



THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL: POTENTIALS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICA

<i>Recebido em</i>	30/11/2023
<i>Aprovado em:</i>	01/01/2024

Prevail Adewale-Alfred¹

ABSTRACT

This essay will examine the implications of the externalization and globalization of the European Green Deal for Africa. The challenges posed to specific sectors and the potentials for growth and cooperation between the two continents. These possible outcomes are numerous, but we focus on some of the most prevalent and/or serious ones below. We begin by examining broadly the EGD and Africa. Thereafter the Implications and potentials.

Keywords: European Green Deal (EGD). Africa. Cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

The European Green Deal (EGD) according to the European Commission (2019) is a roadmap for a socioecological transition to a low-carbon future and provides building blocks for a green economic strategy in Europe. President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen in 2019 proposed the EGD as a mission for Europe to become the world's first carbon neutral continent by 2050, to decouple economic growth from resource use and to

¹ Graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in English and International Studies from Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria and a Master of Arts (M.A) in Peace and Development Studies at the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Currently enrolled in the Master in Security and Human Rights at the University of Tuscia, Viterbo, Italy.



strengthen European cohesion through this mission. The Green Deal aspires to contribute to changes toward sustainable economies, energy and food systems, as well as the preservation of biodiversity and a clean environment. It is more than just a climate agenda. The Green Deal was proposed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the European Commission has elevated it to the status of a key reference framework for the EU's COVID-19 recovery strategy, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the EU's relations with Africa and other regions (Hackenesch, Högl, Knaepen, Iacobuta, & Asafu-Adjaye, 2021).

The EU is progressively transforming the EU Green Deal (EGD), which was originally intended to be a domestic growth strategy and policy framework, into a significant component of its foreign, trade, and development policies. Everyone is acutely aware that tackling climate change will call for a comparable level of ambition on a global scale. The Green Deal is a comprehensive plan for coordinating a number of policy areas, including biodiversity, food, fisheries, and agriculture; clean energy; sustainable industry; reducing pollution; and taking action on climate change. The regional policies that outline the EU's goals for its external activity in the Western Balkans, the EU Neighborhood, and Africa may be the best examples of the external aspect of the European Green Deal. These regional strategies demonstrate a cooperative approach to creating the external dimension of the Green Deal through investment and development programming when combined with the ongoing programming of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument Global Europe (NDICI) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). These initiatives show a wide variation because they frequently stem from local interests and needs (Teevan, Medinilla, & Sergejeff, 2021).

This essay therefore will examine the implications of the externalization and globalization of the European Green Deal for Africa. The challenges posed to specific sectors and the potentials for growth and cooperation between the two continents. These possible outcomes are numerous, but we focus on some of the most prevalent and/or serious ones



below. We begin by examining broadly the EGD and Africa. Thereafter the Implications and potentials.

2 THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL AND AFRICA

The EGD aspires to realize the objective of the European Commission to leave no one or place behind, decouple economic growth from resource usage, and achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. The EU hopes to lead a worldwide race to adopt new sustainability standards, create green technologies, and create new markets. The European Commission adopted the Fit for 55 package of policy measures on July 14, 2021, to lower emissions by at least 55 percent from 1990 levels by 2030 as a first step toward meeting the EGD objectives by 2050 (European Commission, 2021).

Recent times have seen a rise in the importance of green transitions in African policy discussions as well. African nations' per capita emissions continue to be low, and they have made essentially little contribution to global warming. At the same time, the impact of climate change is particularly severe in many of the continent's nations. In "Agenda 2063: The Africa we want," which outlines the AU's strategic plan for the future, climate action is a key component. The African Union's Agenda 2063 aims among other goals, to "eradicate poverty in one generation and build shared prosperity through social and economic transformation of the continent," (Hackenesch, et al., 2021).

For African nations, the EGD's growing pathway toward a net zero carbon future is crucial. After China and the United States, the EU has the third-largest economy in the world, accounting for 16% of the world's GDP in terms of purchasing power parity. With 15.6% of the world's imports and exports, the EU is also one of the three biggest players in international trade (Eurostat, 2020; Eurostat, 2019). Therefore, decreased European demand for fossil fuels might lead to lower commodity prices globally, lower revenue for oil-dependent African nations, and economic disruption in those nations.



