

# Africa hosts considerable potential for green hydrogen

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While there may be many challenges, Africa has the potential to leapfrog in terms of decarbonisation and to capitalise on opportunities presented by green hydrogen, African Hydrogen Partnership secretary general Vincent Oldenbroek has said.

Speaking on the second day of a two-day green hydrogen conference hosted by industry association Africa Solar Industry Association, he said economies on the continent could produce green hydrogen for use in the domestic market, as well as for export.

For the former, he said it would require replacing the import of fossil fuels and chemicals and, for the latter, a new export market for hydrogen and derived chemicals and products, for example, ammonia.

Oldenbroek highlighted that there were opportunities for all African countries, as all had the potential to create domestic hydrogen economies and replace imports.

Moreover, the continent is very renewables rich, which means that countries that have these resources can export hydrogen and derived chemicals and products.

Moreover, countries that are mineral rich can create a complete value chain, with opportunities including but not being limited to platinum group metals, nickel, chrome and copper, for fuel cells, electric vehicles, electrolyzers, solar components and electric motors.

Oldenbroek emphasised that Africa had tremendous potential to decarbonise itself and the world.

He highlighted that the continent had all the resources to achieve this, with an abundance of renewable energy resources, minerals, space and greenfield opportunities and a young population.

Oldenbroek noted, however, that some of the challenges that the continent had to contend with were related to the economy, for example, weak trade balances and currencies and a lack of jobs and growing unemployment.

Moreover, there are social challenges, with a growing population and high poverty levels.

There are also environmental challenges, such as deforestation and pollution to consider.

However, he noted that, in terms of the economic challenges, hydrogen presents an opportunity for creating a better trade balance.

Moreover, the creation of a hydrogen value chain, for example, in terms of electric vehicles, could lead to job creation and industrial growth.

Oldenbroek mentioned that the hydrogen economy on the continent should encompass hydrogen landing zones and sectors.

With regard to hydrogen landing zones, he pointed to the need for creating full hydrogen ecosystems around areas of metropolises, ports, mining and trading hubs and routes.

With regard to hydrogen sectors, he indicated that these could include critical backup power with batteries and solar, and diesel generator elimination, for example, in telecommunications and at data centres.

He also mentioned trucking, for example, in mining. Here, he highlighted work being done by miner Anglo American Platinum in piloting a hydrogen-powered mine truck.