

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### **African Union, AFCONE and OECD Nuclear Energy Agency Sign Landmark MoU to Advance Peaceful Nuclear Energy Development in Africa**



On the margins of the 39<sup>th</sup> African Union (AU) Summit, the African Union Commission (AUC) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) and the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), marking a significant milestone in advancing the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology for socio-economic development in Africa.

The MoU establishes a structured framework for cooperation among the three institutions to promote capacity building, strengthen regulatory and institutional frameworks, enhance research and innovation, and mobilise technical and financial resources in support of Africa's energy transition and industrialisation agenda.

The agreement was signed by H.E. Lerato D. Mataboge, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy at the African Union Commission; H.E. Mr. Gaspard Liyoko Mboyo, Chairperson of AFCONE; and Mr. William D. Magwood, IV, Director-General of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency.

Addressing the gathering on behalf of the African Union Commission, Commissioner Mataboge underscored that the agreement reflects the African Union's strategic commitment to advancing a diversified, secure, and sustainable energy future for the continent, in line with

Agenda 2063 and the Decade of Accelerated Implementation. She emphasised that Africa must increasingly harness its own resources, expertise, and partnerships to drive long-term structural transformation and energy sovereignty. *"Today, we stand at a defining moment in Africa's energy journey. Under the leadership of the African Union and guided by Agenda 2063, this Memorandum of Understanding represents more than a partnership — it is a strategic step toward strengthening Africa's energy sovereignty and advancing the peaceful use of nuclear energy as a catalyst for industrialisation, resilience, and sustainable development across our continent. This MoU we are signing signifies our collective commitment to fostering cooperation, sharing knowledge, and building the institutional and technical capacity required to power Africa's transformation,"* stated H.E. Lerato D. Mataboge.

She further highlighted the structural imbalance between Africa's resource endowment and its current level of nuclear power generation. *"Africa supplies a significant share of the world's mined uranium — around 15–18% — with major production in Namibia, Niger and South Africa, yet the continent contributes less than 1% to global nuclear electricity generation. This imbalance underscores the opportunity for Africa to harness its resources for value-added development at home."*

The Commissioner underscored that nuclear energy forms part of Africa's diversified and low-carbon energy mix and offers a stable baseload solution capable of supporting industrialisation, urban growth, and large-scale infrastructure such as water desalination, irrigation, and wastewater treatment. She further emphasised that the partnership strengthens Africa's energy sovereignty by enabling Member States to build long-term domestic capabilities rather than rely solely on external technologies and expertise.

H.E. Mr. Gaspard Liyoko Mboyo, Chairperson of AFCONE, described the agreement as a strategic milestone. *"It is a distinct honour to join this landmark event, which initiates a new chapter in strengthening nuclear cooperation between Africa and the international community. This MoU is not a bureaucratic exercise, but a strategic step toward building the most secure and sustainable nuclear cooperation, at a critical time when Africa is seeking to meet its massive energy needs while advancing Agenda 2063 and responding to the global call for low-carbon and sustainable energy trajectories."*

He highlighted that AFCONE will play a central role in supporting AU Member States to strengthen nuclear governance, implement the Pelindaba Treaty, and enhance safety, security, and safeguards regimes in line with international standards, ensuring that Africa's nuclear development pathway remains responsible, transparent, and anchored in peaceful use.

Mr. William D. Magwood, IV, Director-General of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency, emphasised the importance of long-term collaboration. *"This Memorandum of Understanding provides a framework for the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency to share its expertise and technical advice in support of Africa's peaceful nuclear energy ambitions. We are grateful to all those who have worked over a long period to make this agreement possible, and we thank African partners who are eager to collaborate to usher in a new era of shared prosperity."*

He noted that the OECD NEA will contribute global best practices, data-driven policy analysis, and technical knowledge to support Africa in developing robust nuclear programmes, building human capital, and strengthening regulatory and institutional capacity across the continent.

The MoU recognises that Africa holds substantial uranium resources yet remains a marginal player in nuclear electricity generation and therefore seeks to transform this gap into an opportunity for regional collaboration, skills development, technology transfer, and domestic value creation.

The cooperation framework will focus on:

- Promoting peaceful nuclear applications for socio-economic development in AU Member States;
- Supporting skills development and industrial capacity building;
- Enhancing policy, regulatory, and technical frameworks;
- Facilitating joint events, knowledge exchange, and collaborative research initiatives.

The partnership aligns with Africa's Agenda 2063 and continental flagship initiatives aimed at expanding electricity access, strengthening regional power markets, and accelerating the transition to reliable, affordable, and low-carbon energy systems.

The MoU will remain valid for an initial period of three years, with the possibility of renewal subject to review.

South Africa is the only African country currently utilising nuclear energy, which accounts for about 5% of its electricity generation, with a total installed capacity of 1,854 GW. Egypt is currently in the process of building a 4.8 GW power plant to be completed in 2031. Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, and Nigeria also have concrete nuclear energy ambitions in the pipeline.

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