At the same time, African nations with plentiful supplies of significant "green" minerals like cobalt and nickel may gain from Europe's transition to a greener future. Africa can anticipate additional effects as the EGD reshapes the EU economy, governance, and foreign policy given that the EU is Africa's largest trading partner with a 28 percent share of both exports and imports with the continent. The EU is also home to four of the ten economies that invested the most FDI in Africa between 2015 and 2019 (Usman, Abimbola & Ituen, 2021; Eurostat, 2019).

3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL FOR AFRICA

3.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR GREEN ENERGY TRANSITIONS

Mark, (2021), as cited in Usman, et al., (2021) believes that a key component of the EGD is a radical transformation of Europe's energy consumption and production in order to accomplish important goals. Among these goals is ensuring a cost-effective energy supply that satisfies the demands of businesses and consumers throughout Europe. Another goal is to increase clean energy production and consumption to replace fossil fuels in order to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. As more than 75% of the EU's greenhouse, gas emissions are attributable to the production and consumption of energy, overhauling Europe's energy systems is essential to the EGD. By 2050, oil will be phased out in Europe; natural gas will be used as a transition fuel; and renewable hydrogen will play a bigger part in the energy mix.

According to Hackenesch, et al., (2021), the EU and African nations working together to transition to sustainable energy sources is a key component of the Green Deal's implementation. They identify three ways to cooperate in the energy sector: (1) expanding access to electricity in Africa using renewable energy, (2) promoting green transitions, especially in nations that depend heavily on fossil fuels, and (3) trading in green energy. However, each of these options would need to be adjusted to the individual needs and



resources of each African nation because resources and demands vary widely across the continent.

Africa has the youngest population in the world, and in the future decades, its urban population is expected to increase even more quickly than China's. This indicates that the need for energy in African countries will skyrocket due to increased need for transportation, industrial activity, and better population coverage. Africa's oil demand may potentially surpass China's in the next two decades if the continent's development is not accompanied by a shift to renewable energy (IEA, 2019). By 2030, IRENA (2020) estimates that African nations may generate 67% of their energy locally and cleanly from renewable sources, resulting in a significant increase in employment and positive effects on health which would make African countries global leaders in renewable energy production.

In the EGD, green hydrogen, or hydrogen created using electricity derived from renewable sources like water electrolysis, plays a significant role. The forthcoming demand for green hydrogen in Europe could be advantageous for nations with large solar and wind potential, positioning those nations as suppliers. The EU and the African Union have started interregional energy projects on African hydrogen potentials to establish the requisite strategic relationships. The Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) is the most notable. The AEEP estimates that by 2030, green hydrogen FDI from Europe to Africa will total 75.6 billion euros (\$90 billion). A few African nations are already formulating plans to take advantage of the chances to export green hydrogen to Europe.

The Moroccan Solar Energy Agency presented a proposal to manufacture green hydrogen, and Morocco has established a National Hydrogen Commission, announced the creation of its Green Hydrogen Roadmap, and signed a statement of intent with Germany to finance the development of the project. With the intention of promoting innovation throughout the whole hydrogen value chain, including fuel cell technologies, South Africa also founded Hydrogen South Africa. There is also a heated discussion over how to make sure that



South Africa exports green hydrogen by investing in the creation of blue hydrogen as a transitional fuel to the carbon-free green hydrogen. In addition, the German government has worked with member nations of the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States to identify potential candidates for green hydrogen production and export from Africa (Usman, et al., (2021).

The EU should needs to continue to form energy partnerships with African nations to support renewable energy development through knowledge transfer, capacity building, and critical investments in necessary infrastructure growth in order to realize the potential of green energy. In that regard, cooperation initiatives like the 2015-founded African Renewable Energy Initiative need to be significantly expanded up, and the planned "partnership for green transition and energy access" under the Comprehensive Strategy with Africa is a step in that direction (IRENA, 2021, as cited in Hackenesch, et al., 2021; European Commission 2020c).

3.2 EU-Africa Biodiversity Strategy

The net gain commitment to replenish nature more than it is depleted forms the basis of the EGD's biodiversity plan. In order to stop the loss of biodiversity, the EU is obligated by this principle to safeguard at least 30% of the land and 30% of the sea inside its borders. One of the few EGD policy sectors with a clear EU-Africa agenda is biodiversity. The EGD biodiversity plan seeks to launch NaturAfrica and form green partnerships with African partners. This plan aims to safeguard ecosystems and wildlife while giving locals employment possibilities in environmentally friendly industries. Additionally, Europe declares its desire to deepen the connections between indigenous peoples' and local communities' contributions to biodiversity protection (Usman, et al., 2021).

