

POWERING AFRICA'S ENERGY FUTURE



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ABOUT VOICES OF SUSTAINABILITY

Voices of Sustainability is a thought leadership platform launched by the Zayed Sustainability Prize to explore the challenges and opportunities of the global transition to an inclusive and

prosperous future. Each month, the series hosts the world's thought leaders to discuss the latest trends and themes in the sustainability agenda.



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INTRODUCTION

On 30 April, the Zayed Sustainability Prize aired the 47th episode of its virtual fireside chat series Voices of Sustainability. This episode explored the future of energy access in Africa, with two distinguished speakers: Angela Homsí, Founder of Ignite Energy Access, and Dr. Al-Hamndou Dorsouma, Acting Director for Climate Change and Green Growth at the African Development Bank (AfDB).

The panel explored how decentralised, digital energy solutions and innovative financing models are key to unlocking inclusive and sustainable energy systems across the continent.



SUMMARY

The 47th episode of Voices of Sustainability, titled Powering Africa's Energy Future, brought together two leading experts to discuss how decentralised solutions and blended finance models are driving transformative change in energy access across Africa.

Moderated by Julia Pyper, Vice President of Public Affairs at GoodLeap and Zayed Sustainability Prize Selection Committee member, the conversation emphasised the need for innovation, coordination, and urgent action to build resilient, sustainable, and equitable energy systems.

Angela Homsí opened the discussion by highlighting Ignite Energy Access's approach to future energy systems: user-centric, decentralised, and digitally managed.



We are building the next generation of utility – decentralised, democratised, dematerialised, and digital – to deliver energy to every community in every corner of the continent.

Angela Homsí

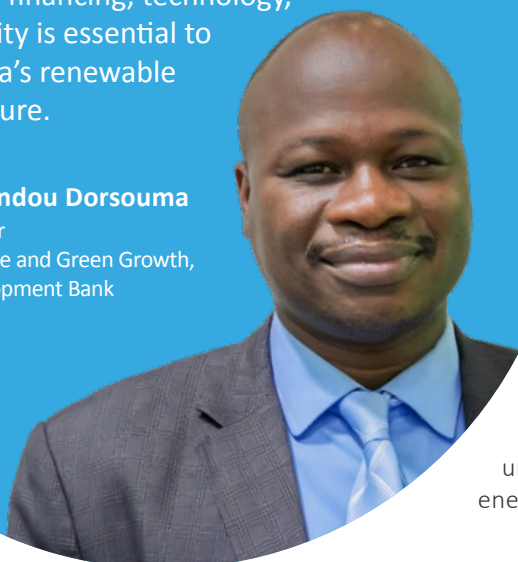
Founder
Ignite Energy Access



Mobilising financing, technology, and capacity is essential to build Africa's renewable energy future.

Dr. Al-Hamndou Dorsouma

Acting Director
Climate Change and Green Growth,
African Development Bank



She outlined how a modular, flexible model – ranging from entry-level solar home systems to large-scale commercial and industrial solutions – can deliver affordable, scalable energy access tailored to different users' needs. Homsí stressed the importance of full digital integration across the energy value chain, enabling real-time monitoring, customer support, financing, and infrastructure management to ensure transparency, scalability, and cost-efficiency.

Homsí further emphasised that decentralised energy has now become the “default pathway” for rural electrification across many African nations, supported increasingly by national policies and multilateral initiatives like Mission 300, led by the World Bank and African Development Bank. She argued for the adoption of results-based financing, backed by digital monitoring platforms, to unlock equitable climate finance and rapidly scale energy infrastructure.

SUMMARY

Dr. Al-Hamndou Dorsouma expanded the conversation to the financing side, explaining the critical role of blended finance and philanthropic capital in de-risking investments in African energy projects. He explained how projects combining philanthropic seed funding, government support, development finance guarantees, and private investment can successfully deliver impact in underserved regions. Dr. Dorsouma highlighted the importance of governments initiating these partnerships, supported by development finance institutions acting as coordinators to align different stakeholders.

The speakers also explored the role of SMEs and youth-led startups. Homsy advocated for strict performance-based climate finance that rewards verifiable outcomes over paper promises, while Dr. Dorsouma shared how AfDB is adapting its financing models to better serve youth enterprises, circular economy startups, and city governments.

In closing, both speakers emphasised that Africa has a “golden opportunity” to leapfrog outdated infrastructure models, build a resilient and decentralised green economy, and emerge as a global leader in renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable cities, and critical minerals development.



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BIOGRAPHIES



Angela Homs

Founder
Ignite Energy Access

Angela Homs is the Founder of Ignite Energy Access, a company pioneering decentralised, user-centric, digitally managed energy solutions across Africa. With a background in finance and infrastructure development, Homs is a champion of democratising energy access through modular systems and full digital integration. Her work advocates for results-based financing models that prioritise transparency, efficiency, and rapid deployment of clean energy solutions in underserved regions.



Dr. Al-Hamndou Dorsouma

Acting Director
Climate Change and Green Growth,
African Development Bank (AfDB)

Dr. Al-Hamndou Dorsouma leads the African Development Bank's initiatives on climate change and green growth. With over two decades of experience, he specialises in building partnerships that mobilise climate finance and drive sustainable development across the continent. Dr. Dorsouma has been instrumental in initiatives like the Desert to Power program and the Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Program, advancing renewable energy access, green infrastructure, and climate resilience across Africa.

The conversation was moderated by:



Julia Pyper

Vice President
Public Affairs at GoodLeap and
Zayed Sustainability Prize Selection Committee member

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OUTCOMES



Decentralised, digital, and modular energy systems are now the primary pathway for universal energy access in Africa



Blended finance models that combine philanthropic, public, and private funding are critical to de-risking energy investments



Results-based financing, enabled by digital monitoring, ensures transparency, accountability, and scalability for climate finance



Youth-led enterprises and small-scale innovators are vital actors in building Africa's green economy and must be directly supported



Africa has a historic opportunity to leapfrog outdated energy infrastructure and become a global leader in renewable energy and climate innovation

Watch the full episode on the [Zayed Sustainability Prize's YouTube channel](#)

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