

Africa needs energy for growth, leaders say ahead of climate talks

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French President Francois Hollande (L) escorts Ghana's President John Dramani after a pre-COP 21 climate meeting on November 10, 2015 at the Elysee Palace in Paris

Africa is looking to key climate talks for solutions to electrify the continent, grow its economies and keep its youth from fleeing abroad, African leaders said in Paris Tuesday.

"Migration and [climate change](#) are closely linked," Ghana's President

John Dramani told journalists after a meeting with French President Francois Hollande, host of the crucial summit which starts on November 30.

"Our most important priority is the lack of power. As soon as we get electricity, it will accelerate growth. All we need is a good partnership with the developed world," said Dramani.

The meeting with Hollande, also attended by leaders from Benin, Guinea, Gabon and Ethiopia, came ahead of the UN [climate talks](#), but also a summit on the migrant crisis opening in Malta Wednesday.

African countries, like the rest of the developing world, are seeking more financial assistance from industrialised nations to cut emissions and deal with the impacts of climate change.

It is those developed nations who are seen as contributing most to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming, while poorer countries tend to suffer most from the effects of climate change.

"Desertification, coastal erosion and drought," caused by the warming of the planet, is increasing poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, Benin's President Boni Yayi told AFP.

"We feel this poverty through the migration crisis shaking Europe. If we want to end this migration crisis we need to go to the root cause, that is create wealth and jobs so that the youth find employment" in their own countries, he said.



"Desertification, coastal erosion and drought," caused by the warming of the planet, is increasing poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, Benin's President Boni Yayi (L), pictured with French President Francois Hollande on November 10, 2015, told AFP

Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn said that electricity, unavailable to 75 percent of people on the continent, was crucial to this process of developing economies.

"The question is from now on how do we deal with the massive climate question, and develop Africa at the same time," said Hollande.

He said the summit in Malta would see several initiatives taken by Africa, while western countries needed to "increase the level of financing that will be at the heart of the" climate talks, set to last until December 11.



Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn (L), pictured with French President Francois Hollande on November 10, 2015, said that electricity, unavailable to 75% of people on the continent, was crucial to this process of developing economies

A high-placed African government source said the migration summit would revolve around internal politics both in Europe, facing a rise in anti-migrant sentiment, and in Africa, struggling to deal with unemployment.

"In Africa, youth unemployment has become the biggest frustration and the biggest political and social threat. Everyone has in mind what happened in Tunisia with the Arab Spring," he said.

"Energy helps create jobs. The biggest obstacle to developing agriculture

and industry in Africa is the lack of electricity and its high cost."

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