

## Solar energy storage morocco

Morocco has made a name for itself as a climate leader. Renewables make up almost two-fifths of its electricity capacity, some fossil fuel subsidies have been phased out and the country lays claim to some of the world's largest clean energy projects. The country has received much praise for its actions to decarbonise.

The country's reputation may be well deserved, but it still faces real challenges - its geographical position in a warming hotspot makes it vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. And even as it seeks to end its dependence on fossil fuels, its energy demands are rising fast.

In June 2021, Morocco updated its UN climate pledge with a promise to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 17-18% by 2030 compared with a business-as-usual scenario, with a stretch target of a 42-46% cut on the condition of receiving international support. It has also made a significant effort to decrease government support for fossil fuels, taking advantage of low oil prices in 2014-15 to successfully phase out petrol and fuel oil subsidies.

To reduce emissions, "quick and radical" transformation of industries, urban planning and infrastructure must be put in place immediately, says Fatima Driouech, associate professor of meteorology at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University and a vice chair at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

"We must start reducing greenhouse emissions today if we are to limit warming to 1.5C and therefore the impacts of climate change," Driouech says. She notes that many of the impacts of climate change in countries like Morocco can still be avoided if we act in time. "We could hope for the eradication of poverty and the reduction of inequalities if global warming were limited to 1.5C rather than 2C or more."

Greenpeace has also urged Morocco to reform and improve its renewable energy law to "make it less troublesome and bureaucratic for individuals to own and sell renewable energy". It has also pushed it to implement a law to enable the connection of small-scale renewable energy systems to the grid.

Morocco itself is already beginning to feel the impacts of climate change. Mean annual temperatures in the country are expected to increase by between 1.1C and 3.5C by 2060, depending on global climate action. The North African kingdom is located in a climate change hotspot - the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry projects that temperatures in the Middle East and North Africa will increase twice as fast as the global average.

Greenpeace's Tazrouti says that the Global North needs to invest more in the countries of the Global South, including Morocco. "A lot of support is needed in southern countries and underdeveloped and poor countries that are suffering and are at the frontline of being affected by climate change," he says. Morocco was the eighth largest recipient of climate finance from richer countries in 2018 and 2019, receiving some \$600m

(?450m).

Countries that pollute the most are having a disastrous impact on the African continent, says Abdeladim El Hafi, who was Morocco's general commissioner during the United Nations climate conference held in Marrakesh in 2016 (COP22), and is now the high commissioner for water and forests. Many African countries do not themselves produce nearly as much carbon, but are already suffering the consequences of climate change.

"Plans and international financial help are needed to help vulnerable countries, islands, and poor countries," says Alaoui, citing water as a top environmental concern for the country. "In Morocco, we need policies to manage, recycle and reuse water. We need climate insurance for droughts and frequent fires, and we need sustainable and smart agriculture."

The World Resources Institute warned that Morocco's water resources were at high stress, as most of it is used for domestic agriculture and for its industries. By the end of the century, rainfall may decline by 20 to 30%.

Morocco's water shortage is hitting hard as water harvesting remains a major issue in this agriculture-intensive country, giving way to discontent and despair. In recent years, in places like the town of Zagora in southern Morocco, residents have been protesting about water shortages.

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