

FALLING WALLS SCIENCE SUMMIT

KEY RESULTS OF THE PLENARY TABLE

“AFRICA’S ENERGY SHIFT: JUST AND GLOBAL COLLABORATION”

— A fair energy future demands African leadership, not new dependencies.

The global energy transition risks repeating old injustices: Africa holds vast renewable potential yet many people still lack modern energy, while fossil-era inequalities and new forms of “energy colonialism” are emerging. To make this shift genuinely just, the panel calls for African-led partnerships, joint innovation capacity, social and gender inclusion, fair policy frameworks and community-rooted collaboration.

Across the continent, momentum is building. New research hubs, industry–university partnerships and cross-border clean-energy projects are reshaping how technology is developed, tested and deployed. This emerging landscape creates space for solutions that reflect African priorities and give young scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs a real stake in the transition – provided collaborations are structured to strengthen local capability rather than reproduce old hierarchies.

THE PANEL CALL TO ACTION:

1 — Put African actors in the lead in energy partnerships.

Structure collaborations so that African institutions co-design agendas, hold decision-making power and build their own energy markets, avoiding a new era in which technology and value chains are controlled elsewhere.

2 — Build joint innovation capacity, not new dependencies.

Establish long-term programmes that combine shared infrastructure, pilot plants and exchanges between universities, research centres and industry, enabling brain circulation rather than brain drain and ensuring two-way technology transfer between Africa and Europe.

3 — Make the energy transition a social and gender-justice project.

Invest in women and young people through targeted funding, mentorship and safe working environments, and design energy projects that prioritise access for low-income communities rather than power-hungry elites such as data centres or crypto-mining operations.

4 — Embed communities and social sciences in every collaboration.

Require multidisciplinary teams that include social scientists and local stakeholders to test acceptance, affordability and real-life impact, ensuring technologies such as clean-cooking fuels are tailored to local contexts and improve everyday lives.

This event is supported by Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin and assembled in the framework of the Falling Walls Science Summit 2025 in Berlin. The Falling Walls Science Summit is a leading international, interdisciplinary, and intersectoral forum for scientific breakthroughs. It commemorates the fall of the Berlin Wall and aims to promote dialogue between science and society.

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