Scholars agree that NaturAfrica is a timely initiative for the African continent. According to the 2018 assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform



on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, climate change is predicted to result in the loss of over 50% of some bird and other animal species by 2100, with temperatures likely to climb faster in Africa than the rest of the world. African lakes' productivity could decline by 20 to 30 percent because of climate change, having a significant negative impact on the populations whose livelihoods depend on the flora and fauna of the lakes. For instance, the region around Lake Chad has experienced a substantial decline in the environment of the lake due to the effects of climate change, which has fueled violent conflicts between ranchers and farmers as well as religious extremism (FAO, 2021; Onuoha, 2008).

It is clear that the fact that both host governments and outside parties have diverse motivations to engage in activities that promote biodiversity loss explains in part why these issues continue. The new worldwide coalition for biodiversity, which is made up of national parks, aquariums, botanic gardens, zoos, and science and natural history museums, is one example of the global alliances that the NaturAfrica initiative hopes to create (European Commission, 2020a). This emphasis on a global biodiversity plan could strengthen unfavorable conservation tactics. Instead, projects should be strengthened and supplemented across the continent. One of these is the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience, which offers policy measures, cooperation mechanisms, and doable actions on land and ecosystem restoration in Africa. It was endorsed at the African Ministerial Summit on Biodiversity in November 2018.

Europe should be more in tune with African reality and the continent's own biodiversity goals when creating and executing NaturAfrica. These realities include the requirement to resolve what some civil society organizations have characterized as enduring issues with violations of human rights and land eviction related to a conservation approach (Chris, 2020).

3.3 POTENTIALS FOR STRENGTHENING CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN AFRICA



A circular economy (CE) must be established in order for the EU to achieve carbon emission neutrality by 2050. The "transition to the circular economy will be systemic, deep, and transformative, in the EU and beyond," declared the European Commission (2020d, p.24). The European Commission (2020c) states that "a clean circular economy [...] requires enhanced cooperation between the EU and Africa on a responsible raw materials sector, secure and clean industrial value chains, respecting ambitious environmental and climate standards" in its proposal for "Comprehensive Strategy with Africa" components. On the other hand, the Agenda 2063 seeks to "create economies and communities that are environmentally sustainable and climate resilient." This includes, among other things, the management of natural resources in a sustainable manner as well as sustainable patterns of use and production. A number of nations, including Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, and South Africa, have begun to implement circular economies (AU, 2014; Ghosh, 2020).

The attractiveness of the idea comes from its potential to reconcile the seemingly incompatible goals of economic growth and environmental sustainability. The potential economic gains from utilizing less resources, such as energy and materials, along with the business prospects brought forth by new technology and evolving business models. The establishment of a circular economy within Europe and, in a subsequent step, collaboration with African nations to develop analogous models, are the main topics of discussion in the EU. Hackenesch, et al., (2021) however argue that a full circular economy that includes value chains from both continents, tight cooperation, and shared learning from the start offer the greatest economic potential for green job creation and growth in Africa and Europe. This strategy offers chances to get beyond barriers to both sustainable commercial relations for Europe and sustainable development in African nations. Digitalization and electronic waste may have a lot of promise in the area they claim. By improving information sharing between manufacturers, consumers, and recycling businesses, digital technologies create new possibilities for efficient recycling. Through increased data creation and analysis of energy



utilization, digital technology can also aid in optimizing material and energy efficiency. By moving the manufacturing cycle closer to the demand and minimizing overproduction in this way, it can lower resource consumption by the final consumer.

Additionally, the European Commission aims to halt garbage exports outside of the EU. The garbage markets in Europe and Africa are tightly entwined. Numerous effects, some detrimental, could result from the lowering of trash trade for African nations. The products that are shipped to African markets are either used right away, after being renovated, or as scrap. A circular reconfiguration of resource flows could therefore limit economic activity in the sectors and small enterprises that use these commodities. However, this can open up new business prospects for several other industries. African enterprises may have more opportunity to engage in higher-value activities if some global value chains are localized to African producers. This would strengthen the manufacturing industry. If this transition is handled carefully, GDP might increase. African and EU stakeholders might build on current African circular economy projects like the African Circular Economy Alliance, which was created by Nigeria, Rwanda, and South Africa. (Usman, et al., 2021).

