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Africa secures $900 million in new clean cooking commitments

African countries have secured $900 million in new financial commitments to expand access to clean cooking technologies, which replace polluting fuels with cleaner alternatives, the International Energy Agency, IEA, said Thursday.

The new pledge builds on the $2.2 billion mobilized at the inaugural Africa Clean Cooking Summit in Paris in 2024, bringing total commitments to more than $3.1 billion, which will be used to expand access to cleaner cooking fuels, stoves and related infrastructure across the continent.

The funding was announced during a virtual meeting on clean cooking in Africa convened by IEA and Kenya, where leaders reviewed progress made since the last summit and outlined priorities ahead of the next gathering later this year.

Nearly 1 billion people across Africa still lack access to clean cooking, relying instead on charcoal, firewood and other polluting fuels that the IEA says contribute to an estimated 850,000 premature deaths each year.

The meeting brought together Kenyan President William Ruto, Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store, U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright, African Union commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy Lerato Mataboge and IEA executive director Fatih Birol, among others.

Clean cooking refers to the use of low-emission fuels and technologies, such as ethanol, biogas and electricity, instead of traditional fuels like charcoal and firewood.

The transition reduces harmful household air pollution and improves health outcomes for millions of African households.

“Access to clean cooking is one of the most impactful yet overlooked challenges of our time,” said Wright, adding that it directly affects the lives of billions of people, particularly women and children.

New clean cooking policies

Kenya’s Ruto said financing remained the biggest obstacle to achieving universal access to clean cooking technologies across Africa. “Ambition alone is not enough. It must be backed by investment,” he said.

Birol said the IEA's latest tracking showed that $740 million, or about one-third of the commitments announced in Paris, has already been deployed across 22 African countries.

“The additional $900 million in commitments demonstrates growing momentum, with more expected before the next summit,” Birol said.

The IEA also released a report showing governments have introduced 121 new clean cooking policies across more than 30 African countries since the Paris summit. Those countries account for about 80% of Africans without access to clean cooking.

The agency said it is working with the African Union to help governments strengthen national clean cooking policies under a continentwide strategy and action plan ahead of the next summit.

It also launched a new public-private Clean Cooking Security Programme aimed at strengthening global supply chains for cooking fuels, particularly liquefied petroleum gas, or LPG.

The initiative follows shipping disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz earlier this year that affected about 30% of globally traded LPG, the agency said.

More than 3.4 billion people worldwide depend on LPG as their primary cooking fuel.

The program will provide technical assistance to countries seeking to improve fuel security while exploring ways to strengthen international cooperation on clean cooking supply chains.