African countries being blessed with green energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal, solar power, and wind power will need to integrate their energy for sustainable economic development when considering that its power grid is not well developed, experts said on the sidelines of the eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in Tunis, Tunisia.

The experts from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), African Development bank (AfDB), other development partners and Government agencies, among others, said that energy as an economic and social input was central to the attainment of Africa's sustainable development as envisaged by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number seven.

To achieve SDG7, "Affordable and Clean Energy,"in Africa, the experts observed that it is very important to promote the Africa Power Pool, which develops green energy and connects with an international transmission line, while also extending distribution and off-grid. Additionally, with many companies, investors, and individuals interested in electrifying Africa, cooperation is needed to accelerate carbon neutrality and access improvements.

At a recent panel discussion during the TICAD 8, energy experts urged for appropriate measures for the continent to support the energy transition toward green growth in Africa.

According to Dr Daniel-Alexander Schroth, Director of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency at the African development bank (AfDB), one of the major challenges facing some countries in Africa is associated with modernisation and expansion.

Japan has been among the leading partner in the continent's desire to switch to renewables-based energy transition promises to deliver vast socio-economic benefits to countries across Africa, improving energy access, creating jobs and boosting energy security.

Electricity demand growing fast

Latest estimates by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) show that an increasing number of governments across Africa consider a sustainable energy transition as a central aspect of their climate strategies.

However, the report points out that except for a few countries such as South Africa, most African countries are not in a situation of pressure where they need to phase out of coal to meet their energy needs through alternative energy sources.

Modernisation, according to experts, is about exploiting the continent's vast endowment of renewable energy resources, including biomass, wind, solar, and hydro-power potential.

Speaking during the side event, Dr. Dolf Gielen, Director, Innovation and Technology Centre, IRENA observed that although Africa has tremendous potential, more than 600 million people lack electricity.

"There is an urgent need to adopt a continental energy integration strategy and an approach to serving as an essential enabler for the overall development of the energy sector," Dr. Gielen told delegates.

Currently, estimates show that Africa takes up just a little more than three percent of global electricity demand.

To raise the electrification rate of the African continent, African countries have been supported by develop through investments driven by agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals targeting modern, reliable, and clean energy for all by 2030.

The Government of Japan and the African Development Bank have been engaged since 2017 in the Japan-Africa Energy Initiative (JAEI) to provide significant support to the New Deal on Energy for Africa which aims to achieve universal access to energy by 2025.

Under this Initiative up to US$ 6 billion have been allocated in both concessional and non-concessional finance for a variety of energy operations to support the provision of electricity for homes, schools, hospitals, agriculture, industries and clean cooking across the continent. (END)