



Future of Energy **Conference**
2026

Report

CONFERENCE THEME:

**Powering Africa's Industrial Transformation:
Energy Systems for Value Addition and Competitiveness**



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Introduction



The [Future of Energy Conference \(FEC\)](#) is an annual platform that brings together stakeholders to advance an inclusive, sustainable and competitive energy future for Africa. It provides a strategic space to examine how Africa's energy systems can support economic transformation.

The 2026 edition was held from 25 to 26 August 2026 under the theme "Powering Africa's Industrial Transformation: Energy Systems for Value Addition and Competitiveness." It brought together policymakers, industry, financial institutions, development partners, civil society and researchers to examine how Africa can leverage its energy resources, mineral wealth, regional markets and emerging capabilities to support industrialisation, deepen value creation and strengthen long-term competitiveness.

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FEC by the Numbers

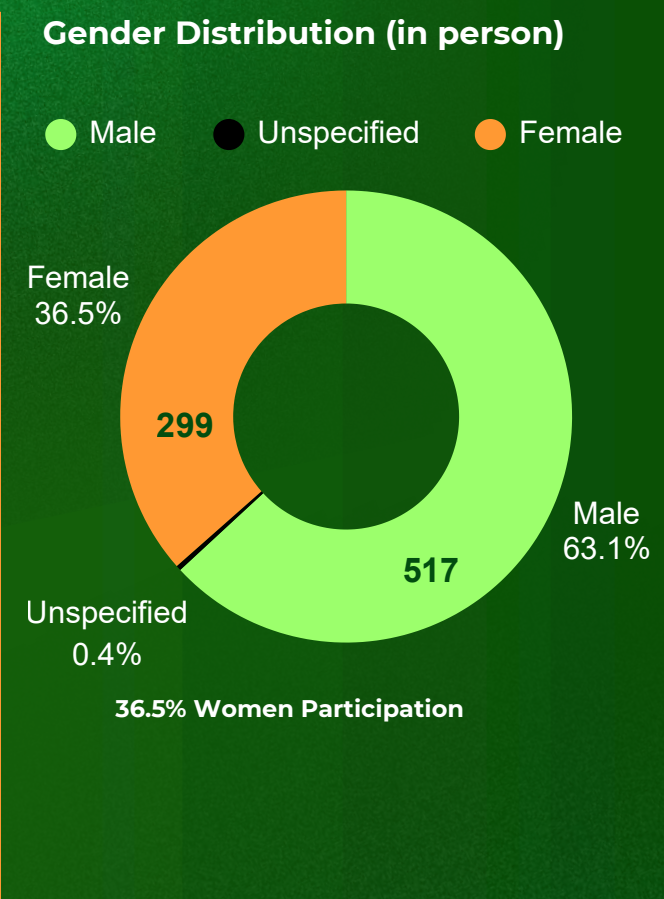
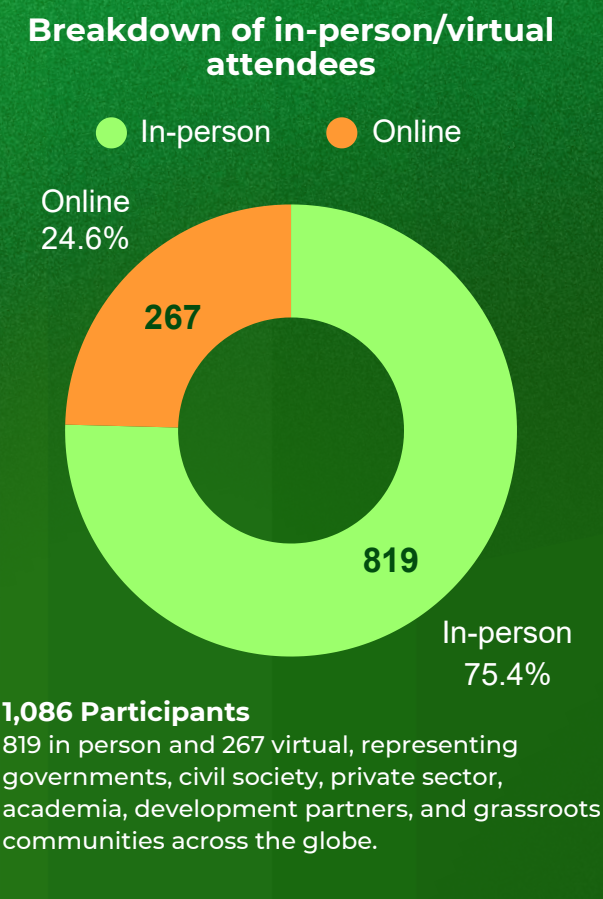
Summary