3.4 GROWING DEMAND FOR ESSENTIAL RAW MATERIALS

Although the EGD aims to uncouple growth from resource consumption, it is crucial to have access to new raw materials because they are crucial components of clean energy technologies like solar PV panels, wind turbines, battery storage, and electric vehicles (EVs), which require more minerals to construct than their fossil fuel-based counterparts, do. Realizing the energy strategies specified in the EGD requires these basic commodities (Usman, et al., 2021). According to predictions made by the World Bank and the International Energy Agency, the demand for some essential raw materials will rise as the adoption of low-carbon technology increases. For instance, the demand for minerals for use in EVs and battery storage will increase at least thirty times in order to achieve the targets of the Paris



Agreement by 2040. While the demand for graphite, cobalt, and nickel will increase by roughly twenty to twenty-five times, the demand for lithium will increase more than forty times. The demand for copper for grid lines will more than double during the same period due to the growth of power networks (International Energy Agency, 2021).

The EU lists thirty essential raw materials some of which are found in Africa, This makes it obvious that Africa has a lot of potential to become a big source of essential raw materials. As the EU looks to lessen its reliance on Asian supply chains for the materials' procurement and processing, there may be a rise in demand for raw materials for green technology in African countries. However, the hazards associated with these potential are unique to the continent. There is a strong risk of repeating previous extractive relationships in which raw material suppliers are relegated to African nations without localizing benefits like high-skilled jobs that result from technology diffusion and growing manufacturing capacities. In terms of pollution, habitat loss, and resource depletion, material exploitation may also have negative environmental and social effects that worsen current fragility. In addition, the EU might export its own carbon emissions to these nations without taking significant mitigating measures (European Commission, 2020b; Usman, et al., 2021).

3.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR AU-EU CLIMATE DIPLOMACY

A crucial element in the EU's Green Deal's success is global climate diplomacy. As a "constructive, but also assertive partner" in global climate diplomacy, the EU aims to participate. In the past, actors from Africa and Europe have participated in climate diplomacy on numerous occasions and in a variety of roles and formats. In order to encourage the inclusion of the environment in international relations, the EU Green Diplomacy Network (GDN) was established in 2002. To engage the larger government, it brings together environmental experts from EU foreign ministries. For instance, at COP17 (2011) in Durban, the GDN played a crucial role in urging China, India, and the US to reach an agreement on



emission limits that had legal meaning. The partnership between the EU and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States at COP21, together with the SIDS, was one of the cornerstones in the formation of the high-ambition coalition that resulted in the approval of the 1.5°C objective (Hackenesch, et al., 2021).

The African Union (AU) engages in climate negotiations, prepares common positions for African ministers, and heads of state at UN sessions of the Conference of the Parties through a number of diplomatic formats, most notably the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), a group of African delegates. Climate change was designated as a top area of collaboration in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES). Investments for a sustainable transition were one of four new priority areas established at the fifth AU-EU Summit, which took place in November 2017 in Abidjan. The Abidjan Declaration addressed climate change head-on, highlighting the continent's steadfast resolve to combating it and to forging a partnership to do so. At first, the JAES sparked a lot of hope for reaching a consensus on climate policy. This collaboration has aided in the development of a shared understanding between African and European players (Hackenesch, et al., 2021).

Despite this obvious commitment by the AU and EU, there are still a couple of challenges to cooperation on climate diplomacy. First, finding a common stance on climate change and speaking with one voice are challenges for both the EU and AU. Greater collaboration between the AU and EU, including exchange of knowledge on regional strategies, might further harmonize the voices on both continents. Another difficulty is the absence of efficient venues for institutional governance and collaboration on climate change. There are numerous overlapping and conflicting structures now in place for dealing with Europe and Africa. In order to ensure that the Paris Agreement is properly implemented at all levels and across all sectors, it is vital to integrate climate change into all activities. In addition, a more focused climate strategy built on a continent-to-continent alliance and featuring a long-term strategic plan could improve the effectiveness of climate action. Such a



