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International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum: 9-10 April 2026

At a time of growing geopolitical instability, worsening climate impacts, and increasing inequality, the International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum (IVECF) made one message clear: the energy transition is not just about addressing climate change but must be regarded as a pathway to economic transformation as well. The Forum, which convened on the theme “Powering Prosperity, Security and Stability,” emphasized the role of sustainable energy and just transitions, green industrialization, and climate resilience in addressing growing insecurity and instability.

The Forum was structured around two complementary and interlinked action tracks:

- Global Green Industrialization Dialogue, which provided the strategic and political backbone of the Forum and addressed system-level challenges and opportunities; and
- Country and Regional Implementation, where participants focused on practical delivery, peer learning, and knowledge exchange and serving as a launchpad for new initiatives and partnerships.

Across plenary and roundtable discussions, participants emphasized that the energy transition can no longer be approached only as a climate agenda. Rather, it must be understood as a broader development and security imperative, requiring systemic and integrated approaches that bring these three dimensions together in ways that support economic diversification, resilience, and industrial transformation.

The Forum included a particular focus on challenges and opportunities for least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), small island developing States (SIDS), emerging economies, and crisis contexts. A central message was that green industrialization will help ensure the transition creates value locally rather than reinforcing existing patterns of dependency. Speakers stressed that countries rich in natural resources, such as critical minerals, must not remain mere suppliers of raw materials. Instead, energy systems should be linked to productivity, jobs, and local value creation, enabling countries to move up value chains and strengthen economic sovereignty.

The Forum underscored the importance of multilateralism and regional cooperation, particularly in light of ongoing geopolitical

tensions. Regional economic corridors, value chains, and shared infrastructure were discussed as means of achieving scale, attracting investment, and supporting industrial development. Examples from West and Central Africa, Central Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean illustrated the growing importance of aligning energy, transport, trade, and industrial planning across borders.

A recurring point highlighted during the Forum was the persistent challenge of finance. Participants stressed that while concessional finance remains critical, particularly for vulnerable and low-income countries, it is not sufficient on its own. Delivering green industrialization at scale will require more accessible, affordable, and responsive finance, as well as innovative financial instruments to attract private sector investment.

Speakers also stressed the need to prioritize implementation, highlighting practical conditions required to deliver results, including coherent policies, viable business models, standards and certification systems, skills development, and stronger coordination between public and private actors. Youth, women, local communities, and workers were consistently identified as central to a just transition, not as passive beneficiaries but as active participants.

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The Forum also featured the launch of the [Global Programme on Climate Resilient Renewable Energy Systems in SIDS](#) (G-RES), implemented by the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and supported by USD 13 million from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). At the Forum, Beate Meisl-Reisinger, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs, Austria, announced a contribution of EUR 2.45 million to the Programme.

The Forum concluded with a call to carry forward the momentum generated in Vienna through the [Vienna Call to Action](#). The Call to Action positions the energy transition as a driver of economic transformation, calling for integrated policies, scaled finance, and coordinated global action to deliver green industrialization and shared prosperity.

IVECF 2026 took place from 9-10 April 2026 in Hofburg Palace, Vienna, Austria, and brought together policymakers, international organizations, financial institutions, private sector actors, researchers, and youth representatives. It was co-organized by UNIDO, the Austrian Government, and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA).

A Brief History of the International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum

The IVECF aims to explore how energy can contribute to meeting global development challenges, based on the premise that issues, such as poverty, climate change, security, health, and income, are closely linked to the nature, accessibility, and affordability of existing energy systems. Established in 2008 by the Government of Austria, IIASA, and UNIDO, the Forum takes place every two years.

VEF 2009: Initially established as the Vienna Energy Forum (VEF), the first Forum convened in Vienna from 22-24 June 2009, under the theme “Towards an Integrated Energy Agenda Beyond 2020: Securing Sustainable Policies and Investments.” The conference served as an opportunity to shift the debate on energy and development beyond generalities to identify specific courses of action, as well as initiate and advance regional and international cooperation. One of the Forum’s key recommendations foresaw the creation of a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on energy, which would seek to achieve universal energy access by 2030.

VEF 2011: The second VEF, themed “Energy for All – Time for Action,” convened in Vienna from 21-23 June 2011, and was held in parallel with a Ministerial Meeting on Energy and Green Industry. The Forum focused on energy poverty and increasing energy access in developing countries and addressed a range of issues, including key building blocks for developing a strategy for prioritizing energy access, energy efficiency, and reducing global energy intensity.

VEF 2013: The third VEF, themed “One Year after Rio+20: The Energy Future We Want,” took place in Vienna from 28-30 May 2013. It addressed sustainable energy in the context of negotiating the post-2015 development agenda, a process initiated at the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

VEF 2015: The fourth VEF, themed “Sustainable Energy for Inclusive Development,” was held from 18-20 June 2015. It aimed to contribute to the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and climate processes by emphasizing their multiple co-benefits, as well as showcasing best practices and actions on the ground.

VEF 2017: The fifth VEF met from 9-12 May 2017, under the theme “Sustainable Energy for the Implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.” The event sought to promote dialogue on: the nexus between energy, climate, transport, food, water, and health; linkages in implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on climate change; and the role of innovation as a global driver for sustainable growth.

VEF 2021: The 2021 VEF took place virtually under the theme “Where Action Meets Ambition.” Participants explored food system transformation, industry decarbonization, energy-efficient products, renewable grids, consumer-driven change, sustainable mobility, and resilient systems.

IVECF 2023: The Forum was rebranded as the IVECF to reflect the urgent need for integrated action on energy security, climate action, and sustainable development. The 2023 Forum took place from 2-3 November 2023, focusing on solutions for energy systems transformation, decarbonizing the built environment, powering sustainable agriculture, advancing green industrialization and sustainable energy value chains, and nature-based infrastructure.

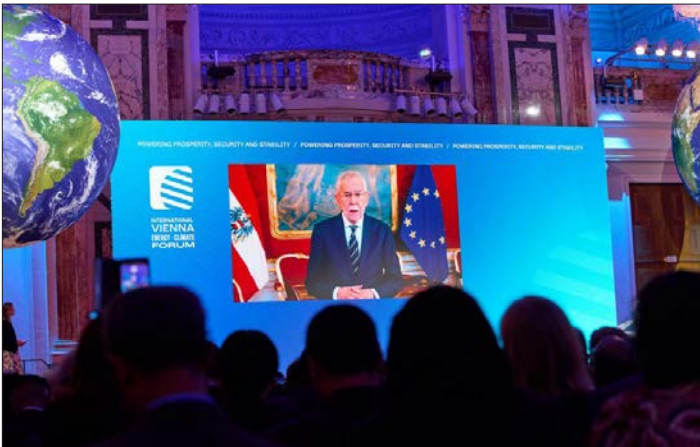
Report of IVECF 2026

Opening Ceremony

On Thursday, 9 April, Master of Ceremony Katharina Moser, opened the Forum, highlighting that the complexity of today’s challenges, including geopolitical tensions and climate change, are reshaping lives and communities. Referring to the Forum’s theme of “Powering Prosperity, Security and Stability,” she stressed that this serves as a reminder that global challenges are interconnected, and so too are their solutions. She emphasized that the energy transition, climate action, security, and green industrialization cannot be addressed in isolation, as they reinforce one another and only collectively can deliver lasting outcomes.



Katharina Moser, Master of Ceremony



Alexander Van der Bellen, Federal President of Austria

Speaking via video message, Alexander Van der Bellen, Federal President of Austria, cautioned that global attention must not drift away from the climate crisis amid today's turbulent geopolitical context. He emphasized that climate change disproportionately affects SIDS, LDCs, and LLDCs, and stressed that the Forum's holistic approach, which links climate, energy, security, and green industrialization, will be reflected in Austria's priorities should Austria be elected to the UN Security Council in June 2026.

Gerd Müller, Director General, UNIDO, underscored the need to decouple economic growth from rising emissions, noting that while knowledge and technologies are available, scaling up financing and implementation is critical. Lamenting that progress toward universal energy access has stalled since 2020, he emphasized that clean energy and climate action remain key priorities for UNIDO. Müller further highlighted the growing demand for critical minerals, noting that countries such as Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, along with others in Africa and Latin America, hold some of the world's most valuable resources. He stressed that this presents significant opportunities for these countries but also requires ensuring fair contracts and strong environmental standards. He referenced the Global Alliance for Responsible and Green Minerals as a key partner in this effort.

