

OPEC says energy-starved Africa needs fairer climate treatment

By [Wendell Roelf](#)

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Africa should be treated fairly while addressing global climate challenges as the continent contributes the smallest share to greenhouse gas emissions globally, OPEC secretary general Haitham Al Ghais said on Tuesday.



Addressing Africa Energy Week 2023 in Cape Town, the head of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said oil demand in Africa was expected to rise close to 80% between now and 2045 and that the continent needed more support and collaboration.

"In a world in which Heathrow Airport consumes more energy than Sierra Leone, or in which two-thirds of all primary schools in sub-Saharan Africa have no access to electricity, the same environmental yardstick should not be used to compare regions at vastly different stages of development," Al Ghais said in online remarks.

Africa holds around 13% of the world's natural gas and 7% of its oil but has the world's lowest per capita energy use.



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"Utilising Africa's natural resources like oil and gas will help deliver energy affordability and alleviate energy poverty," he said, a position often repeated by the fossil fuel industry to increase oil production on the continent.

Despite its vast solar, wind and hydrogen potential, around 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live without electricity and almost 1 billion without access to clean energy for cooking.

Climate change experts have pointed out that in African countries with large fossil fuel reserves, proceeds have mostly filled the coffers of corrupt political elites and have not helped alleviate general poverty or energy poverty. They say the corruption that comes with petrodollars often leads to even worse delivery of basic services.

In Angola and Nigeria, Africa's leading oil producers for decades, access to electricity in 2021 for the population was just 40% and 57%, respectively, the World Bank said last year.

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