focused yet thorough approach could aid in the rationalization of the various instruments, including the financial instruments (Hackenesch, et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights important issues regarding globalization, transnational value chains, and sustainable development approaches. In this environment, green transitions have risen in importance in policy discussions in both Europe and Africa, despite the fact that both have very different starting points and viewpoints on how to prioritize the promotion of green transitions. A mutually beneficial relationship would replace the previous donor-recipient focus of EU-Africa ties as a result of the transition envisioned in the EGD. Forging sincere collaborations to get raw materials and energy from Africa by developing industrial capacity, localizing value chains, and utilizing shared technologies should therefore be the focus of new relations; and coordinating the EGD's spheres of influence with Africa's own development priorities among other things. However, the success of cooperation on green transitions and the Green Deal will depend on whether and how African countries define their own strategic partnership objectives and formulate clear expectations vis-à-vis European partners on how joint knowledge production and formats for cooperation(s) shall be organized.

REFERENCES

African Union (2014): The Agenda 2063, <https://au.int/en/documents/20141012/key-documents-agenda2063>

Chris Lang, (June 12, 2020), "The EU's NaturAfrica Must Avoid Colonialism in Conservation: Protected Areas Should Be Managed by Indigenous Peoples Themselves," REDD-Monitor, ,



<https://redd-monitor.org/2020/06/12/the-eus-naturafrica-must-avoid-colonialism-in-conservation-protected-areas-should-be-managed-by-indigenous-peoples-themselves>

European Commission, (2019). *The European Green Deal* (European Commission, COM/2019/640 final).

European Commission, (2020a). “EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing Nature Back into Our Lives,”, <https://benoit-biteau.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BDS-Leak-15052020.pdf>

European Commission. (2020b). *European Commission, “Critical Raw Materials Resilience: Charting a Path towards Greater Security and Sustainability”*. COM/2020/474 final. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0474>

European Commission (2020c): Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_20_374

European Commission (2020d): Circular economy action plan. op. cit. https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/new_circular_economy_action_plan.pdf, p.24

European Commission, (July 14, 2021). “European Green Deal: Commission Proposes Transformation of EU Economy and Society to Meet Climate Ambitions,” news release https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_3541

Eurostat, (2019) “Africa-EU International Trade in Goods Statistics,” https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Africa-EU_-_international_trade_in_goods_statistics&oldid=457940



Eurostat, (May 19, 2020). “The 2017 Results of the International Comparison Program,” news release, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/portlet_file_entry/2995521/2-19052020-BP-EN.pdf/bb14f7f9-fc26-8aa1-60d4-7c2b509dda8e

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2021). *Evaluation of the FAO Response to the Crisis in the Lake Chad Basin 2015–2018* (Rome: FAO Programme Evaluation Series).

Ghosh, S.K. (2020): *Circular economy: Global perspective*. Springer

Hackenesch, C., Högl, M., Knaepen, H., Iacobuta, G., & Asafu-Adjaye, J. (2021). *Green Transitions in Africa–Europe relations: What role for the European Green Deal*. *ETTG: Brussel, Belgium*.

IEA (2019): *Africa energy outlook* <https://www.iea.org/reports/africa-energy-outlook-2019#overview>

International Energy Agency, (May 2021). *The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions*, Paris: IEA. <https://www.iea.org/reports/the-role-of-critical-minerals-in-clean-energy-transitions>

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, (March 2018). *The Regional Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Africa* (Bonn, Germany: IPBES Secretariat).

IRENA (2020): *Global Renewables Outlook: Energy Transformation 2050*, <https://www.irena.org/publications/2020/Apr/Global-Renewables-Outlook-2020>

Onuoha, F. (2008a). *Environmental Degradation, Livelihood and Conflicts the Implications of the Diminishing Water Resources of Lake Chad for Northeastern Nigeria*.



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, (September 2018). *Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience*.

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/274b/80e7/34d341167178fe08effd0900/cop-14-afr-hls-04-final-en.pdf>

Teevan, C., Medinilla, A., & Sergejeff, K. (2021). The Green Deal in EU foreign and development policy. *ECDPM Briefing Note, 131*.

Usman, Z., Abimbola, O., & Ituen, I. (2021). What does the European green deal mean for Africa?.