

## From commitment to action

### The complexity of achieving Africa's targets against climate change

The mounting evidence at our disposal attests that, in order to mitigate the effects of climate change, the increase of global temperatures must be kept within 1,5° in comparison to pre-industrial levels.

Achieving net-zero life models, however, is an effort that requires a global and synergic mobilisation, which finds its roots in the international commitments currently driving the sustainability agenda. The masterplan of this effort is represented by the [Paris Agreement](#) and the [UN 2030 Agenda](#), which clearly outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals as the milestones to achieve in the current decade.

The aforementioned targets are the basis for the proliferation of national and regional pledges. This is the case, for example, of [Agenda 2063](#), promoted by the African Union and defined as “Africa’s blueprint and master plan for transforming [the continent] into the global powerhouse of the future”, as well as of the African Development Bank’s (AfDB’s) [New Deal on Energy](#), aiming at achieving 100% urban access and 95% rural energy access by 2025. Moreover, According to the [International Renewable Energy Agency](#) (IRENA), by November 2021, 53 African countries had approved NDCs but, out of them, only 40 countries outlined specific targets for the development of renewable energy sources (i.e.: increase of national REs capacity, e-mobility, etc.).

We are therefore witnessing a shift in the climate-related global governance: nevertheless, the current results of commitments, policies and NDCs are seesawing. International agreements are producing questionable outcomes in comparison to the agreed targets, with the global emissions expected to rise by 16% before 2030 ([International Energy Agency](#)). A *status quo* that characterises also the African continent: according to RES4Africa’s analysis [Connecting the Dots](#), just in the MENA region, only a few countries (Morocco, Egypt and Jordan) are on track to meet their respective targets, with RE growth still being limited and uneven. Northern and Southern Africa channelled more than 50% of all additional RE capacity since 2009, and just a handful of countries (Egypt, South Africa and Morocco) are attracting more than 60% of REs-related investments in Africa ([Connecting the Dots: Why only 2% of global RE in Africa?](#)).

The reasons preventing a full and even realisation of the proposed targets consist in an out-and-out stumbling block, standing between international agreements, NDCs and their actual realisation.

Such a gap mostly consists in eye-catching, unrealistic plans for the growth of the REs market, which often remain unachieved due to multiple factors. First of all, few African countries can rely on effective procurement planning processes, causing frequent underinvestment in their renewable energy sectors. Additional to this status quo are numerous structural inefficiencies (slow auctions, poor transparency on key elements such as the tariffs, slow bureaucratic passages, etc.), which prevent a widespread deployment of renewable solutions.

These criticalities, as explained by [IRENA](#), are worsened by market distortions which “favour fossil fuels”, outlining as necessary to “establish a fiscal system that curbs their use”. Such a shift, however, should be smart and well planned, as fossil fuel still provide basic energy access to entire communities: as instance, just in the MENA region, non-renewable energy sources cover 90% of the generated electricity, and many of its national economies highly rely on their revenues for their national fiscal balance.

As a matter of fact, in a growing number of African countries, a new political agenda is gaining momentum, according to which the attention to renewable energy shouldn't necessarily prevent countries from exploiting fossil fuels resources. As Nigeria's Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Marlin Sylva, declared to [CNBC Africa](#), “We are still in transition from firewood to gas. Please allow us to continue with our own transition”. In this sense, advocacy actions for the development of renewable energy markets should not only underline that they are the sustainable choice, but stress as well that renewable energies are the most rapid and cost-effective way to provide electricity and power the inclusive socio-economic growth of the continent.

Transforming commitment into action, in conclusion, is a process that should not be taken for granted: it requires a massive deal of preparatory operations, policy updates, institutional awareness and market reforms. To exploit the massive renewable energy resources the continent is blessed with and ensure access to sustainable energy for all, a collective effort must be unleashed, based on shared objectives and common benchmarks, but taking into account the necessities and criticalities of all African countries.

[RES4Africa Foundation \(Renewable Energy Solutions for Africa\)](#) is a Foundation that operates in support of Africa's just energy transition. Its mission is to work towards creating favourable conditions for scaling up investments in clean energy technologies in the continent. Functioning as a bridge between Europe and Africa, RES4Africa envisions the sustainable transformation of the continent's electricity systems to provide reliable and affordable electricity access, enabling job creation and socio-economic progress of all African businesses and societies.