Thematic Session: SMART MOVES: ADVANCING ELECTRIC MOBILITY IN AFRICA

Organizers: UNFCCC, RCC Kampala, East Africa Development Bank

Time: 28 September 2021, 14:00 – 15:30 GMT+3

Venue: Virtual platform, Africa Climate Week 2021

Watch on demand: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pnP-3FzheQ

Link to event page: https://unfccc.int/ttclear/events/2021/2021_event04

List of speakers

- Michelle DeFreese, Global Green Growth Institute (Moderator)
- Hiten Parmar, Director, uYilo e-Mobility Programme
- Alexander Koerner, Programme Officer, UN Environment
- Charlène Kouassi, Development Manager, African Mobilities Observatory
- Shantha Bloemen, Director, Mobility for Africa
- Saudamini Bagai, Programme Officer, UNFCCC Secretariat

Description

Africa is home to the fastest-growing population in the world. This growth has not been without consequences. GHG emissions on the continent drastically increased and the transport sector is one of the main contributors to these emissions, with demand for transport fuels growing by almost 50% between 2010 and 2020. Much of this growth is driven by the ever-increasing demand for mobility.

Africa has the fastest growing vehicles rate with increasing demand for passenger mobility. The informal transportation systems based on motorbikes (two-wheelers), tuktuks (three wheelers), cars and minibuses form the largest share of passenger transportation in the region.

Building on the steps already made with renewable energy in the region, particularly with the diffusion of off-grid PV solar energy systems, Africa's potential to leapfrog fossil fuels is promising. Advancements in digital technology and simplified charging infrastructures made electric options for passenger mobility more compelling and the shift towards e-mobility is gradually taking place on the continent. E-mobility also provides great developmental potential for African countries such as the creation of "green jobs". Africa's young population plays a key role in the change.

The event aims to bring together public and private experts to showcase ongoing efforts to "electrically" transform the African mobility and discuss policy options for accelerating upscaling and diffusion of successful technological solutions in the region.

Key takeaways

- The electric mobility technologies work and are proven to result in savings of fuel costs, as demonstrated by the UNEP Global Electric Mobility Programme E-2Wheeler projects in Kenya and Uganda. Supporting policies, such as development of safety standards, EV charging, need to be developed accompanying the deployment of these technologies.
- Beyond EV-charging infrastructure, supporting system such as solar energy generation, storage, distribution, vehicle to grid ancillary services played a key role to a functioning electric vehicle-grid interoperability, as demonstrated in electric mobility programme in South Africa
- Africa endowed with deposits of minerals for battery production can benefit immensely from the industry created by e-mobility
- Upscaling the e-mobility solutions will need to overcome obstacles and challenges, such as regulations, digitalization, buy-in or social acceptance and stakeholders engagements.
- Silos are also seen as a major barrier, underlining the need to view e-mobility through the lens of provision of energy access, clean generation, job creation, gender perspectives and sustainable development
- Creating enabling environments for the system is crucial. This includes developing relationship and building credibility in the market. As technologies continue to evolve, and so the needs to have markets ready to adapt to the changing circumstances. Efforts need to be put in place with regard to consumer education, policy and regulatory that supports their deployment in the markets.
- In the context of Africa, funding and access to funding for e-mobility solutions are not an issue. However, collaboration, forging alliances are crucial to enable wider deployment to allow greater replication and more impactful results

Quotes from the session

"Electric mobility is not about just the vehicles, it is development of an ecosystem that is really required, promotion of green energy generation, support infrastructure, mobility options, connectivity to consumers, skills and development and also circular economy " – Hiten Parmar

"We can't roll out e-mobility if we continue to work in silos. We are building local skills, local mechanics, developing the practical skills we need that have massive potential for job creation." – Shantha Bloemen