

Statement by the African Union

Delivered by H.E Amani Abou-Zeid, African Union Commissioner

On the occasion of the 2023 SDG Summit
High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the 78th United Nations General Assembly

Accelerating SDG Commitments: 1.8 Billion Adolescents and Youth Transforming our World

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[Transcribed by PMNCH]

Good afternoon, everyone.

I was not scheduled to speak [initially], but I insisted to have to ask for the floor to share our commitment.

I am the Africa Union Commissioner in charge of Energy of Digitalization and Transport, and I want to remind everybody that more than half of Africa does not have access to electricity. I want to remind everybody that 90% of our population in the continent do not have access to clean cooking and that the major contributor early death in the continent is the fact that we are not using clean cooking as the majority of those who are hurt are women and children. Not only early death, but also, girls lose like four or five hours each day to get firewood or to help with the cooking that on charcoal and other things.

So, our commitment at the African Union is that ensure that each and every African has access to electricity, but also clean cooking and we have elevated that in our African common position on energy since last year and I'm happy to report that even this year, clean cooking is very much part of our strategy and all our programmes, this is one.

Second, we cannot talk about youth and betterment of life, education, connection, advocacy without digitalization. So, we are committing ourselves to meaningful connectivity to everyone, especially girls. And thanks to the African Union efforts together with the Broadband Commission, the global One and many of our initiatives like Smart Africa but also other initiatives, global initiatives, we are committed to one connecting each and every African each and every household, each and every enterprise on the continent with you know high speed Internet to skills, especially you know for girls but also safety and security online. We are revising all our protocols or our cyber security strategies to ensure safety and security of our children and youth particularly online.

Third, we are talking about fear. We cannot not talk about transport and thanks to the African Union, the work that we do, but also the great advocacy done by fear, we are revising the way we are looking at road safety to make sure that girls and women's safety in transport is very well part of that and that we are changing all our strategies accordingly. I could not lose this opportunity without highlighting this to all of you. There was a time when I was one of those 1.8 billion, but alas, it is no longer the case. But anyway, we are doing our best.

Thank you all.