Beate Meinel-Reisinger, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs, Austria, noted that current geopolitical developments highlight the extent to which societies depend on energy systems and called for a reassessment of the structures and vulnerabilities of these systems. She questioned whether the energy systems of the past are fit for the future, stressing that future energy systems must be sustainable, renewable, resilient, and capable of driving development without locking countries into new forms of dependency. Meinel-Reisinger said these future systems should empower communities to shape their own development freely, underlining that renewable energy is not only a technological solution but also a source of "freedom energy," enhancing security and reducing vulnerability to external

shocks. She called for scaling up renewable energy and clean industrialization globally, with particular attention to LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.

Julius Maada Bio, President of Sierra Leone, emphasized that the energy transition should not be measured solely by how much power is generated, but also by how much value is created and how many lives are transformed. He stressed that prosperity, security, and stability are interconnected development outcomes. He noted Africa is emerging as a center of value creation and industrial growth, with West Africa positioning itself as an integrated and investable economic space. At the core of this transformation, he emphasized, are development corridors linking resources to energy, transport, processing, and export, with the aim of retaining value within the region, strengthening economic security, and reducing exposure to volatility. He noted that high capital costs and risk perceptions continue to prevent many bankable African projects from reaching implementation, and called for more accessible, affordable, and responsive climate finance.

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, Chairman of the People's Council, Turkmenistan, stressed that climate and energy rank among the most vulnerable dimensions of the global agenda and advanced several proposals: a global security strategy premised on the indivisibility of security, with energy security as a central pillar; a UN-led energy code calling for the depoliticization of the energy sector; a UN General Assembly resolution on the role of energy connectivity in sustainable development; and a rights-based approach to energy access. He highlighted Turkmenistan's commitment to a just green energy transition and announced that the Regional Center for Climate Technologies in Central Asia will soon be established in Ashgabat.

Speaking via video message, Hilda Heine, President of the Marshall Islands, warmly welcomed the Vienna Call to Action on Sustainable Energy and Climate Security, describing it as a timely intervention given a looming energy crisis that has laid bare the fragility of a system still heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels. She underscored the acute vulnerability of SIDS, whose economies and energy systems face compounding pressures from the climate crisis, and called for a fairer international financial



Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, Chairman of the People's Council, Turkmenistan



Rabab Fatima, UN Under-Secretary-General and UN High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS

architecture to enable these states to access adequate financing. She characterized the Vienna Call to Action as a compelling roadmap to the resilient future their communities deserve.

Rabab Fatima, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, conveyed three key messages on behalf of UN Secretary-General António Guterres: energy is the foundation of prosperity yet remains out of reach for too many; the energy transition and adaptation must advance together and at scale; and the current geopolitical moment, having exposed the fragility and interconnectedness of global energy systems, demands accelerated progress toward a just renewable energy transition. On the latter point, she recalled the UN Secretary-General's call to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030, underlining that this requires a decisive reduction in the costs of clean energy at scale.

Over the two days of the Forum, participants gathered in four plenary and eight roundtable sessions, which are summarized below.

Plenary Sessions

Powering Prosperity, Security and Stability: Climate and Stability in a Shifting Global Landscape: On Thursday, 9 April, Katharina Moser moderated this plenary session, which focused on how current energy, industrial, and climate pathways contribute to insecurity and inequality, and framed a just transition and green industrialization as central to achieving prosperity, security, and stability.

Nikolaus Marschik, Secretary General for Foreign Affairs, Austria, reflected on the shifting global landscape, noting that an increasing number of countries are turning away from multilateralism and resorting to the use of force. He observed that as the world changes, only the most powerful countries benefit from what he described as “transactional power politics,” underscoring the continued importance of multilateralism, particularly for countries lacking significant military or economic power.

On the link between climate and security, Marschik stressed that climate change is no longer solely an environmental issue but a strategic concern, as it increases instability and vulnerability,

and called for climate security to be elevated on the global agenda.

Liu Zhenmin, Special Envoy for Climate Change, China, noted the world is confronting profound challenges and warned that the impacts of climate change will not diminish if climate action slows. He urged continued multilateral climate action under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, and cautioned against unilateralism and protectionism.

Liu observed that green and low-carbon development is shifting from a policy-driven to a market-driven paradigm and encouraged all countries to stimulate economic development through green industrialization. On the energy transition and energy security, he suggested that developed countries, having already industrialized and reached peak emissions, should aim for carbon neutrality by 2040 to pave the way for global neutrality by 2050, alongside a dual-track approach, combining the expansion of renewable energy with the clean use of fossil fuels.

Following these opening statements, panelists examined the main risks and levers shaping the energy transition, and the importance of international cooperation in addressing emerging challenges.

On risks, Marie-May Jeremie, Minister of Environment, Climate, Energy and Natural Resources, Seychelles, identified the potential shift from dependence on imported fossil fuels to dependence on imported renewable energy technologies, such as solar panels. She also highlighted the lack of local expertise as a concern, noting that without domestic capacity, countries risk remaining consumers rather than innovators in the energy transition. She added that the cost of capital is a decisive factor, with high borrowing costs creating an uneven playing field for SIDS and limiting project development. On the role of international cooperation, Jeremie emphasized that global stability is essential for advancing the energy transition, noting that external crises have immediate impacts on small island economies.

Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, Director General, IIASA, emphasized that the primary risk is not a single threat but a “polycrisis” (the interaction of multiple crises). He explained that



Marie-May Jeremie, Minister of Environment, Climate, Energy and Natural Resources, Seychelles

this complexity can lead to cascading effects and potential system collapse, underscoring the importance of systems analysis. He also highlighted the role of artificial intelligence, arguing it should be used to advance the energy transition rather than for military purposes or to exacerbate inequality. Schellnhuber called for complementing long-term strategies with rapid response capacities to address immediate crises. He stressed that free markets alone cannot deliver the energy transition, and that coordinated action across politics, economics, business, and academia is required.

Francesco La Camera, Director-General, International Renewable Energy Agency, warned that progress in shifting away from centralized fossil fuel systems remains too slow. While acknowledging concerns about new dependencies on critical minerals, he argued this is not a risk given their widespread availability. Instead, he emphasized the need to support resource-rich countries in becoming not only suppliers but also beneficiaries of value-added processes. La Camera outlined his organization's shift toward more regionally focused approaches, including initiatives in Africa, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. He stressed that these initiatives aim to link renewable energy deployment with green industrialization and support countries in planning and implementing projects tailored to regional needs.

Helen Watts, Executive Director, Student Energy, highlighted social risks, including the failure to adequately involve communities and young people in shaping future energy systems. She outlined the need to build both technical and non-technical skills, ensure the availability of quality jobs, and avoid replicating centralized systems that force young people to relocate rather than thrive in their communities. She highlighted challenges facing youth engagement, noting shifting political priorities have reduced opportunities for participation, while climate anxiety and lack of agency contribute to burnout.

From Commitment to Action: Global Green Industrialization as a Pillar of Prosperity for All: On Thursday, 9 April, this plenary examined how to translate high-level commitments on green industrialization into concrete investment pipelines, policy frameworks, and employment pathways. The discussion took place against the backdrop of the

[Belém Declaration on Global Green Industrialization](#), adopted at UNFCCC COP 30 in 2025, which calls for a just transition that enables developing countries to secure a fair share of the emerging green industry value chain.

Moderator Phillip Cornell, Senior Advisor for Energy and Environment, Economist Group, framed the discussion around a central challenge: in an increasingly fragmented global landscape, many of the countries that most urgently need green industrialization continue to face the greatest barriers to financing it.

In opening remarks, Balarabe Abbas Lawal, Minister of Environment, Nigeria, described green industrialization as central not only to climate action but also to national security, economic resilience, and poverty reduction. Highlighting Nigeria's role in shaping African perspectives on the energy transition, he pointed to the country's pathway to net zero by 2060, and emphasized that Nigeria's approach seeks to address the dual crises of energy poverty and climate vulnerability. Referring to his country's 2021 Climate Change Act as a strong legal foundation, Lawal highlighted subsequent reforms aimed at reducing fossil fuel dependence and attracting private investment, including the launch of the Carbon Market Framework and the National Clean Cooking Policy.

Semida Silveira, Professor, Department of Systems Engineering, Cornell University, stressed that green industrialization must be grounded in local realities and cannot be approached as a "one-size-fits-all" model. She called for stronger knowledge co-creation, shared ownership of solutions, and academic leadership that helps adapt technologies to local contexts.

A panel then considered how international dialogue can unlock growth and make commitments investable. Aysel Yagubova, Executive Director, Clean Energy Centre of the Economic Cooperation Community, identified a lack of structured and comparable information as a major barrier in Central Asia. While political commitments and infrastructure projects are already emerging in many countries, she said insufficient data on market conditions, resource availability, and risk assessment continues to hinder project implementation from inception to completion.