Participant Distribution by Continent



FEC 2026 at a Glance: Advancing Diversity and Inclusion



Opening Remarks and Guest Speakers' Addresses

Each day of the Conference began with addresses from guest speakers. The Keynote Address was delivered by Dr. George Nana Agyekum Donkor President, ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development – EBID, and Dr. Marit Kitaw, Economic Affairs Officer, UN Economic Commission for Africa - UNECA. This section of the report presents a summary of the guest speeches that were delivered at the Conference.



Energy must power competitiveness

The cost and reliability of energy remain fundamental to Africa's industrial ambitions. High energy costs affect what businesses can produce, where industries locate and how African economies compete in global markets. Yet lowering the cost of power is not simply a matter of building more generation capacity. Contract design, financing structures, risk allocation, infrastructure and the efficiency of electricity systems all influence the price ultimately paid by productive sectors.

This requires a closer alignment between energy and industrial policy. Energy systems must be designed not only to meet consumption needs, but to provide the predictable, affordable and reliable power required for production at scale.

“

We can't build global competitiveness on uncompetitive energy

Mr Benjamin Boakye
Executive Director, ACEP



Resource wealth must become productive capacity

Africa's abundant mineral and natural resource endowment presents a significant opportunity, but extraction alone will not deliver industrialisation. The greater opportunity lies in building stronger linkages between resource extraction and the wider economy. This requires both moving forward into processing, refining, manufacturing and technology development, and building backward linkages through domestic suppliers of equipment, engineering, logistics, maintenance, technology and other services that support resource production.

The question, therefore, is not simply how much Africa produces or exports, but how much value, knowledge, enterprise and productive capacity is created and retained within African economies. Growing demand for critical minerals creates an opportunity to participate more deeply in emerging value chains, while also using the resource sector to stimulate domestic firms, supplier networks and technological capabilities. Realising this opportunity will require deliberate investment in infrastructure, competitive energy systems, skills, technology, local supplier development and regional industrial ecosystems that connect extraction to a broader base of productive activity.

“

Africa must stop planning energy for consumption and look at production

Dr. Marit Kitaw

*Economic Affairs Officer, UN
Economic Commission for
Africa - UNECA*



The financing model needs to evolve

Africa's energy and industrial infrastructure needs cannot be met through public budgets or conventional financing alone. High investment risks raise financing costs, making energy and infrastructure more expensive and weakening industrial competitiveness.

This requires a financing architecture that combines better risk allocation with blended and local-currency denominated finance, deeper capital markets and credible public-private partnerships. African development and financial institutions also have a role in mobilising capital and reducing dependence on external financing.

The goal is to finance productive outcomes at a cost that enables African industries to compete.

“

There is a need to improve cross-border infrastructure to enable us to better utilise and share energy resources across the continent

Dr George Nana Agyekum Donkor

President, ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development



Africa needs regional scale

Industrial transformation cannot be pursued effectively through fragmented national systems. Regional power pools, cross-border infrastructure and the African Continental Free Trade Area create opportunities for countries to specialise, connect production networks and access larger markets. Regional integration should therefore be viewed not only as a trade objective, but as part of Africa's industrial strategy. Countries do not need to build every stage of a production network themselves. They can combine energy resources, mineral endowments, infrastructure, skills and markets across borders to build more competitive regional production networks and create the scale required for value addition.

