

President Paul Kagame has said that switching to clean and sustainable energy is critical in Africa and around the world. The President made the remarks on Tuesday, May 17, during the inaugural Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) forum underway in Kigali.

President Kagame emphasized the need to increase climate financing to developing countries to help with adaptation.

The forum which has attracted over 2000 participants is reviewing progress of the seventh sustainable development goal (SDG7) on affordable, clean and sustainable energy for all.

The President said that over the past decade, significant progress had been achieved towards the goal, but the Covid-19 pandemic had reversed some of those gains. He said that, currently in Africa more than half a billion people still don't have access to electricity.

Kagame said, "This energy crisis coincides with the threat of climate change. To which our continent is especially vulnerable. Switching to renewable energy is crucial. That is why creating an enabling environment to attract investment in sustainable energy is so important."

"This can be accomplished through the use of off-grid technologies and stand-alone systems to empower communities, industrial policies for sustainable energy and support the growth of commercial technologies."

In a virtual address to the conference, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres underscored that closing the energy access gap and then the energy poverty is crucial to delivering the agenda.

The UN Chief said, it is also fundamental to tackling the climate crisis. "We need to shift to sustainable energy systems everywhere. The addiction to fossil fuels must end starting with coal by 2030."

Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative of the United Nations-Secretary General and CEO of SEforALL, observed that as one of the goals on climate change, net-zero by 2050 must be achieved and we must act now to save our planet from climate change, we need clean energy support through building energy systems that will support economic growth.

SEforALL which opened today is attended by representatives from the United Nations, government officials, civil society organisations, scientists, researchers, young environmental activists and runs until May 19.

SDG 7 calls for access to sustainable energy for all by 2030, and SEforALL forum is a landmark global gathering that brings people together to take stock of progress, showcase success, and identify solutions to achieve faster, broader gains toward sustainable energy for all.