Faustine Delasalle, Chief Executive Officer, Mission Possible Partnership, highlighted persistent bottlenecks across sectors such as steel, cement, and chemicals, noting that while project pipelines are increasingly concentrated in emerging markets, they continue to struggle to secure financing. She pointed to common barriers, including uncertain demand, localization challenges, and insufficient derisking instruments. Stressing that concessional finance alone will not close the gap, Delasalle argued for greater focus on demand drivers, including carbon pricing and policy tools that catalyze initial investments.

Jean-François Gagné, Head of the Secretariat, Clean Energy Ministerial, emphasized the continued relevance of international platforms in an otherwise fragmented landscape. He noted that the energy transition has moved from concept to lived practice and highlighted the growing importance of South-South and South-North collaboration. He stressed the need to aggregate demand across markets and sectors and to bring all relevant stakeholders around the table.

Kenneth Jong Fo Wei, Youth for Energy Southeast Asia, focused on the green jobs workforce development gap for young people, arguing that while governments often articulate ambitious goals, the policies required to translate these into concrete jobs,



Helen Watts, Executive Director, Student Energy



Ezéchiel Nibigira, President, Economic Community of Central African States

incentives, and long-term green career pathways are frequently missing.

In the subsequent discussion, panelists reflected on the effectiveness of policy instruments such as emissions trading systems in periods of supply disruption and the importance of involving youth in policy design from the outset. Yagubova highlighted regional efforts to engage younger generations through a digital knowledge hub and youth energy hackathons, noting such initiatives can help generate innovative approaches and bridge communication gaps across generations.

Just Energy Transition for Structural Transformation and Economic Diversification: On Friday, 10 April, this plenary session, moderated by Phillip Cornell, explored how the energy transition is evolving beyond a purely climate-focused agenda to encompass competitiveness, security, and development. Cornell invited panelists to consider how the energy transition can be connected to real economic transformation, and how it can be both just and durable.

Ezéchiel Nibigira, President of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), underlined the importance of regional coordination, highlighting that ECCAS Heads of State have developed a regional industrialization plan, emphasizing that international cooperation is now needed to secure financing and implement the plan. He emphasized the importance of both regional and international collaboration, with countries planning, mobilizing resources, and implementing projects together.

Jeffrey Sachs, President, Sustainable Development Solutions Network, emphasized that large-scale projects, such as hydropower development in the Congo Basin, require regional coordination and significant upfront investment. He argued that emerging economies, particularly China and India, are likely to play a key role as partners, given their capacity to provide finance, technology, and industrial capabilities. He also underscored the importance of large-scale investment in transmission infrastructure, while recognizing that energy transitions are diverse and context-specific. In this regard, he emphasized that decentralized solutions, such as microgrids, solar home systems, and rooftop solar, can often be financed at the local level, whereas major infrastructure projects require substantial upfront capital, long-term planning, and strong coordination across political and financial stakeholders.

Rana Adib, Executive Director, Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), highlighted the structural barriers that must be addressed to enable a successful transition. She emphasized that the shift to renewable energy represents not simply a change in fuel, but a shift toward domestically available energy sources. She noted that while importing or regionally producing technologies requires investment, it does not entail the same ongoing dependency as fossil fuels. Adib stressed the importance of aligning energy supply with industrial demand, trade systems, and broader economic structures. She called for the regional development of markets, workforce mobility, and supply chains, emphasizing that the transition extends beyond industrial hubs to the entire value chain.

Haneen AlJuhani, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Young Professionals, highlighted the importance of skills and inclusion, noting that while young professionals are already contributing to the transition, they are often excluded from decision-making processes. She highlighted innovative education models that combine academic learning with practical work experience, enabling graduates to enter the workforce with both qualifications and industry-relevant skills.

In the subsequent discussion, participants discussed the challenge of competition among developing countries to attract foreign investment, often leading to incentives that risk triggering a “race to the bottom.” In response, speakers emphasized the importance of public finance in leveraging private investment, as well as the need for stable and coherent policy and regulatory frameworks to create predictable investment environments.

A question was raised regarding how to ensure energy access and benefits of the energy transition reach local levels, particularly in countries such as Nigeria, where energy costs can account for up to 30% of industrial costs. In response, speakers emphasized openness to investment and partnerships, which can reduce energy costs and improve quality of life.

As a closing reflection, the discussion highlighted the importance of strengthening regional cooperation and developing resilient regional supply chains to enhance energy security. It recognized that energy transitions are diverse and context-specific, requiring tailored approaches across countries. Participants emphasized that this is a complex process that



Haneen AlJuhani, IEEE Young Professionals

demands collaboration among governments, private sector actors, and other stakeholders. Ultimately, stable and predictable policy frameworks are essential to mobilize the private investment needed to drive and sustain the transition.

Securing the Green Transformation: Resilient Technologies and Infrastructure: On Friday, 10 April, Katharina Moser moderated this plenary session. In opening remarks, Norbert Totschnig, Federal Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management, Austria, stressed that climate and energy policies are geopolitical concerns, noting that recent disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have underscored the importance of energy security. He argued that the green transformation is already underway but must now be secured through predictable regulatory frameworks, long-term investment certainty, and resilient value chains.

Referring to Austria's target of reaching 100% renewable electricity by 2030, Totschnig highlighted the country's Renewable Expansion Accelerator Act, which seeks to simplify approval processes for renewable projects and create incentives for private sector investment. He also emphasized the economic opportunities associated with the transition, including job creation, export potential, and stronger resilience against climate-related disasters.

In the ensuing panel, speakers explored how countries across different regions are approaching resilient technologies and infrastructure in practice. Gedion Timothewos Hessebon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ethiopia, described green development as central to his country's long-term strategy. He highlighted large-scale afforestation efforts involving students and civil servants, and noted that approximately 95% of Ethiopia's power comes from renewables. He also pointed to the country's recent decision to prohibit the import of fossil fuel vehicles, framing this as both an economic and resilience measure.

Marie-May Jeremie emphasized that the prosperity of the Seychelles is closely tied to environmental sustainability, given the central role of tourism and fisheries in its economy. She noted that recent investments are increasingly directed toward climate-

resilient infrastructure and renewable energy, stressing the need for integrated approaches in small island contexts.

Jonathan Reid, Minister of Innovation, Industry, Science and Technology, Barbados, reflected on how SIDS are transitioning from dependence on fossil fuels toward infrastructure based on wind, solar, and ocean resources. He highlighted Barbados' Green Industrial Gateway Advantage, which seeks to leverage the country's geographic position and emerging innovation ecosystem to attract investment and support industrial transformation.

Dana Kadyrbek, Founder, HydroTech ATM, presented the company's atmospheric water harvesting technology, designed to address rural water scarcity in Central Asia. She explained that the decentralized devices extract potable water directly from the air without requiring electricity, making them particularly suitable for fragile or remote contexts.

Luke LeBlanc, SDG7 Youth Constituency, brought a personal perspective shaped by displacement following a hurricane in Dominica. Identifying himself as a climate migrant, he stressed the importance of ensuring that funding criteria do not exclude SIDS and overseas territories.

In a second round of interventions, speakers converged on the need to combine infrastructure resilience, technological innovation, and fairer access to finance to secure the green transformation.

Roundtable Sessions

Spotlight on LDCs and LLDCs: Green Industrialization for Stability and Shared Prosperity: On Thursday, 9 April, Otalia Sacko, Project Administrator, UNIDO, moderated this session, which focused on practical mechanisms for positioning green industrialization as a pathway to prosperity, stability, and economic sovereignty.

Julius Maada Bio emphasized that decentralized renewable energy systems offer significant opportunities for LDCs and LLDCs to leapfrog traditional development pathways. He stressed the importance of financial viability, predictable regulatory frameworks, and the development of aggregated, investment-ready project pipelines to attract capital at scale.



Jonathan Reid, Minister of Innovation, Industry, Science and Technology, Barbados



Julius Maada Bio, President of Sierra Leone

Peter Huber, Director General for International Partnerships and Humanitarian Assistance, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, Austria, highlighted the role of green economic corridors in connecting industrial hubs and enabling cross-border value chains, referencing initiatives such as the Lobito Corridor and the West Africa Clean Energy Corridor. He stressed the importance of regional approaches that achieve scale while remaining responsive to the specific circumstances of LDCs and LLDCs.

Via video message, Lok Bahadur Thapa, President, UN Economic and Social Council, noted that energy insecurity and limited industrial capacity exacerbate vulnerabilities in LDCs and LLDCs. He identified four priorities: advancing energy access, energy security, and green industrialization in tandem; using renewable energy to drive economic transformation; improving access to finance; and strengthening international cooperation aligned with country-led priorities.

Gedion Timothewos Hessebon outlined key policy considerations for green industrialization, including the need for affordable and reliable clean energy, the opportunity for Africa to leapfrog to low-carbon industrial growth, and the potential to scale green manufacturing. He highlighted structural barriers, including dependence on raw material exports, unilateral trade measures, and limited access to finance. He emphasized initiatives such as [Mission 300](#), which aims to connect 300 million people to electricity by 2030, and the expansion of eco-friendly industrial parks.