“

Ghana's vision of a just energy transition rests on three pillars: energy access, industrialisation and sustainability.

Dr. John Abdulai Jinapor
Minister for Energy and Green Transition, Ghana



“

Africa has the resources, market, and willing people to transform its potential into production, jobs, and prosperity.

Hon. Dr Cassiel Ato Forson
Minister of Finance, Ghana



Transformation must also be inclusive

The pursuit of competitiveness cannot be separated from questions of ownership, participation and distribution. Industrial transformation must consider who benefits from new investments, who is excluded, who bears the costs and what capabilities are left behind.

This extends the idea of value addition beyond economic output. A genuinely transformative model should create opportunities for communities, workers, women, young people and African enterprises, while strengthening local skills, technology, research and ownership.

The same principle applies across the resource lifecycle – from extraction and processing to manufacturing and, ultimately, recycling. The measure of transformation is therefore not only what Africa produces, but what productive capability and lasting development benefit remain in Africa.

“

Success cannot be monitored by how much money enters Africa, or minerals taken

Ms. Claudine Sigam

*Interim Director General,
AMDC, African Union)*



“

True industrial transformation is not measured by megawatts or capital expenditure alone. It is measured by how well it dismantles the historical structures of exclusion

Mr Emmanuel Kuyole

Program Officer, Ford Foundation



Key Points from Plenary Sessions

This section of the report captures key points from the various Plenary Sessions



Panel Session 1: Repositioning Africa's Energy Systems for Industrial Competitiveness

- Megawatts are not the measure of success; access, affordability and reliability are equally important.
- African industries cannot compete on expensive power, especially when inefficiencies, cross-subsidisation and currency risks continue to drive up costs.
- Africa needs to be more ambitious about both producing and consuming power if it is serious about industrialisation.
- Risk must be shared rather than routinely transferred to governments and consumers, with smarter financing structures used to bring private capital in.
- Regional power systems must connect Africa's resources, markets and productive capacity through stronger power pools, cross-border infrastructure and flexible energy solutions.



Panel Session 2: Financing Competitive Industrial Energy Systems: Who Pays, Who Invests, and What Must Change?

- Africa's financing problem is not simply a shortage of capital; weak project preparation, high perceived risk and poor transaction structures are keeping capital away.
- De-risking is not free: when governments absorb excessive risk, the cost ultimately returns through higher tariffs, taxes or public debt.
- DFIs should catalyse private investment by taking on risks that commercial investors are unwilling to bear, not crowd it out.
- Climate finance must follow coherent energy and industrial plans, with capital matched to bankable projects and clearly defined development outcomes.
- Clearing energy-sector arrears and improving payment discipline can be as powerful a financing intervention as introducing new capital.



Panel Session 3: Powering Value Addition Through Competitive Industrial Regional Value Chains

- Africa does not need to build every stage of every value chain in every country; regional specialisation can create greater scale and competitiveness.
- Reliable, competitively priced power is a commercial prerequisite for turning mineral resources into higher-value products.
- Where value addition happens should be determined by economic and commercial feasibility, not simply by the desire to process everything domestically.
- Regional value chains can pool Africa's resources, infrastructure, skills and markets to make industries viable at a scale individual countries cannot achieve alone.
- Finance is available for bankable projects; predictable regulation, efficient permitting and credible project structures are needed to unlock it.



Panel Session 4: Beyond Resources: What Capabilities Must Africa Build to Compete in the Clean Energy Economy?

