

Programme



Making Africa's Energy Transition Work:

Local Manufacturing,
Decent Work,
and Sustainable
Livelihoods



Thursday, 8 to Friday, 9 October 2026

Southern Sun Rosebank Hotel,
Johannesburg



Programme

Day 1 - Thursday, 08 October 2026, 09:00-16:30

08:00-09:00
Registrations
All

09:00-09:10
Welcome and Introductions
Gilad Isaacs, IEJ

SESSION 1	Labour Union Roundtable Discussion (Cafe style) Facilitator: Basani Baloyi, IEJ
TIME	09:10 - 10:30

SESSION DESCRIPTION	Trade unions have played a central role in shaping and advancing the concept of a just transition. As renewable energy production networks continue to evolve across Africa, particularly with the growing need to develop local manufacturing capabilities for renewable energy and storage components and subcomponents, important questions arise regarding the role of trade unions in this process. This session will bring together South African trade union federations in a roundtable, café-style discussion to explore the role of trade unions in promoting the localisation of renewable energy manufacturing, drawing on lessons and experiences from South African Trade Unions.	
SPEAKERS	Riefdah Ajam, General Secretary	Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA)
	Newton Masuku, National Educator and National Spokesperson	SAFTU
	Narius Moloto, General Secretary	National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU)
	Tengo Tengela, Trade and Industry Policy Coordinator	COSATU

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10:30-11:00

Tea Break

Everyone

SESSION 2	Renewable Energy manufacturing and Developing Productive Capabilities in Africa - A Kenyan Case Study Facilitator: Seutame Maimele, IEJ
TIME	11:00 - 12:00

SESSION DESCRIPTION	Renewable energy use is rising in Kenya, and the country currently generates most of its domestic value after imported renewable energy technologies and components enter the country, rather than through the manufacture of the core technologies themselves. This session will feature a presentation based on a study that assesses the extent of localisation in Kenya's solar and wind energy sectors and examines whether these forms of localisation create decent work and advance gender equity. The study finds that Kenya's solar and wind sectors have expanded significantly, but localisation remains limited and uneven. Kenya is primarily positioned in downstream activities, including distribution, installation, sales, EPC contracting, civil works, assembly, repair, and maintenance. High-value activities, such as solar cell production, inverter manufacturing, turbine component manufacturing, advanced research and development (R&D), technology ownership, and intellectual property, remain largely under external control.	
PRESENTERS/ DISCUSSANT	Presenter: Joan Andega, Research Assistant	African Center for Technology Studies (ACTS)
	Discussant: Dr Rosemary Owigar, Lecturer	Maseno University, Kenya

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SESSION 3	Renewable Energy manufacturing and Developing Productive Capabilities in Africa- South African Case Study Facilitator: Andrew Mukandila, the DTIC
TIME	12:00 - 13:00

SESSION DESCRIPTION	South Africa is rapidly expanding its renewable energy (RE) sector. Installed RE generation capacity is expected to grow from 17 GW in 2025 to more than 45 GW by 2030, with new wind and solar projects, together with battery energy storage systems (BESS), contributing a significant share. However, this growing demand has yet to translate into meaningful growth in local manufacturing or job creation. Instead, much of this demand continues to be met through imported products, particularly low-cost imports from China. As a result, the country is missing a critical opportunity to use the energy transition as a catalyst for industrial development and employment creation. This session will present a case study on South Africa's opportunities and challenges in developing a more localised renewable energy sector.	
PRESENTERS/ DISCUSSANT	Presenter: Seutame Maimele, Green Industrial Policy Researcher	Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ)
	Discussant: Sumayya Goga, Senior Researcher (Economist)	Centre for Competition, Regulation and Economic Development (CCRED)

13:00-14:00
Lunch
Everyone

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SESSION 4	Renewable Energy manufacturing and Developing Productive Capabilities in Africa- Ghana Case Study Facilitator: Joan Andega, ACTS
TIME	14:00 - 15:00

SESSION DESCRIPTION	Ghana's solar photovoltaic (PV) sector is expanding rapidly, with installed solar capacity reaching 81 MW by 2023. While the sector offers significant potential for job creation, the solar industry remains concentrated in the final stages of the value chain, primarily focused on importing, installing, and maintaining equipment rather than manufacturing it. Consequently, much of the value generated by Ghana's growing solar market flows outward instead of contributing to domestic industrial development. This session will feature a presentation by ACEP that identifies concrete opportunities for Ghana to create and capture greater value from its solar market. These include local assembly of solar modules; manufacturing components such as mounting frames, cables, and packaging by leveraging Ghana's existing industrial capabilities; providing long-term operations and maintenance services; and developing solar panel recycling capacity to manage panels at the end of their useful life.	
PRESENTERS/ DISCUSSANT	Presenters: Charles Gyamfi Ofori and Prosper A. Amuquandoh	African Center for Energy Policy (ACEP) & World Energy Council's Future Energy Leaders (WEC-FEL)
	Discussant: Dr Gloria Boafo-Mensah (Senior Research Scientist)	CSIR-Institute of Industrial Research