Abdulhamid Alkhalifa, President, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development, emphasized the Fund's increasing focus on climate-related projects, clean cooking initiatives, and digital transformation, as well as its commitment to supporting LDCs through dedicated financing windows. He stressed the importance of multi-dimensional partnerships and knowledge sharing.

Xin Baoan, Chairman, Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization, called for accelerating the development and use of clean energy, promoting industrial synergy and regional coordination, and strengthening

capacity-building efforts. He highlighted his organization's contributions, including training programmes reaching over 10,000 participants across more than 100 countries.

Monday Semaya Kumba, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, South Sudan, emphasized his country's commitment to advancing a future defined by stability, resilience, and shared prosperity. He stressed that achieving this vision requires strengthening partnerships, unlocking investment, and fostering technological innovation.

Rana Adib emphasized that realities on the ground differ significantly across countries, and policy approaches must reflect these differences. Noting Africa's innovation potential and human capital, she called for stronger support systems to harness these opportunities. Adib underscored the need to move from extractive models to economic transformation, linking energy generation to demand, and fostering regional cooperation to create sufficient market scale.

Sascha Raabe, Head, Global Alliance for Responsible and Green Minerals, UNIDO, highlighted the importance of ensuring that value creation occurs within resource-rich countries in the Global South. He stressed that such countries must not remain mere suppliers of raw materials but should also benefit from the energy transition through job creation and industrial development. In addition, he emphasized improving working and social conditions in both artisanal and industrial mining sectors, noting that better conditions would reduce reputational risks and attract investment.

Youssef Mondoha Assoumani, Ambassador of the Union of the Comoros to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union, underscored the importance of partnerships and coordination in advancing sustainable energy and development objectives.

Francesco La Camera identified three key value addition pathways: leveraging energy to support agricultural processing and local industries; developing services and manufacturing around digital energy solutions; and improving access to green technologies in LDCs and LLDCs.



Abdulhamid Alkhalifa, President, OPEC Fund for International Development



Princess Abze Djigma, Chair, Mutirão and Burkindi Coalition Capacity Building Initiative



Roger Baro, Special Advisor to the President of Burkina Faso on the Environment

Princess Abze Djigma, Chair, Mutirão-Burkindi Coalition on Capacity Building Initiative, stressed that capacity building is critical to advancing green industrialization. She highlighted the importance of political will and the role of the informal sector, noting the development of toolkits to enable its participation in the energy transition.

Roger Baro, Minister of Water, Environment and Sanitation, and Special Advisor to the President of Burkina Faso on the Environment, emphasized that green industrialization is not an option but a strategic necessity for his country. He identified key constraints, including high production costs, insufficient processing of raw materials, underdeveloped industrial zones, and limited understanding of green industrialization concepts. He called for greater cooperation with international partners to support initiatives such as recycling and valorizing wastepaper.

Paris Chuop, Secretary of State, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia, emphasized that partnerships, coordination, and engagement in global cooperation are key to successful implementation of sustainable energy strategies.

Tosi Mpanu-Mpanu, Special Adviser to the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on Environment, Urbanism and Mobility, stressed that his country represents a critical solution to the climate crisis through its forests, renewable energy potential, and critical minerals. However, he highlighted the paradox that resource-rich regions often remain in poverty, underscoring the need to develop local value chains. He underscored the need for improved energy access, technology transfer, capacity building, and highly concessional, de-risked financing.

Daniel Schroth, Director for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, African Development Bank, announced the first call for proposals under the [Africa Green Hydrogen Programme](#). He noted USD 20 million has been allocated to support up to five private sector-led projects, targeting those with strong government backing and the potential for rapid implementation.

Munalula Yowela, Coordinator, LDC Group Secretariat, stressed that energy is not an end in itself, but rather a driver of productivity, livelihoods, and sustainable growth. She highlighted key enablers, including equitable access to finance, stronger

partnerships, bankable projects, capacity building, and practical implementation tools.

Rabab Fatima emphasized the importance of regional approaches in advancing sustainable development and energy transitions. She explained that external debt levels in LDCs and LLDCs are rising, while official development assistance and foreign direct investment are declining, and stressed that closing this gap will require a comprehensive approach, including scaling up innovative financing mechanisms. Fatima further emphasized that green industrialization depends on the equitable management of critical minerals, underscoring the need for governance frameworks that ensure fair distribution of benefits.

Gerd Müller reiterated that LDCs and LLDCs must not remain solely suppliers of raw materials in the global economy. He stressed that the global energy transition must avoid replicating historical patterns of dependency, warning against the emergence of “neo-colonialism” in the minerals sector. Müller emphasized the importance of creating local value, particularly in mineral-rich countries, as a means of transforming economies and reducing poverty.

Spotlight on Islands: Resilient Renewable Energy Systems for Climate Security in SIDS: This roundtable, moderated by Phillip Cornell on Thursday, 9 April, focused on pathways for building resilient renewable energy systems in SIDS. It also marked the launch of the [Global Programme on Climate Resilient Renewable Energy Systems in SIDS \(G-RES\)](#), implemented by UNIDO with support from the GEF and the Government of Austria.

Gerd Müller stressed the need to keep SIDS at the forefront of international attention and emphasized UNIDO’s commitment to translating solidarity into tangible outcomes. He announced the launch of G-RES, supported by USD 13 million from the GEF and an additional contribution from Austria.

Beate Meinel-Reisinger outlined three priorities: listening to SIDS and their populations; taking concrete action to strengthen resilience through measures, such as decentralized grids and storage systems; and deepening international cooperation. She announced an additional contribution from Austria of EUR 2.45 million to G-RES.



Gerd Müller, Director General, UNIDO



Albert Binger, Secretary General, SIDS DOCK

Rabab Fatima emphasized that while many SIDS remain heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels, they are also demonstrating leadership in the shift toward cleaner and more resilient systems. She called for a multisectoral approach, noting resilient energy systems cannot be built in isolation from transport, water, and food systems. She highlighted the central challenge of finance, warning that improved metrics alone, such as through the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), will not automatically translate into accessible capital.

In a video message, Claude Gascon, Interim CEO and Chairperson, GEF, described G-RES as an effort to unlock resilient investment pathways in initial partner countries, including Barbados and Palau. He said the programme aims to reduce investment barriers through SIDS-to-SIDS cooperation and aligns with the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS.

Albert Binger, Secretary-General, Small Island Sustainable Energy and Climate Resilience Organization (SIDS DOCK), highlighted both the many difficulties faced by island states and their long history of resilience. Recalling SIDS were once referred to as “the canary in the coal mine” in the climate negotiations, he warned they now risk becoming an endangered species. He stressing that islands also hold immense renewable potential, particularly through ocean-based resources.

During the discussion, ministers and experts explored how to move from vulnerability to resilience. Denzil Llewellyn Douglas, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade, Industry, Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Economic Development and Investment, Saint Kitts and Nevis, emphasized his country’s transition from a sugar-based economy to services and digital sectors, noting this transformation depends on renewable energy investment. He stressed the importance of integrating the MVI into financing frameworks, especially in the context of high interest rates.

Jonathan Reid highlighted the importance of maintaining ambition in difficult times and positioned Barbados as a space for dialogue, consensus-building, and innovation. He linked political stability to energy security and long-term prosperity.

Andre Perez, Minister of Blue Economy and Marine Conservation, Belize, emphasized both the risks and

opportunities associated with the blue economy. He pointed to the country’s hydropower assets and stressed the need to create stable conditions for investors and international financial institutions.

Andrew Baasaron, Minister of Economic Affairs, Entrepreneurship and Technological Innovation, Suriname, highlighted efforts to diversify the economy beyond offshore oil, including agriculture and tourism, while also developing hydropower and other renewable energy sources.

Mohammad Rafik Nagdee, Executive Director, Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, identified finance and project aggregation as the two principal bottlenecks across SIDS. He stressed the need for blended finance models and a regional approach to energy security.

Marie-May Jeremie emphasized the need to connect innovative ocean finance mechanisms with climate-resilient energy planning. She pointed to persistent financing constraints and called for stronger collective advocacy by SIDS.

Muaviyath Mohamed, Minister of State for Tourism and Environment, Maldives, reported that the country has committed to generating 33% of its energy from renewable sources by 2028 and already achieved 10% in 2025. He highlighted floating solar as a key solution for land-constrained islands.

Wolfgang Putschek, Managing Director, Swimsol, discussed the bankability of renewable energy projects in SIDS and highlighted the company’s work on industrial-scale floating solar systems in the Maldives, particularly for resort infrastructure.