- Africa cannot compete in the clean energy economy by exporting resources alone; it must build the skills, technology and productive capabilities to move further up the production chain.
- Technology transfer only creates lasting value when African firms and institutions can absorb, adapt and eventually develop the technologies they acquire.
- Local content should be measured by skills, productivity, technology transfer and industrial capability, not simply by the share of contracts awarded domestically.
- Industrial policy must work across energy, mining, trade, finance and education, with regional integration used to build markets and production systems at a scale an individual country cannot achieve.
- Africa needs to finance strategic industries by mobilising domestic capital, improving project preparation and sustaining policies long enough for productive capabilities to take root.



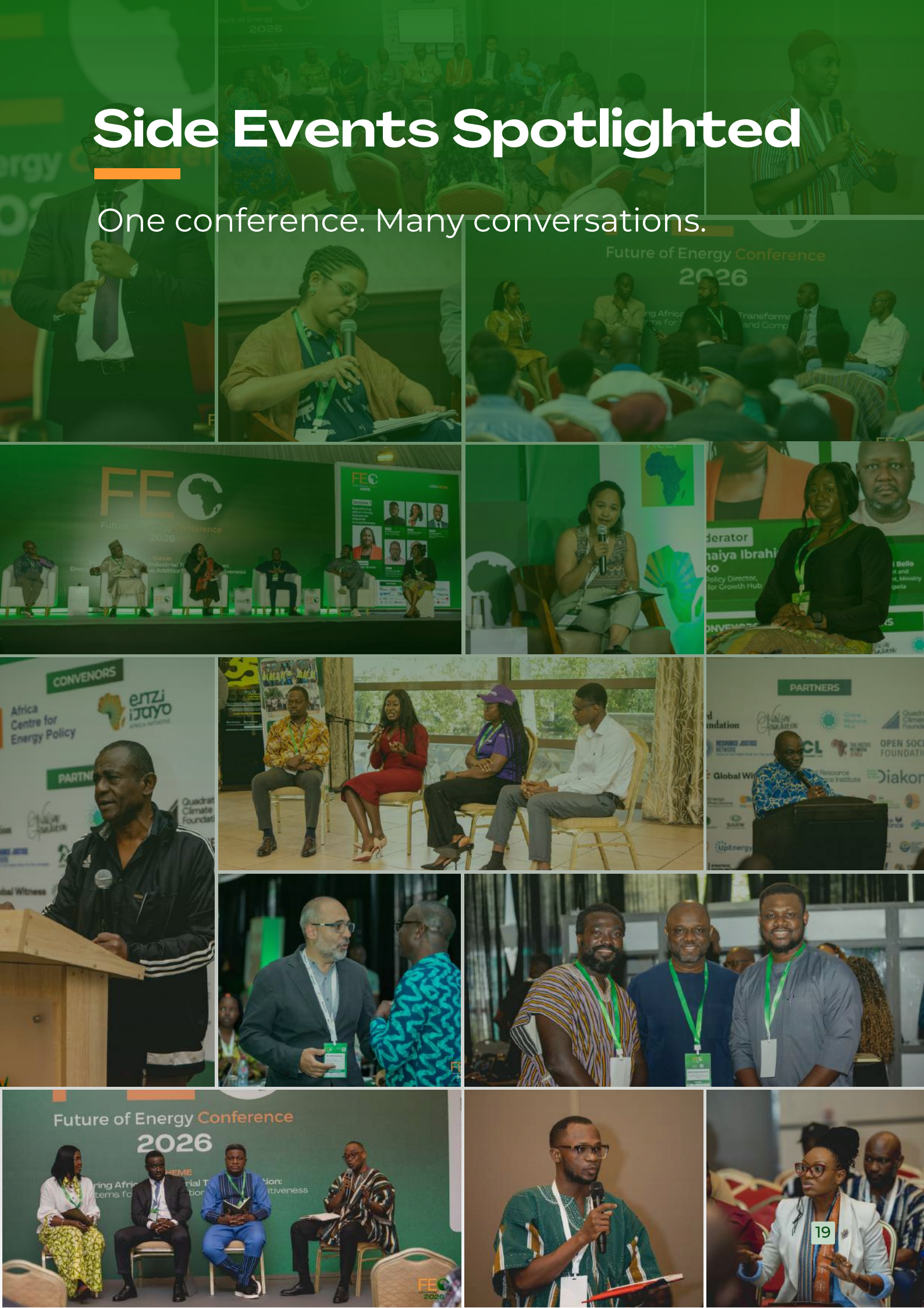
Expert Chat: Competing in a New Global Industrial Order: What Must Africa Get Right?

