

Senegal sees growing support for African gas amid Ukraine war

By [Aaron Ross](#)

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Senegalese President Macky Sall said on Thursday, 7 July, there is growing international support for developing gas resources in Africa as part of the continent's energy transition.



Senegal's President Macky Sall attends the Ecowas summit to discuss transitional roadmap for Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea, in Accra, Ghana, 3 July 2022. Reuters/Francis Kokoroko

African leaders have bristled at pledges by Western countries to eliminate or reduce development financing in Africa for gas projects in the name of fighting climate change, even as those same countries tout gas as a "transition fuel" at home.

On Wednesday, the European Parliament backed EU rules labelling investments in gas and nuclear power plants as climate-friendly. Gas is a fossil fuel that produces planet-warming emissions, but far less than coal.

"We need to salute the positive evolution of partner countries and institutions on the financing of gas projects," Sall said in a speech at a World Bank-sponsored conference in the capital Dakar.

"We are starting to come to our senses on this question," he said, without citing specific examples.

Western development finance institutions have in recent years announced measures to restrict financing to gas projects. The European Investment Bank has ended financing to gas projects entirely.



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Renewed interest in African gas

But the war in Ukraine and efforts by developed economies to reduce their reliance on Russia have led to renewed interest in African gas. The German government, for example, said in May that it might help explore a gas field in Senegal.

The extent to which that interest in African gas for export could translate into support for domestic gas-fired power production is not yet clear, and donor countries have not reversed previously-announced policies on development financing.

Nevertheless, World Bank managing director for operations, Axel van Trotsenburg, told Reuters in an interview at the conference that there was mounting recognition of gas's role as a transition fuel in Africa.

"Given that a lot of the OECD countries are increasing gas use, there is more sympathy for this argument," he said.

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