Solomone Fifita, Manager, Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, highlighted progress in the ongoing development of the Pacific Renewable Ocean Energy Readiness Programme and welcomed G-RES as a vehicle for pooled procurement and greater economies of scale.

Mario Galbert, Caribbean Youth Climate Council, stressed that the energy transition must be just and inclusive. Recalling the devastating impacts of recent hurricanes in Jamaica, he emphasized the need for financing, skills development for young people, and long-term partnerships that place communities at the center of resilient energy systems.

Heinz Habertheuer, Head of International Programmes and Projects, Austrian Development Agency, said renewable



Wolfgang Putschek, Managing Director, Swimsol

energy both reduces dependencies and promotes sustainable development.

Stefano Marguccio, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Sustainable Energy for All, concluded by underscoring the “energy transition is the challenge of this century. And the SIDS are where you can make or break it.”

Strengthening Multilateral Support for Green

Industrialization: On Thursday, 9 April, Phillip Cornell moderated this roundtable discussion, posing the central question of how to move from fragmented support toward coordinated delivery of green industrialization.

Ciyong Zou, Deputy to the Director General and Managing Director, Directorate of Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Industrial Development, UNIDO, emphasized that for developing and emerging economies, multilateral cooperation is central to accelerating progress, but highlighted that current efforts are often fragmented and do not reach countries at the required scale. He stressed that finance lies at the core of the challenge.

Seidu Issifu, Minister of State for Climate Change and Sustainability, Ghana, underscored the need for effective collaboration, appropriate financing, capacity building, and technology transfer. He stressed that the timeliness of financing is critical, noting delays can hinder implementation. He also emphasized efforts in Ghana to mobilize local entrepreneurs and raise awareness of green industrialization opportunities.

Silvana Penaherrera, Subsecretary, Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments and Fisheries, Ecuador, emphasized that green industrialization should be viewed not as a cost but as a strategic investment and a key competitive advantage for the coming decade. She discussed the country’s efforts to decarbonize its shrimp sector to meet European market requirements, with the goal of positioning Ecuador as a supplier of the “greenest shrimp” globally. Penaherrera urged the European Union (EU) to ensure its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) recognizes the decarbonization efforts of developing countries, including through tariff exemptions for verified green products.

Jan Dusík, Deputy Director General, Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA), European Commission,

emphasized the importance of creating market demand for low-carbon innovations. He explained that the EU is discussing allocating 30% of its next seven-year budget to climate and development measures. He stressed that CBAM is intended to ensure a level playing field rather than generate revenue, and to encourage emission reductions or carbon pricing globally.

Amir Lebdioui, Director, Technology and Industrialization for Development Centre, University of Oxford, emphasized that green industrialization requires scale on both the demand and supply sides, which most countries cannot achieve independently. He highlighted the importance of regional coordination and outlined different models, including supranational, multilateral, and “minilateral” approaches. He noted successful models often involve coordinating agencies that identify gaps in regional supply chains while allowing countries to define their own priorities and niches.

Oleksiy Tatarenko, Senior Principal, Climate-Aligned Industries, Rocky Mountain Institute, emphasized that development finance must shift from a project-by-project approach to a systems-level perspective, focusing on decarbonizing entire value chains. He highlighted the importance of coordinated infrastructure planning, including export and import terminals, and the role of governance in facilitating this coordination. He stressed the potential role of initiatives such as the Global Green Industrialization Agenda in supporting coordination and de-risking value chains.

Lais de Souza Garcia, Head of the Renewable Energy Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil, emphasized the benefits of international cooperation while stressing the importance of country-driven initiatives. She highlighted the need to translate decarbonization strategies into local contexts and the importance of technology neutrality in regulatory frameworks. She cautioned against creating trade barriers and stressed the need for level playing fields that enable development.

Johanna Lissinger Peitz, Senior Adviser to the Government of Sweden, identified key enabling factors, including high-level political commitment, clarity on financial expectations, and a balance between multilateral frameworks and bilateral project implementation.



Jan Dusík, Deputy Director General, DG CLIMA, European Commission



Jean-François Gagné, Head of Secretariat, Clean Energy Ministerial

Jean-François Gagné emphasized the importance of cross-sectoral engagement, noting that effective multilateral cooperation must involve not only energy ministers but those responsible for finance, transport, employment, and other sectors as well.

Michael Apicelli, Head of Secretariat, Climate Club, highlighted challenges related to access to finance, particularly the higher costs faced by countries in the Global South, as well as policy uncertainty that limits market development. He noted the Climate Club is working to develop markets for near-zero emissions products, address carbon leakage, and strengthen partnerships.

Paul Durrant, Joint Head, Breakthrough Agenda Secretariat, emphasized that effective frameworks should act as neutral enablers of action, identifying key opportunities, connecting stakeholders, tracking progress, and adapting strategies where necessary. He highlighted the importance of independent political advice, inclusive engagement platforms, and transparent reporting.

Faustine Delasalle stressed that creating demand for low-carbon commodities is a critical first step, as bankable projects cannot emerge without it. She emphasized the need to distinguish between multilateral and national actions, with countries playing a central role in developing domestic markets, supported by coordinated efforts.

Barbara Terenghi, Vice President of Sustainability, Edison S.p.A, outlined the conditions required for private sector investment in green markets, including the availability of bankable projects and viable investment environments. She emphasized that private companies cannot operate alone in emerging markets, underscoring the importance of multilateral support, co-investment, and strong institutional counterparts.

Gianpiero Nacci, Managing Director for Climate Strategy and Delivery, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, emphasized the importance of building investor confidence through knowledge sharing and transparency, including databases on financial performance. He also highlighted the need to

reduce financing costs through operational alignment, common taxonomies, and financial innovation.

Jennie Dodson, Senior Director, Policy, Advocacy and Member Mobilization, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), noted that businesses remain committed to climate action but highlighted a lack of coordination between public and private sector initiatives. She called for mechanisms that align shared interests, risk appetites, and economic priorities.

Maryana Malyshevska, European Youth Energy Network, emphasized that multilateral collaboration must place young people at its center. She called for education systems and cross-sector partnerships between businesses and academic institutions to align with the needs of green industries, equipping young people with relevant skills. She emphasized that green industrialization presents an opportunity to design accessible and high-quality entry points for youth employment.

Leading by Doing: Middle-Income Countries as Engines of Green Industrial Transformation: On Thursday, 9 April, Hawa Kebe, Project Administrator, UNIDO, moderated this roundtable, framing the discussion around three questions: what has worked, what remains difficult in implementation, and how successful approaches can be scaled across policy, finance, industry, youth participation, and regional cooperation.

Fatou Haidara, Deputy to the Director General and Managing Director, Directorate of Global Partnerships and External Relations, UNIDO, stressed that middle-income countries (MICs) are already delivering concrete results rather than merely planning for transition. She highlighted the decarbonization of energy-intensive sectors as both a climate necessity and a pathway to attract investment, strengthen competitiveness, and create growth opportunities.

Wael Aboulmagd, Assistant Foreign Minister for Climate, Environment and Sustainable Development, Egypt, pointed to national strategies such as establishing a decarbonization framework, investment incentives for industry, efforts to decarbonize the power supply through competitive procurement and private sector participation, and retrofitting existing energy assets to avoid stranded costs. He highlighted the importance of blended finance and support from multilateral development banks.



Jennie Dodson, Senior Director of Policy, Advocacy and Member Mobilization, WBCSD



Gergő Kocsis, Deputy State Secretary for International Cooperation, Hungary

Lenín Vizcaíno Sierra, Vice Minister for Business Development, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Colombia, described the “dual challenge” of expanding industrialization and employment while transitioning to a low-carbon economy. He recalled Colombia’s target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.

Although noting that his country is not an MIC, Gergő Kocsis, Deputy State Secretary for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary, shared lessons from its industrial transition, stressing the importance of strategic commitments, diversified supply chains, and regional connectivity. He highlighted rapid growth in solar power, alongside major investments in energy storage and household-level energy systems.

Zhongyuan Li, Chief Risk Officer, Export-Import Bank of China, stressed that bankable pathways require policy stability in host countries, long-term visibility, and effective risk management. He pointed to blended finance and support for technology upgrades as essential tools, while noting the challenge posed by the absence of globally harmonized standards.

Thomas Eriksson, Director, Department of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East Region, Green Climate Fund, emphasized the need to move “from projects to pipelines,” arguing that continuous investment pipelines, predictability, and platforms capable of aggregating projects are key to attracting capital at scale.

Werner Schnappauf, German Council for Sustainable Development, underscored trust and risk sharing as prerequisites for bankability, highlighting that instruments, such as carbon contracts for difference, can support industrial transformation in sectors such as steel.

