



# SDG Pavilion at COP27

## Event Summary

Organization: UNU-INRA & UNECA

Event Title:

Overview of event and key messages
<p><i>Write a paragraph overview (not more than 150 words) which includes the name of the moderator and provides a concise overview of the key themes and synergies across the session's presentations</i></p> <p><i>The session was moderated by Dr. Linus Mofor. The main discussion centred around JUST green transitions in the African continent with a focus on informal sector inclusion and accelerating green innovation. The key topic of conversation focused on what constitutes a compelling just transition for Africa and the role of digital technologies. Panelists insisted on the necessity of having short-, medium-, and long-term goals for energy transition grounded on development contexts and an acute need to ensure energy. Insisting further that vulnerable groups including women must be included in green transitions, considering that they are highly represented in vulnerable employment and the informal sector. It was concluded that the role of digital technologies can not be overestimated in the transition as conduit for information exchange, early warnings triggers, and use of emerging technologies such as AI and IoT. The importance of connecting green entrepreneurs and informal sector agents with policymakers and financiers to reduce information gaps and support innovation was highlighted. In synopsis partnership is crucial to create synergies in supporting JUST green transitions in Africa.</i></p>
Speaker notes (including remarks by moderator)
<p><i><b>What constitutes a compelling just transition in Africa?</b></i></p> <p><i><b>Dr. Fatima Denton</b> remarked that this has to start with the way we define energy security, and must align with well-being to ensure that some people are not left on the margins. We should address the equity issues of transition, including both the scope and depth of transition, with deliberate and purposeful intent.</i></p> <p><i>We should start with the end from the beginning, we have to think on energy transition from the current reality. Let's set the short, medium and long-time goals for transition and focus. Reskilling and retooling may be necessary for JUST transition and we must ensure the access of key resources such as knowledge, technology and infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i><b>Mr. Jean-Paul Adam</b> posited that there is not one transition, there are multiple transitions. The transformation cannot be decoupled from economic transformation as we are fundamentally altering the framing of the economy and economic relations which has huge implications for the informal sector and the energy sector in terms of energy access.</i></p>

*Without energy we cannot move towards value addition to connect citizens across countries and allow them to invest in sustainable livelihoods. The role of oil and gas is a consequence of low energy access and clean cooking options. Gas can enable the upscaling of renewable energy across Africa. Every country will need to define its just energy pathways.*

***How do you see this nexus of energy with empowerment women, youth, rural dwellers.***

***Dr. Vanessa Ushie*** noted that women are over represented in the informal sector and vulnerable employment, while underrepresented in key sectors of green jobs, especially in higher-value areas such as transport and construction.

*The critical challenge is how do we address informality among women and create more green jobs? We need to ensure quality of jobs for women and support women entrepreneurs to achieve formalization of businesses which require training and finance support. Important enabling mechanisms are creating a level playing, improving legislation and providing public finance. AfDB have several financing mechanisms to support women and sectoral facilities. As well as other policy framework that support vulnerable people especially women and youth.*

*It is our responsibility to ensure the energy transition is just equitable and inclusive and should not leave anyone behind. AfDB is willing to work with stakeholder to ensure green transition in Africa.*

***How can Digital technologies support green transition?***

***Dr. Mactar Seck*** explained that digital technology can help green transition using emerging technology by reducing energy/ CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through smart technologies. Moreover, early warning signs and emerging technologies such as AI and IoT can play a tremendous role in green transition.

*Factors that hamper the use of digital technologies to support green transition includes:*

- 1. Inadequate Financing, most technology requires massive investment*
- 2. Limited Private sector investment in Africa*
- 3. Inadequate climate information that can support green transition*

*Therefore, to unleash the potential of the digital technologies for green transition expand broadband penetration, ensuring inclusive access to digital infrastructure, supportive legal and regulatory framework and skills development in the continent is crucial. To make innovation a reality it must be linked to the private sector and finance Also sound regulation is needed to enable young innovators.*


*UN-ECA is open to working with UNU-INRA and other stakeholders to support the role out of the JUSTIS Digital Portal in the African continent in supporting green transition.*

**Q&A**

*Include questions asked and notable replies (if any) in bullet-pointed form*

*How do we define the informal sector as it may be different from country to country?*

***Dr. Ushie*** noted that in defining the informal sector, one can look at the type of business, if the business is legally registered, the infrastructure etc. There are many definitions in



Africa of informality but it mostly depends on whether the businesses are taxed or taxable. It is critical to look at tax as a central dimension.

*How do you bridge the literacy gap for informal sector to interact with platform?*

**Dr. Denton** noted that unless you retool or reskill you will not be able to bridge the literacy gap.

Ms. Thelma Denton reflected on research findings emerging from the JUSTIS project, observing that about 40% of informal sector have at least primary education. We also find a high use of digital technology in rural areas and among informal workers and the JUSTIS digital application is designed to be used on mobile phones. The project will also include training sessions to help users engage and understand how to use the technology.

**Mr. Jean-Paul Adam** noted that not every community is going to produce their own energy, whereas some may focus on biofuels and charcoal among a number of different options as part of a greater whole. We shouldn't just look at it from the perspective of how to use low-cost solutions, but also how you connect communities to the grid to make in low energy access areas to make business more productive. Where the solutions are logical and linked to value creation it's good to look at context-specific innovations. But the focus should be connecting people to energy systems for greater productivity.

*How do you leverage on local finance?*

**Dr. Adam** raised the issue of channelling resources, highlighting opportunity through carbon credit markets. If structured right, carbon credit markets can bring money to the individual farmer and practitioner. UN-ECA's digital centre of excellence is not exclusive but responsive to specific needs expressed by member states. There should be a multiplicity of initiatives, many hackathons

On the private sector and local finance, Dr. Ushie revealed that AfDB is supporting green banks and youth entrepreneurship banks to finance green jobs. The innovative UNU-INRA-led JUSTIS platform is trying to address the knowledge gap. It is important to bring in banking and how we can support de-risking.

**Dr. Mactar Seck** expressed that the user is the central point. In terms of financial inclusion, high number of mobile users in Africa pushes financial inclusion, thus digital technologies play a wide role to foster economic development. We are at the first stage of the JUSTIS digital initiative, piloting 4 countries and willing to take on suggestions rolling out to the rest of the continent. We are open and can work with everyone.

### Relevant data

*Include any relevant data reporting the successful proceedings of the event. This may include, but not limited to:*

- *Number of participants (registered / attendees)*
  - Total approved registrants: 85
  - Total users: 75
- *Number of speakers*
  - 5 speakers, 1 moderator



- *Regional representation*

Algeria	
Angola	African region: 73
Benin	Americas: 7
Botswana	Europe: 3
Burkina Faso	Asia: 2
Burundi	
Cameroon x 3	
Canada	
Côte d'Ivoire x 3	
Egypt	
Ethiopia x 2	
Gabon	
Gambia	
Germany x 3	
Ghana x 21	
Ghana	
Japan	
Kenya x 2	
Madagascar	
Morocco	
Namibia x 8	
Niger x 3	
Nigeria x 8	
Pakistan	
Senegal	
Somalia	
South Africa x 6	
Tanzania x 6	
United States x 6	
Zambia x 3	

- *Gender representation*
  - *Speakers: 3 females, 2 males*
  - *Moderator: 1 male*

**Resources**

*Provide any resource that informs better the session. These could be as background notes to the discussion, outcome documents, additional resources.*

The JUSTIS portal: <https://greenafricaportal.net/home>