- Africa needs to stop accepting investor terms at face value and independently test the risks and returns behind every investment proposal.
- Incentives should solve specific investment barriers, not be granted automatically as the price of attracting investors.
- Technology transfer is not enough; Africa must build the capabilities to absorb, adapt and eventually develop technology locally.
- Country-level strategies must identify what each economy can realistically do, while regional integration should handle what countries cannot do efficiently alone.
- Africa must strengthen its own agency by turning domestic resources into visible productive investment before looking outward for capital.



Side Events Spotlighted

One conference. Many conversations.





Energy Transition Africa

Who Is Going to Run Africa's Energy Transition? Why Human Infrastructure Is the Missing Line Item in Africa's Energy Investment Case

Key takeaway:

Africa's energy transition will stall without the human and institutional capability to plan, build, operate and maintain the systems that investment and technology alone cannot deliver.



Dream Renewables / Tangelic

Beyond Energy Access: Leveraging Decentralized Energy for Rural Infrastructure, Enterprise and Inclusive Growth

Key takeaway:

Energy access becomes transformative when projects are designed around local livelihoods, productive uses, community ownership and the systems needed to keep them working.



King's College London

Justice in Critical Minerals Governance: Rethinking Africa's Energy Costs, Supply Chains and Industrial Competitiveness

Key takeaway:

A just minerals transition must give communities a meaningful role in decisions, livelihoods and value creation – not simply a share of the benefits.



Association of Ghana Industries (AGI)

Unlocking Investment Pathways for Sustainable Energy Solutions

Key takeaway:

Renewable energy financing is available, but projects need credible feasibility studies, standardised documentation and creditworthy offtakers to become bankable.



Energy for Growth Hub

How Self-Supply Power is Serving as a Parallel Grid for Firms and Industries in Africa

Key takeaway:

Businesses are willing to pay for reliable electricity, making grid reliability – not simply tariffs – the key to reducing dependence on costly self-generation.



Friends of Lake Turkana

Considering Alternative Dynamics and Sources for Sustainable Energy: Natural Resources and Human Development Transitions in Africa's Sustainable Transformation

Key takeaway:

Africa's transformation will depend not only on its resource endowment, but on its ability to build productive capacity, deploy technology and mobilise its people and institutions.



Africa Policy Research Institute / Natural Resource Governance Institute

From Deployment to Industrialization: Green Tech Innovation, Youth Employment and Industrial Competitiveness in Africa

Key takeaway:

Africa does not lack green innovation; the challenge is building the financing, skills, markets and policy systems that allow promising solutions to scale into sustainable businesses and jobs.



Youth Climate Council Ghana / Resource Governance Campus Hub

Investing in the Future: Policy Frameworks and Capital Pathways for Energy Innovations in Africa

Key takeaway:

Young energy innovators need more than grants to scale; they need appropriate financing, stronger policy implementation, investment-readiness support and access to markets and off-takers.



Association for Women in Energy and Extractives in Kenya (AWEIK) / Nigerian Wind Energy Council (NWEK)

Women Powering Africa's Industrial Transformation

Key takeaway:

Africa's energy transformation needs more than renewable capacity; it needs stronger grids, regional integration, appropriate financing and deliberate pathways for women to lead and participate across the sector.



Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI)

Powering Africa's Mineral Value Addition: Energy Systems, Regional Infrastructure and the Viability of Alumina Refining

Key takeaway:

Ghana's aluminium ambitions will depend not on bauxite alone, but on competitive energy, infrastructure, financing, policy coordination and commercially viable project economics.



Tax Justice Network Africa / Enzi Ijayo

Financing Africa's Green Industrialization in the Energy Transition

Key takeaway:

Africa needs financing and policy systems that lower the cost of green industrialisation while strengthening African ownership, climate-readiness and resilience to external trade measures.



Sustainable Development Network (SDN)

From Data Gaps to Coordinated Action: Scaling Measurement-Based Emissions Reporting across Africa's Energy Sector to Enhance Global Competitiveness

Key takeaway:

Better emissions data means better decisions, but Africa needs coordinated measurement systems, credible baselines, shared standards and the capacity to turn data into action.



Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND)

Driving Industrial Competitiveness through Coherent Energy Systems and Policy Reforms

Key takeaway:

Energy-sector competitiveness requires policy coherence, accessible information, skilled young people and reforms that do not leave smaller businesses behind.



Southern African Resource Watch / Third World Network

From Extraction to Transformation: Aligning Africa's Energy Transition Minerals with Industrial Policy and Structural Economic Transformation

Key takeaway:

Africa's critical minerals must become a pathway to industrialisation, not another cycle of extraction, requiring African-designed policies, value-chain investment and meaningful community agency.



Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL)

From Minerals to Manufacturing: Powering Africa's Green Industrialization

Key takeaway:

Africa can transform its mineral wealth into manufacturing capacity by leveraging regional specialization, shared infrastructure, South-South partnerships, and enhancing local value retention.



Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP)

From Methane Data to Risk-Informed Action: Strengthening Decision-Making for Effective Methane Management

Key takeaway:

Methane data only matters when it can be translated into credible baselines, effective regulation and timely action to reduce emissions.



The Conversation



Click to read
Action Points

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Innovation challenge



The Innovation Challenge showcased the breadth of African solutions emerging at the intersection of energy, agriculture, climate resilience and industrial development. Across the two tracks, innovators demonstrated practical applications of solar energy, biogas, energy storage, battery second-life and recycling, climate finance, sustainable food processing, cold storage, battery swapping and waste-to-value solutions. From converting banana waste into biodegradable packaging to giving retired EV batteries a second life, the pitches showed that African innovators are not simply responding to energy challenges—they are building new ways to connect energy with livelihoods, productivity, circularity and local enterprise.

The pitches also revealed that innovation alone is not enough to achieve scale. Across the sessions, judges repeatedly tested the commercial and operational foundations of the solutions. These included the reliability of feedstock and supply chains, cost structures and revenue models, market access, financing, technical performance, safety, data integrity and the capacity of small teams to scale. The discussions highlighted the need for stronger links between innovators, investors, industry, academia and communities, alongside patient financing, technical support, market development and systems for battery traceability and circularity. The central lesson was clear: moving African innovation from promising idea to viable enterprise requires an ecosystem that can finance, test, connect and scale it.



The Journey

361 applicants

51 interviewees

16 showcase participants

11 finalists

1 winner

Finalists from
4 Countries



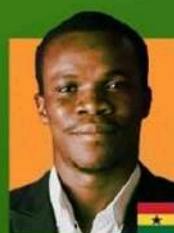
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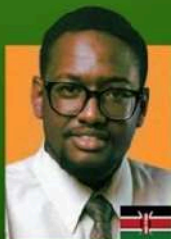
Modester Nanyunga



Christopher Amewuho



Priscilla Adhiambo



Rhyt Cruz Kilo



Blessing Unoka



Godfrey Noel



AbdulBasit Bashir



Tatu Kassim



Brian Mwai

Innovation Challenge 2026



1st Runner Up



Tracy Achieng
KilimoChills Solution, KENYA

WINNER



Blessing Unoka
Sambal Enterprise, NIGERIA

2nd Runner Up



Priscilla Adhiambo
Pamoja Cell, KENYA

CONGRATULATIONS!