Thomas Guillot, Chief Executive Officer, Global Cement and Concrete Association, said the principal challenge is no longer technological knowledge but rather policy predictability and enabling conditions. He stressed that circular economy projects and industrial decarbonization require legislation and long-term regulatory clarity to become profitable.

Francis Meshioye, President, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, pointed to the high cost of finance and energy as major constraints, while identifying energy efficiency and market-based mechanisms such as India’s Perform, Achieve and Trade scheme as relevant models. He also emphasized the need for long-term, low-cost finance, and investment in human capital.

Seruni Salsabila, Children and Youth Constituency to the UNFCCC, stressed that the energy transition must include affected communities and the voices of young people as workers, engineers, and entrepreneurs across sectors and regions.

Vladimir Imamovich Norov, Chairman, Central Asian Association for Artificial Intelligence, highlighted the renewable energy potential of Central Asia, particularly hydropower and solar development.

Selen İnal, Founder, EcoMuse, representing the Council of Engineers for the Energy Transition, emphasized that innovation in MICs is not limited to technology, but also includes business models, financing structures, and public-private coordination mechanisms that allow proven solutions to scale.

Enabling Green Industrialization at Scale: Policies, Institutions, and Investments: On Friday, 10 April, Phillip Cornell moderated this roundtable, which focused on translating enabling conditions into practical policy frameworks and coordinated action.

Georgia Iordanescu, Chief, Sustainable Energy and Just Transitions Unit, UNIDO, explored what “scale” means in practice, noting it is a measure of market viability, that is whether a solution can survive real market conditions and be replicated. She identified three essential elements: innovation anchored in real industrial demand; scale dependent on viable and replicable business models; and partnerships as essential to move from innovation to industry.

Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, Federal Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Nigeria, emphasized the importance of policies and institutions in supporting green industrialization. He noted that while there is pressure to achieve inclusive economic growth, this requires strong private sector participation. However, he added that private sector actors often face challenges related to competitiveness and access to finance.

Krzysztof Bolesta, Secretary of State, Ministry of Climate and Environment, Poland, described his country’s transition, noting that, ten years ago, 90% of electricity came from coal, compared to around 50% today. He emphasized that policies, institutions, and investment must work in sync. He described Poland’s transition as bottom-up, emphasizing that greening industry requires not only technical change but also shifts in public attitudes.

Jackson Gedion Kiswaga, Member of Parliament, Tanzania, explained that policy reforms and incentives were introduced to enable private sector participation in a previously monopolized energy sector. He emphasized that stable and predictable policy frameworks are critical for attracting investors.

Lisa Sachs, Director, Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, Columbia University, highlighted fragmentation across policy areas, including energy, climate, and finance. She stressed the need for coherent and aligned frameworks, noting industrial planning requires managing underlying risks, including



Maryse Dadina Nkoua Ngavouka, Executive Director, Oyo Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency

high capital costs in emerging markets, and that concessional finance alone does not lead to scale.

Maryse Dadina Nkoua Ngavouka, Executive Director, Oyo Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency, highlighted lessons learned, including the importance of bridging policy and implementation through tracking, fostering public-private partnerships, supporting research ecosystems, and developing testing and certification systems.

Gloria Alvarenga, Director of Integration, Access, and Energy Security, Latin American and Caribbean Energy Organization (OLADE), emphasized that integration and cooperation are essential at both regional and international levels. She highlighted the importance of engaging academia, youth, and the private sector.

Rajeshwari Sriram, Chapters Coordinator, Student Energy, stressed that the transition raises questions about who benefits and who has a voice. She emphasized that youth must be active participants, not just beneficiaries, and highlighted the need to align education and skills development with green industrialization, as well as to create accessible pathways for youth engagement.

Rafael Ramalho Dubeux, Deputy Executive Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Brazil, described the country's ecological transformation plan, framing the transition as an economic opportunity rather than a cost. He highlighted recent policy developments, including a mandatory carbon market, frameworks for low-carbon hydrogen and offshore wind, and financial instruments such as sovereign sustainable bonds.

Sabine Gaber, Chief Executive Officer, Austrian Development Bank, emphasized the importance of supporting private sector investment at both small and large scales. She noted that regulatory frameworks must shift away from fossil fuel subsidies to create green markets and highlighted a private equity umbrella fund using blended finance to mobilize capital from European impact investors for infrastructure in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Eleanor Webster, Head of Secretariat, Mission Innovation, emphasized that innovation ecosystems require delivery mechanisms. She highlighted the importance of clear targets,

project pipelines, "lighthouse" projects to demonstrate success, public procurement to create demand, and standardized tools and metrics to align stakeholders.

Maria José Garcia, Executive Director, Inter-American Cement Federation, highlighted the role of the cement sector in development and the need for its decarbonization. She outlined measures including circular economy approaches, flexible product standards, green public procurement, and blended finance to support investment.

Siddharth Dasgupta, Lead of Industry Decarbonization, Climate Investment Funds, discussed challenges in project development, noting many projects fail to progress beyond the early stages due to demand uncertainty, financing constraints, and non-financial barriers such as grid access, land issues, and supply chain constraints.

Ademola Ogunbanjo, President and CEO, Oando Clean Energy Limited, highlighted challenges arising from policy fragmentation. He described a recent example where a recycling project his company is developing was undermined by new export restrictions in Nigeria, illustrating how the lack of policy coherence can disrupt private sector initiatives.

Stefano Marguccio, Deputy CEO, Sustainable Energy for All, highlighted the significant potential of regional markets, particularly in Africa. He noted that renewable energy presents a cost-effective opportunity, but emphasized the need for supportive policy frameworks, infrastructure development, and coordinated partnerships.

Verena Ehold, Managing Director, Environment Agency Austria, emphasized the lack of shared rules and trusted data as a bottleneck that must be overcome to achieve green industrialization. She explained that standards, certification, and monitoring frameworks are essential for defining what constitutes "green," building investor trust, reducing transaction costs, and enabling policy effectiveness.

Audrey Ma, Board Executive Director and Vice President of International Business, REFIRE Group, emphasized the importance of demand creation, bankable projects, and policy certainty. She highlighted the need to build industrial hubs and develop pilot projects that can demonstrate viability and attract



Ademola Ogunbanjo, President and CEO, Oando Clean Energy Limited



Yala Conceição Hivernon, Assistant Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO

further investment, linking policy frameworks to real market demand.

Beyond Borders: Regional Value Chains and Green Industrial Corridors: On Friday, 10 April, Yala Conceição Hivernon, Assistant Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO, moderated this roundtable, which focused on how cross-border energy cooperation, transport connectivity, and industrial planning can support climate-aligned development pathways, particularly in LDCs, LLDCs, and MICs.

Rana Ghoneim, Director, Division of Energy and Climate Action, UNIDO, highlighted the role of economic corridors in diversifying economies and creating local value chains, particularly in regions rich in renewable resources and critical minerals. She outlined priorities, including: aligning energy, industrial, and investment policies; building pipelines of bankable regional projects; and strengthening local skills so value chains generate employment within the regions concerned.

Peter Huber underscored that connectivity, energy, and industry must be aligned to deliver prosperity. He emphasized the importance of secure and resilient renewable energy systems, regional scale, and institutional partnerships, noting Austria's long-standing support for the [Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centres](#) through UNIDO.

Maurice Niaty Mouamba, Commissioner and Chief of the Department of Land Use Planning and Infrastructure, ECCAS, highlighted the region's hydropower and forestry potential and recent steps toward regional integration, including adoption of a regional energy market code and a masterplan for regional value chains. He said integrating energy, transport, and industry could transform the region into a zone of green growth and shared prosperity.

Presenting on behalf of the Council of Engineers for the Energy Transition, Ulf Larsson, Technical Director and Global Decarbonization Lead, Rail and Transit, WSP, presented the Council's Issue Brief on [Clean Economic Corridors in Africa: Integrating Energy, Industry, and Transport for Low Carbon Growth](#), which argues that, among others, many existing corridors still lack a coherent clean energy vision and climate resilient framework. The Issue Brief calls for viewing corridors as integrated cross-border systems that combine energy, transport,

and industrial development, while also ensuring local benefits, especially for women and youth.

Seidu Issifu stressed that green economic corridors are central to Ghana's sustainability strategy and industrialization goals. He pointed to the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor as a major opportunity for sustainable manufacturing and clean energy deployment. Issifu emphasized policy harmonization, public-private partnerships, green infrastructure, and regional coordination as the key strategies required to translate corridor development into bankable projects.

Gibson Obasi, Executive Director, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, outlined the Centre's role in aligning renewable energy policies across 15 member states, supporting data systems, identifying bankable projects, and strengthening regional skills programmes.

Manuchehr Jobir, Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the UN in Vienna, highlighted his country's hydropower leadership, noting that approximately 98% of its electricity comes from renewable sources. He cited the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project that links Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with Afghanistan and Pakistan as an example of how renewable energy infrastructure can underpin regional industrial development.