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SESSION 5	Advocacy and Organising Strategies and theories of change. How can labour and industrial capital work together to push a mutual interest in green industrial policy? Facilitator: Rethabile Gamede (MC)
TIME	15:00 - 16:30

SESSION DESCRIPTION	Industry and labour have worked together effectively for many years. However, while they share common interests, their priorities and objectives do not always align. As momentum grows to address climate change, new opportunities for collaboration are emerging, alongside a greater need for joint engagement on green industrial policy. This session brings together industry stakeholders and trade union representatives from three African countries, namely Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa, to discuss how these constituencies can work together in support of a transformative green industrial agenda.	
SPEAKERS	Gerald Nienaber, Projects Director, SAREM Task Team (Wind, Solar & BESS)	Mode Tech Services (Pty) Ltd, South Africa
	Mercy Kimalat, CEO	Association of Start-Ups and SMME Enablers, Kenya
	Isaac Batini, Climate and Sustainable Energy Professional	Association of Ghana Industries - Energy Service Centre, Ghana
	Boitumelo Molete, Commissioner and Social Development Policy Coordinator – Virtual	COSATU, South Africa
	Rebecca Okello, Programme Officer	East African Trade Union Confederation, Kenya

End of Day One

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Day 2 - Friday, 09 October 2026, 09:00-16:00

SESSION 6	Policy Makers Discussion (Cafe style) Facilitator: Mathew (Lev) Grant, Just Transition Labour Centre
TIME	09:00 - 10:30

SESSION DESCRIPTION	Policy Makers Discussion (Cafe style) What are the difficulties coordinating across the state between branches focused on energy provision, trade and industrial policy, and environmental issues? This session will convene a policymakers' roundtable to explore the role of policy in driving industrial development. Bringing together participants from Ghana, Kenya and South Africa, the discussion will examine how policymakers navigate the challenges of coordinating across different areas of the state, particularly those responsible for energy provision, trade and industrial policy, and environmental governance.	
SPEAKERS/ PRESENTERS	Dr Robert Bright Sogbadji, Deputy Director	Renewable Energy Ministry of Energy and Green Transition, Ghana
	Noma Qase, Director responsible for renewable energy	SAREM Project Unit, South Africa
	Eric Kiruja, Energy Policy Professional and Mechanical Engineer	State Department of energy, Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, Kenya

10:30-11:00

Tea Break

Everyone

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SESSION 7	Lessons from Other Countries Facilitator: Elvis Avenyo, UJ SARChI: Industrial Development
TIME	11:00 - 12:00

SESSION DESCRIPTION	Lessons from other countries: On understanding the Chinese role in global South energy, does it threaten trade partners industrialisation? China has played, and continues to play, a pivotal role in the production and supply of renewable energy components globally and across the African continent. This session will focus on lessons from China's experience and explore how African countries can better understand the factors that enabled China to become a leading manufacturing powerhouse, particularly in renewable energy component manufacturing.	
SPEAKERS	Frangton Chiyemura, Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in International Development	The Open University, United Kingdom
	Bryce Neumann, Director of Technology and Information	CBC Fasteners, South Africa
	Prof Christine Loh, Chief Development Strategist – Short Video Presentation	Institute for the Environment, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

12:00-13:00

Lunch

Everyone

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SESSION 8	Advocacy and Organising Strategies and theories of change. How can labour and industrial capital work together to push a mutual interest in green industrial policy? Facilitator: Tengo Tengela, COSATU
TIME	13:00 - 14:15

SESSION DESCRIPTION	How can labour and industrial capital work together to push a mutual interest in green industrial policy? Advocacy and Organising Strategies and theories of change. In this session, the project teams will present the outcomes of their advocacy. The breakaway groups will identify 5 policy moments that will be leveraged for their advocacy. Secondly, the group will discuss a) How can labour and industrial capital work together to push a mutual interest in green industrial policy
	Everyone

14:15-14:30

Tea Break

Everyone

14:30-15:30

**Closing session
Graphic Harvest**

15:30-16:00

**Closing Remarks
Speaker: Gilad Isaacs, IEJ**

End of Day Two



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