

CIVIL SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AfDB ON SUPPORT FOR AN INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY TRANSITION TO BUILD A JUST GREEN RECOVERY

ACCESS Coalition brings together organizations and networks who work on furthering access to clean energy across Africa, with expertise in delivering energy services and products to consumers in the last mile, including on financing approaches, business models, and integrated and inclusive energy planning working with government and other development partners.

The world is currently off-track to deliver SDG 7 on access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030 (IEA et al, 2020). There is a global financing gap for energy access and particularly for the least cost solutions needed by people living in energy poverty (SEforALL, 2019).

The need for a just, sustainable energy transition is even more urgent given the opportunities and risks associated with Covid-19 response and recovery packages, including MDB recovery support. These can catalyse a just, green recovery, with renewable and efficient energy systems for all as their foundation, or lock developing countries further into high-carbon energy infrastructure.

Based on our experience as practitioners and researchers, we offer the following recommendations to the Bank in the spirit of furthering progress towards **universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy**, and to **building back better**.

- **Prioritise access to decentralized renewable electricity and clean cooking solutions as integral components of a sustainable and inclusive energy transition.** The majority of people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to clean and efficient cooking fuels and technologies. The number of people without access to clean cooking rose from 750 million to 890 million in the region in 2018 yet finance for clean cooking is decreasing globally (SEforALL, 2019). As most people in Africa without electricity access live away from centralized grids, decentralized renewable electricity solutions offer the 'least-cost' options for the majority of people (IEA et al, 2020) yet only represent a tiny proportion of global energy access finance. Investments in improving on-grid distribution and transmission are also needed, including to make electricity access reliable. Targeted financing approaches are needed to ensure energy services are affordable for people living in energy poverty, including the use of social protection approaches for the poorest and most vulnerable groups (SEforALL et al, 2020).
- **Scale up investments in energy for community health and education and for productive activities to build community resilience.** COVID-19 has highlighted the need to build sustainable community resilience to shocks, including pandemics but also the impacts of climate change. Combined with other supporting services, energy access can be an enabler of community services such as education and health, and catalyse income-generating activities and employment. Provision of higher levels of power for these services and for productive uses, especially for micro small enterprises and smallholder farming, should be prioritised. This will also translate into creation of jobs which is important for Covid-19 recovery.

- **Commit to powering past oil and gas.** AfDB along with other MDBs has already ruled out further support for coal. Phasing out fossil fuels and scaling up support for a global transition to renewable and efficient energy systems is not only urgent to address climate change but makes economic sense. Global demand for oil is expected to peak during the 2020s. Renewable electricity generation is now the least cost option for around two thirds of the global population, and transport is increasingly electrified. Research shows that 42million people around the world could be employed in the renewable energy sector by 2050 (ODI et al, 2020).
- **Commitment to engage civil society organizations:** in the face of shrinking civil space globally inclusive engagement by AfDB with a range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, is crucial. Participation of CSOs and energy-poor communities and groups in the development of Country Strategy Papers will help ensure integrated and inclusive energy planning that is responsive to citizens' wider development needs and development of financially, environmentally and socially sustainable investments.

About ACCESS

The Alliance of CSOs for Clean Energy Access (ACCESS) advocates for people living in poverty to have access to safe, reliable and affordable energy, and for environmentally sustainable and efficient energy systems globally.

ACCESS was founded in 2014. It has 65 members globally who between them have decades of experience delivering energy services to poor and marginal communities, carrying out research, capacity building and advocacy, and working with other stakeholders such as businesses, governments, international donors and investors.

We believe that to achieve SDG 7 on universal energy access by 2030, we need to go beyond business as-usual approaches to energy service planning and delivery to mobilize new, inclusive coalitions of stakeholders and adopt more inclusive energy planning and decision-making. Energy services have greatest poverty-reducing impact when they address the wider development needs of communities and are integrated with initiatives on food security, health, education and livelihoods.

We aim to use our expertise and experience of working with energy-poor communities to:

- Improve other stakeholders' understanding of the energy needs of poor communities;
- Raise awareness and build demand for energy services and products among poor groups;
- Build public understanding and political support for inclusive energy markets and the enabling environment reforms needed to support them;
- Design and deliver energy solutions with long-term development impact.

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Website: [https://access-coalition](https://access-coalition.org)

References

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