Innovation and Investment Arena

The Innovation & Investment Arena brought together innovators, technology providers, research institutions and businesses showcasing practical solutions across clean energy, electric mobility, agriculture, energy efficiency, circular economy and waste-to-energy. From locally assembled electric bikes and solar-powered irrigation to battery storage, cold-chain technologies, clean cooking and community biogas, the exhibits offered a glimpse into the range of solutions emerging to address Africa's energy and industrial challenges.

Beyond showcasing technologies, the Arena created a space for innovators to engage directly with potential customers, investors, financiers, policymakers, development partners and industry players. The conversations reflected a recurring need to move promising solutions beyond demonstration and into wider markets—through stronger partnerships, appropriate financing, technical support and opportunities to test and scale. The Arena complemented the conference discussions by putting some of the technologies and enterprises driving Africa's energy transformation directly in front of the people who can help take them further.



Key Outcomes



Policy framing and agenda-setting:

FEC 2026 helped sharpen how Africa's energy and industrial challenges are being understood, especially the shift from access to productive energy, from raw extraction to wider value-chain development, and from national to regional industrial strategies.

Cross-sector convergence:

The conference brought energy, mining, finance, trade, infrastructure and industrial policy actors into a more integrated conversation, reinforcing the idea that these aspirations cannot be pursued separately.

Evidence and analytical clarity:

The discussions produced clearer diagnoses of the structural constraints affecting industrial competitiveness, including energy costs, reliability, financing, risk allocation, infrastructure, skills and institutional capability.

Realistic implementation pathways:

FEC 2026 advanced the conversation from broad ambition towards more practical solutions around project bankability, industrial corridors, regional specialisation, technology absorption, local enterprise development and the conditions required for viable value addition.

Continued policy influence beyond the conference:

Post FEC 2026 reflections and references from both individual and institutional participants indicate a willingness to carry key points into their ongoing planning, stakeholder engagement and advocacy efforts. This suggests that the influence of FEC is extending beyond the event towards informing wider policy and institutional conversations.

Conclusion

FEC 2026 has helped clarify the choices Africa must confront as it seeks to build more competitive, productive and resilient economies. The value of the conference now lies in what follows: whether the ideas, partnerships and policy debates generated in Accra can be translated into measurable progress over the next year. The period leading to FEC 2027 therefore be treated as an implementation window. It provides an opportunity to track how the debates on industrial energy costs, regional value chains, financing, productive infrastructure, local capabilities and policy coordination are evolving, where concrete reforms or investments are beginning to emerge, and where important gaps remain.

FEC 2027 will build from that evidence. Rather than restarting the conversation, the next conference will ask a more demanding question: what has changed since 2026, what has moved from discussion to implementation, and what must now be accelerated?

ACEP and its partners will use the year ahead to continue engaging stakeholders, tracking emerging policy and investment developments, and strengthening the evidence around Africa's industrial transformation.



Media Headlines



The Experience, Through Their Words

 **Maha Chairi** • 3rd+ • 1mo ...
Founder, 180Pi | Climate data infrastructure for Africa...

Congratulations to ACEP and all the partners behind FEC 2026. The strength of a platform like this is that it brings energy access, industrialisation, finance, governance and accountability into the same conversation. The next value will be in carrying those connections into practical work that improves power reliability, local value creation and investment readiness.