Javid Abdullayev, Director, Azerbaijan Renewable Energy Agency, emphasized that regional corridors must become greener, more efficient, and more competitive. Referring to the Caspian Green Energy Corridor and the Zangezur Corridor linking Azerbaijan and Turkey, he argued these should not be seen merely as export routes but as the foundations of broader industrial ecosystems, including green hydrogen and industrial decarbonization.

Aysel Yagubova highlighted the role of regional centers in making projects bankable, aligning regulatory frameworks, and serving as bridges between governments, development partners, and financial institutions.

Jakob Lau Holst, CEO, Global Wind Organisation, stressed the importance of standardized training, safety standards, and accessible career pathways. He noted more than 220,000 workers across 55 countries have already been trained through the



Gibson Obasi, Acting Executive Director, ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency



Jakob Lau Holst, CEO, Global Wind Organization

organization's schemes, which are designed to support workforce mobility across regional projects.

Hadiza Abdulmumini, SDG7 Youth Constituency, said corridors are “not just lines on the map,” but infrastructure that will shape livelihoods and geographies for decades to come. She called for meaningful youth participation in corridor design and implementation.

Several speakers also discussed the Lobito Corridor, a 1,300-kilometer route linking Angola with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia. Amadeu Leitão Nunes, Executive Secretary, Lobito Corridor Transit Facilitation Agency, described the corridor as a test case for moving beyond the traditional extractive model. He identified governance fragmentation across the three sovereign countries, sequencing of industrial development alongside infrastructure, and fragmented data systems as major challenges.

Daniel Schroth emphasized that the corridor is not a single infrastructure project but a wider regional integration strategy combining rail, road, and energy systems. He highlighted the Bank's role in mobilizing financing and bringing in private sector actors.

Innovation to Impact – Entrepreneurship, Skills and Inclusive Green Industrial Value Creation: On Friday, 10 April, Gerswynn Mckuur, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO, moderated this roundtable session, which examined how entrepreneurship, skills development, and innovation ecosystems can support inclusive green industrial value creation and help translate ideas into real economic impact.

Riccardo Savigliano, Chief, Energy Systems and Industrial Decarbonization Unit, UNIDO, emphasized the need for investment in entrepreneurial development and green skills to build sustainable value chains. He said research suggests that in the future, two of three children will work in jobs that do not yet exist, underscoring the urgency of preparing future workforces.

Shri Rajneesh, Additional Secretary and Development Commissioner, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, India, stressed that countries must design policies suited to their own economic systems, noting there is no one-size-fits-all approach. He emphasized that innovation must respond to real industry challenges, warning that “innovation for the sake of innovation” is unlikely to succeed.

Daniel Gomes de Almeida Filho, Secretary for Technological Development and Innovation, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Brazil, emphasized the need to understand how current jobs affect people's wellbeing, including mental health. He also highlighted the importance of extending innovation beyond major urban centers to ensure inclusive development across regions.

Giulia Genuardi, Managing Director, Enel Group, stressed the importance of investing in human capital across all stages of the transition, linking just transition principles with workforce development through multi-stakeholder approaches involving public institutions, the private sector, and civil society. She also underscored the importance of empowering women and youth as agents of change and strengthening policy and regulatory ecosystems.



Milena Angelova, Secretary General, Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association

Milena Angelova, Secretary General, Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association, emphasized that actors within value chains must work to distribute costs fairly, noting that transition-related costs are likely to increase. She highlighted the importance of creating markets for green products and establishing the right conditions for entrepreneurship.

Daniel Schroth emphasized the need to aggregate projects to reduce transaction costs, noting large development banks are not structured to invest in individual small enterprises. He highlighted the scarcity of equity financing and efforts to develop new financing vehicles to support proven projects. He also pointed to challenges related to access to local currency financing and the need for technical assistance to support project development.

Xiaolong Fu, Director, International Hydrogen Energy Centre, emphasized the importance of international collaboration, noting hydrogen can play a key role in scaling industrial development from pilot to large-scale deployment.

Fred Walti, CEO and Founder, Network for Global Innovation, highlighted the role of entrepreneurs in developing technologies and driving economic growth. He emphasized the importance of strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting entrepreneurs with business skills. He also noted that artificial intelligence can accelerate the journey from concept to market.

Bulcsu Gödri, Head of Business Development, Technology Transfer Company, University of Szeged, Hungary, discussed challenges faced in the absence of regulatory support and incentives. He emphasized the importance of connecting entrepreneurship with technology development and highlighted that framing innovations within a climate context can help unlock funding and support.

Nermin Sena Özger, CEO and Founder, NeSea, shared her experience of building a business in response to real-world challenges such as climate impacts and overfishing. She highlighted the importance of perseverance, noting the need to overcome rejection and build solutions grounded in lived experience. She emphasized that science-based entrepreneurship requires time, evidence, and dedicated ecosystems distinct from traditional business environments.

Mark Hill, CEO, Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, highlighted the untapped potential of SIDS, noting they can serve as “regulatory sandboxes” for faster and more efficient innovation. He, therefore, emphasized that SIDS should not just be recognized for their vulnerability but also for their capacity to deliver investment and innovation outcomes.

Semida Silveira highlighted that energy should be regarded as a driver of development and that energy infrastructure should be designed to trigger local economic growth. She stressed the need for strong local and regional ecosystems, catalytic projects, and institutional support that enables skills development and knowledge creation.

Selma Prodanovic, CEO and Founder, 1MillionStartups, discussed the role of “angel investors” in supporting startups. She highlighted a “trust gap” in investment, noting investors tend to support those they are familiar with, which can reinforce gender biases. She called for changing perceptions, normalizing ambition, particularly among women and youth, and building inclusive ecosystems.

Nate Wyne, CEO and Co-Founder, Floodlight, emphasized the importance of business-driven models, noting a preference for contracts over grants. He also highlighted challenges faced by smaller innovators, including competition from larger players and “innovation tourists” who move between projects without delivering outcomes.

Rita Idehai, CEO and Founder, Ecobarter, shared her experience of developing reverse vending machines in Nigeria. She highlighted challenges, including building technical capacity, overcoming market mistrust, and changing consumer behavior. She emphasized the importance of regulatory frameworks, such as deposit return schemes, partnerships to scale solutions, and access to capital beyond the pilot stage.

Manuela Lima D’Avila, International Cooperation Advisor, Latin American Observatory of Energy Geopolitics, emphasized the need to reshape perceptions of the energy sector among young people, highlighting opportunities for dynamic and meaningful careers. She pointed to persistent gender gaps, particularly in technical roles, and stressed the importance of practical engagement, such as technical visits, to connect youth with industry. She also emphasized the need for capacity building, time, and fair compensation for young professionals.

Rebuilding Futures: Green Industrialization in Crisis

Contexts: On Friday, 10 April, Phillip Cornell moderated this roundtable, which considered how crisis recovery can serve as a critical opportunity to rebuild industrial systems along green and climate-resilient pathways rather than reinforcing carbon-intensive structures. Opening the discussion, Cornell emphasized that recovery is not simply about rebuilding what has been lost, but about redesigning systems for the future.

Sunil Handunnetti, Minister of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development, Sri Lanka, reflected on his country’s experience of repeated shocks, including the 2004 tsunami, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a recent economic crisis, alongside increasing climate-induced weather disruptions. He described green industrialization as an imperative for industrial competitiveness, resilience, and economic sovereignty (particularly given the

country’s heavy reliance on imported energy and exposure to fossil fuel price volatility). He underlined the government’s net-zero by 2050 objective and identified entrepreneurship, clean technologies, and low-carbon production as central pillars of the country’s industrial policy.

Lisa Sachs stressed that resilience, energy security, economic sovereignty, and competitiveness now “point in the same direction,” noting this alignment was far less visible five years ago. She outlined two key areas of work. On the one hand, fragmented agendas on recovery, development, and decarbonization must be brought together in integrated plans, which jointly look at industry and energy. On the other, she highlighted the strategic use of concessional finance to derisk and unlock private investment (where risks can be effectively managed).

Yurii Vitrenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the UN in Vienna, described industrial recovery as a national priority shaped by the ongoing war. He emphasized that decisions taken now will define the country’s future economic structure and highlighted the [Ukraine Plan 2024-2027](#) as a key instrument for recovery, reconstruction, modernization, and alignment with European standards. He stressed that green industrialization should be rooted in local capacities and should meaningfully include women, youth, and veterans.

