

March 21, 2022

“Profound Transformation”

DBU: Just energy transition in the Global South


Osnabrück. The call for a significant expansion of renewable energy sources (RES) is growing louder and has gained further momentum in the wake of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. The Global South could be a game changer in the expansion of RES—especially with the help of representatives there in local and state parliaments. The German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU - Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt), in its digital series, presents in an online salon a parliamentarians’ network supported by the DBU with the aim of achieving more than simply an energy transition in the Global South—renewable energies should be socially just and offer local value. DBU Secretary General Alexander Bonde: “Sun, wind, and water in the Global South thus become a win-win situation—global greenhouse gas emissions decline, new jobs are created, and poverty decreases.”

Bonde: More sustainable and more independent energy supply is needed.

“We are on the cusp of a profound transformation,” Bonde says. He believes that “more sustainable and more independent energy supply is needed”. In his view, global power and resource conflicts, as well as the war in Ukraine, make this quite clear. Joining for the all-English-language DBU Online Salon tomorrow (Tuesday) from 1 to 2:30 p.m. will be guests from the Philippines and Costa Rica. The Protestant aid organization “Brot für die Welt” (*Bread for the World*) investigates the links between the energy transition and global justice. Those wishing to participate in the Online Salon “Working together for a Just Energy Transition in the Global South” can register at: <https://www.dbu.de/@OnlineSalonEnergyTransition>.

Global Renewables Congress (GRC) Representatives Network

The Global Renewables Congress (GRC) supported by the DBU, a global network of parliamentarians coping with renewable energies, will be discussed, as well as the follow-up project to promote a just energy transition. Bonde: “After establishing the network, we want to work with parliamentarians from the Global South to explore how plans for the expansion of RES can lead to legislation.” He

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says that the guiding principles here are “global solutions through local action based on science”. According to Bonde, this includes appropriate expertise in the Global South and professional international communication.

Höhn: Set the Course for Renewable Energy Now and Forgo the Phase-In of Coal

The GRC is chaired by Bärbel Höhn, currently the Energy Commissioner for Africa at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and former Minister of the Environment in North Rhine-Westphalia. Höhn believes that time is running out for a just energy transition in the Global South. Now is the time “to set the course for renewable energy while forgoing the phase-in of coal in the nations of the Global South”. Many countries in Asia, for example, are now “just getting ready to invest massively in coal-fired power”. Höhn says that numerous countries in Africa are also planning to use coal or gas. “However, we all know that supply shortages due to the coronavirus pandemic and also because of Russia’s war of aggression in Ukraine are making gas, coal and oil massively more expensive. However, wind and sun are available at low cost; the expansion will create local jobs and strengthen our own energy independence.”

Avoiding the Mistakes of Western Industrialized Nations


Höhn has high hopes for the new GRC because it includes parliamentarians from different parties from national and local parliaments in Africa, Asia and the USA. The goal is to “convince people: that it is not only more climate-friendly, but also more cost-effective to promote the expansion of renewable energy sources rather than investing in coal-fired power plants”. Höhn says that it is not about lecturing the nations of the Global South on renewable energy sources. Instead, RES options should be discussed with the representatives of these nations in accordance with international and interdisciplinary expertise—“in order to avoid in these countries the mistakes of Western industrialized nations, which have relied for too long on coal, gas, and nuclear power for their energy supply”.

A World of New Options in Day-to-Day Life

Höhn believes the expansion of renewable energy sources in the nations of the Global South is “an excellent decentralized tool” that will benefit many local citizens. “In Africa, half of the population has little or no access to electricity. And of that half of the population, almost 90 percent of them are living in rural areas.” With electricity, people could significantly improve their quality of life. They would “suddenly have a world of new options for organizing their day-to-day lives; for example, they could pump water, grind grain, dry vegetables and fruit, and refrigerate fish and medicines; in short: create jobs, generate income, and overcome poverty,” says the chairperson of the GRC.

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Whenever the generic masculine is used, this is merely for better readability. However, all genders can be meant.

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