Like • 4 • Reply

 **Ketakandriana Rafitoson, PhD** • 3rd+ • 1mo ...
Executive Director @ Resource Justice Network | Vice...

Well done [Africa Centre for Energy Policy](#) and all partners involved for this massive success!! [Resource Justice Network](#) is proud to stand with you in this quest for a brighter energy future for Africa!! 🌟

Like • 1 • Reply • 1 reply

 **Oluwabukunmi Precious Bankole** • 3rd+ • 1w ...
I build operations systems that let service businesses...

I had a front-row seat to Africa's energy shift at FEC 2026, and the numbers only tell part of the story. What stayed with me was the drive in the room: 60 countries and one shared conviction that our industrial future is ours to power. Looking forward to seeing these conversations become action. Congratulations 🌟

Like • 1 • Reply

 **Wolf-Dietrich Fugger** • 2nd • 1mo ...
Solar Energy Solutions for Africa

Treating energy purely as a consumer utility rather than an industrial engine has held back value addition across the continent for too long.

If Africa is to process its own minerals and build localized supply chains, cohesive policy frameworks between energy, trade, and finance aren't just ideal, they are an absolute prerequisite. Dr. Marit Y. Kitaw nailed it: a true transition must reflect local industrial realities, not just imported targets.

Great insights from the Africa Centre for Energy Policy team. Looking forward to seeing how these discussions translate into integrated policy execution!

Like • 3 • Reply

 **Ketakandriana Rafitoson, PhD** • 3rd+ • 3w ...
Executive Director @ Resource Justice Network | Vice...

Such a wonderful and inspiring moment, thanks again [Africa Centre for Energy Policy](#) for it!!

Like • 1 • Reply

 **Abukari Mohammed Babamu, MBA** • 3rd+ • 1mo ...
Energy Policy | Oil & Gas | Petroleum Accounting &...

Congratulations 🌟 to Acep for organizing such a wonderful program, the insightful discussions and higher intellectual deliveries were top notch. Can't wait for next...

Like • 1 • Reply

 **Lucy Onoriode Okeke** • 3rd+ • 3w ...
Director Focus Africa Women Forum | Senior Manag...

Proud to have been part of FEC 2026 in Accra, representing NMDPRA as a panelist at the SDN/NUPRC side event on measurement based emissions reporting. Two days of rich exchange with policymakers, industry leaders and innovators shaping Africa's energy future only reinforces what I keep coming back to: our pipeline infrastructure is the backbone of that future, and it deserves the same urgency in the conversation as renewables and transition finance. Grateful for the connections made and the ideas sparked. Already looking forward to building on this momentum toward FEC 2027.

[#AfricanPipelineLady](#) [#FutureOfEnergy](#) [#EnergyTransition](#)

Like • 1 • Reply • 1 reply

 **Mohammed Dahiru Aminu, Ph.D.** • 3rd+ • Connect • 1mo ...
Leading Climate Change Mitigation Policy ...
Sep 6

From Accra to Paris, the past two weeks have reminded me why I value my work at [Clean Air Task Force](#) and the opportunity to help turn evidence on methane into practical decisions that reduce emissions across Africa.

On 26 August, I joined a panel at the Future of Energy Conference 2026, organized by the [Africa Centre for Energy Policy](#) (ACEP) in Accra. Our discussion explored how methane data can inform effective action. My contributions focused on mitigation opportunities across Africa's oil and gas sector and how countries can prioritize measures within the resources available to them.

A central question was how to make better use of the information we already have, while addressing the gaps that hold back implementation.

 **Sarah Millar** • 3rd+ • 1mo Follow ...
Co-Founder at Banyan Diplomacy

A very happy newbie, and very much hope to become a regular. Congratulations to the teams on a superb conference.





See you at



Future of Energy **Conference**

2027

24th–25th August, 2027

Get in touch with us via

fec2027@acep.africa

for enquiries and partnership



Future of Energy Conference 2026

The Future of Energy Conference (FEC), organised by the Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP), is an annual platform to drive stakeholder collaboration towards an inclusive and sustainable energy future for Africa. It critically explores strategies to harness the untapped potential within the energy transition and the continent's natural resources to address energy poverty and drive economic transformation.