Salah Abdel Shafi, Palestinian Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Observer to the UN in Vienna, underlined the exceptional political and economic constraints facing Palestine. He stressed that recovery cannot be understood outside its broader socioeconomic and political context, particularly due to restrictions on trade, movement, and access to resources. Referring to Gaza, he described recovery as inseparable from humanitarian assistance. He outlined ongoing efforts, led by the Palestinian Federation of Industries with technical support from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UNIDO, to assess the damage sustained by industrial establishments. He highlighted the “One Palestine, One UN, One Future” Horizon Fund, a funding mechanism for recovery established in December 2025, as an effort to avoid donor duplication and improve coordination.



Magdi Ahmed Mofadal Elnour, Permanent Representative of Sudan to Austria and to the UN and other International Organizations in Vienna

Magdi Ahmed Mofadal Elnour, Permanent Representative of Sudan to Austria and to the UN and other International Organizations in Vienna, noted the impact of conflict on the country's ability to harness renewable resources. He stressed that, with the right international partnerships and investment derisking, Sudan could become a success story in green industrial recovery. He underscored the social dimension, particularly the role of green jobs in reducing youth emigration and promoting regional integration.

Mohammed Goni Alkali, Managing Director and CEO, North-East Development Commission, Nigeria, presented lessons from post-insurgency recovery in northeastern Nigeria, where the Commission allocates a third of investments to green projects. He stressed the importance of developing a cross-cutting Master Plan to guide recovery efforts. He emphasized that infrastructure recovery also plays an important role in rebuilding public trust.

Yuko Yasunaga, Deputy to the Director General and Managing Director of Corporate Services and Operations, UNIDO, highlighted UNIDO's work in Ukraine, including damage assessments, consultations with government and private sector actors, and implementation of green industrial recovery projects supported by multiple donors.

Gianpiero Nacci emphasized the importance of business continuity and support for small and medium enterprises in recovery contexts. He also highlighted the importance of support for infrastructure projects.

Koji Terajima, Director, Panasonic Ukraine, described investments in Ukraine to decentralize district heating systems through the implementation of heat pump technology, contributing to energy savings, energy security, independence, and decarbonization in Ukraine.

Mouddar Khouja, Secretary General of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce, highlighted the need to meet industry's energy demands as a foundation for recovering industrial establishments.

Florie Gonsolin, Programme Lead for EU Industry Transformation, Agora Industry, highlighted lessons from the EU's [Green Deal Industrial Plan](#), while stressing that each recovery context must be approached on its own terms. She pointed to key building blocks, such as gradual carbon pricing, public procurement frameworks, and vertically integrated country partnerships, as elements that can complement long-term growth.

Kim Malin Lakeit, Director for International Cooperation, Deutsche Energie-Agentur GmbH, emphasized the need for demand-led technical assistance and legal stability to support investment decisions. She stressed that such agencies should act as neutral technical partners.

Bakyt Dzhusupov, Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, stressed that countries rebuilding energy systems have a unique opportunity to address new climate risks from the outset. He highlighted the development of an open Geographical Information System (GIS) platform to help participating states visualize energy vulnerabilities and integrate climate projections into planning. He also advocated for stronger multilateral cooperation.

Via video message, Mohammed AlAgha, UNIDO Youth Advisory Group, argued that young people from crisis-affected contexts are already actively contributing to reconstruction, often informally and under extreme constraints, rather than passively waiting for help. He called on institutions to move beyond viewing youth only as beneficiaries and to include them meaningfully as participants and decision-makers in reconstruction processes, turning commitments into accessible, real opportunities.

Closing Segment

On Friday, 10 April, Katharina Moser reflected on the central themes that had emerged over the Forum's two days, noting that leaders had repeatedly linked energy security, climate change, and economic transformation. She underscored that these agendas "must move forward together" and invited participants to carry the momentum of the Forum forward with the [Vienna Call to Action](#).

Phillip Cornell offered concluding reflections on the broader geopolitical context. He noted many of the assumptions that underpinned the green transition only a few years ago still hold, particularly the strong economic case for renewable energy. At the same time, he stressed, the international environment has changed significantly, with growing energy security concerns and heightened vulnerability in fossil fuel supply chains. He observed that multilateral cooperation is increasingly taking plurilateral forms, including smaller regional and South-South partnerships.

Referring to discussions on crisis and conflict-affected settings, Cornell emphasized that even in highly fragile contexts, opportunities to build more distributed and resilient infrastructure systems exist. He nevertheless stressed that sustainable recovery ultimately depends on peace and political stability.

Betty Osei Bonsu, Director of Operations and Programs, Green Africa Youth Organization, highlighted the importance of trust, inclusion, and leadership opportunities for young people, particularly young women, pointing to the [Gender and Energy Compact](#) as a guiding document. Drawing on her own experience of leading an award-winning waste management initiative, she emphasized that climate, energy, and industrial transformation debates are fundamentally also about who is trusted to lead.



Ciyong Zou, Deputy to the Director General and the Managing Director, Directorate of Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Industrial Development, UNIDO, and **Maria José Garcia Jaramillo**, Executive Director of the Inter-American Cement Federation

Gabriela Sellner, Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN in Vienna, emphasized that the energy systems of the future must be sustainable, renewable, and resilient. She noted that the Vienna Call to Action offers a practical framework for linking energy, climate, and security policy through stronger regional coordination, while stressing that the task now lies in delivery.

Ciyong Zou reflected on the wider implications of the Forum for global cooperation. He noted that rising energy challenges, climate impacts, and shifting economic realities are increasingly shaping both lives and economies. Looking beyond 2030, he argued that sustainable development frameworks must treat energy, industry, and climate resilience as an integrated system rather than separate policy domains.

Alexander Karner, Head of Unit for Themes and Quality, Austrian Development Agency, stressed that progress must ultimately be measured by tangible outcomes on the ground. He highlighted the importance of accountability, gender-responsive project design, and cross-sectoral cooperation, noting that development agencies play a central role in translating strategic ambitions into measurable results.

Nina Abrahamczik, City Councillor, Vienna, on behalf of the Mayor of Vienna, highlighted the city's efforts to combine climate neutrality goals with social inclusion. Referring to the city's Climate Strategy, adaptation programmes, solar initiatives, and participatory district-level climate teams, she stressed that effective climate governance depends on reaching those who are often absent from formal participation processes, particularly the most vulnerable communities. She concluded that no single model for participation exists and that the way forward must combine dialogue with practical impact.

The Forum closed at 6.15pm.

Upcoming Meetings

Central Asian Regional Ecological Summit: This Regional Ecological Summit will present the results of a two-year process to develop coordinated, practical solutions and mechanisms for regional cooperation on climate change and the environment among Central Asian countries. **dates:** 20-24 April 2026 **location:** Astana, Kazakhstan **www:** caclimate.fund/en/regional-ecological-sammit-2026

First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels: This conference aims to advance collective efforts to phase out fossil fuels and will identify legal, economic, and social pathways to phase out fossil fuels. **dates:** 28-29 April 2026 **location:** Santa Marta, Colombia **www:** transitionawayconference.com/

2026 Annual Meetings of the African Development Bank Group: The African Development Bank Group will hold its 2026 Annual Meetings under the theme "Mobilising Africa's Development Financing at Scale in a Fragmented World." **dates:** 25-29 May 2026 **location:** Brazzaville, Republic of Congo **www:** am.afdb.org/en

71st Meeting of the GEF Council and 8th GEF Assembly: The eighth GEF Assembly and the 71st meeting of the GEF Council will bring together ministers, prominent environmentalists, government officials, business leaders, and leaders of GEF Agencies and of the main environmental

conventions, as well as civil society representatives and Indigenous Peoples, to discuss governance and financing solutions for global environmental challenges. **dates:** 30 May - 6 June 2026 **location:** Samarkand, Uzbekistan **www:** thegef.org/events/eighth-gef-assembly

64th Sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies: The 64th sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) are scheduled to take place in June 2026. **dates:** 8-18 June 2026 **location:** Bonn, Germany **www:** unfccc.int/conference/first-sessional-period-2026

2026 UN Climate Change Conference: The 2026 UN Climate Change Conference will consist of the 31st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC, the 21st meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Kyoto Protocol, and the eighth meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Paris Agreement, as well as the 65th sessions of the SBI and SBSTA. **dates:** 9-20 November 2026 **location:** Antalya, Turkey **www:** unfccc.int/cop31/the-road-to-antalya

UN Trade and Development Global Supply Chain Forum 2026: This Forum will discuss policy options and consider practical measures to enhance the resilience, sustainability, and inclusiveness of transport and logistics systems. **dates:** 29 November - 1 December 2026 **location:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia **www:** unctad.org/meeting/global-supply-chain-forum-2026

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org/

Glossary

ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
GEF	Global Environment Facility
G-RES	Global Programme on Climate Resilient Renewable Energy Systems in SIDS
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
IVECF	International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum
LDCs	least developed countries
LLDCs	landlocked developing countries
MICs	middle-income countries
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	small island developing States
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization
VEF	Vienna Energy Forum