commissioners. The “Addis Ababa Communiqué” was approved, based on the conclusions drawn for the first years of the partnership and on comments from all interested actors.

Main points of these conclusions were included in outlooks for the coming years, making clear that there was still action necessary to reach the 2020 targets which had been formulated at the first High Level Meeting of the AEEP in 2010. Despite of all the progress made in the respective areas, the two continents are still facing central barriers and their cooperation will be needed to reach energy access for all Africans, fostered by sustainable resource use and long-lasting political dialogue.

More information on www.aEEP-conference.org
Pictures are provided by IISD Reporting Services.