

Africa's economic prosperity depends on inclusive energy mix

Energy sustainability is not just an opportunity to transform societies and grow economies, it is also a necessity - a prerequisite to meet Africa's growing energy demand and to reduce the global carbon footprint in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Ryan Collyer, acting CEO of Rosatom Central and Southern Africa

These were the words of Ryan Collyer, acting CEO of Rosatom Central and Southern Africa, during the Energy Leader's Dialogue webinar series on energy transition, a high-level panel representing global and regional energy leaders, shared their experience on the challenges to sustainable growth of the liquid petroleum gas (LPG), solar and nuclear energy industries in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as possible solutions.

The most pressing issue of the global energy agenda, according to the panel, is solving the energy trilemma: in order to build a strong basis for prosperity and competitiveness, individual countries must find a balance between energy affordability, energy security and environmental sustainability in their respective energy mixes.

Nuclear ticks all three boxes

"Out of all sources of electricity, nuclear is one of very few that are currently capable of ticking all three boxes. Nuclear power is a cost-effective and reliable source of power that is always available," said Collyer.

A modern nuclear power plant (NPP) is able to supply uninterrupted power for 60-80 years at a predictable and affordable price, which is not drastically affected by the volatility of the global commodity market. Nuclear energy is also a key component of a clean and sustainable energy strategy, which emits no CO2 into atmosphere.

Collyer called for an open and equal debate on different energy sources on the continent and noted that an energy mix made up of various sources is vitally important; "Generation sources should not be fighting over which source is best for the continent, but rather working together to empower the continent and its people through access to affordable and clean energy."

Making the world green

"The ideal future energy mix for Africa is nuclear accompanied by renewables – hydro, solar and wind. This is how we can make the world green and at the same time deliver cost efficient electricity to Africa in a sustainable manner," said Collyer.

He also highlighted the importance for the nuclear industry to dispel the myths that it commonly faces; "The myth that nuclear is unsafe, for example, is simply untrue. Statistically, nuclear is the safest form of energy production known to man. From 1971 to 2009 the nuclear industry actually saved over 1.8-million lives through the prevention of harmful pollutants, should that power have been produced with hydrocarbons."

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