



**2026**  
**June**

## Energy Security Takes Centre Stage: What It Means for Climate Ambition



CEO Roundtable White Paper

The Al-Attiyah Foundation



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At the Al-Attiyah Foundation's second CEO Roundtable of 2026, distinguished leaders from the energy industry, drawn from within Qatar and overseas, convened to discuss and reflect on a possible change in emphasis in the energy scene. With security of supply becoming more prominent in governments, suppliers and consumers, the question of what the rapidly unfolding volatile scenario means for energy policies and climate change initiatives was the subject of this roundtable.

The roundtable opened with a brief statement from the moderator, Mr. Stephen Cole, marking the passing of H.E. Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah. He acknowledged the profound loss felt by the Al-Attiyah family, the Foundation, and the many colleagues and friends who had the privilege of knowing and working alongside him.

## CEO WHITE PAPER

H.E. Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah created the Foundation as a platform for knowledge exchange and to support the global community in the quest towards a sustainable energy future.

The CEO Roundtable is an opportunity for CEOs, Foundation members and partners to meet in one room and examine pertinent energy and sustainable development topics.



The moderator emphasised that the Foundation would continue to uphold H.E. Al-Attiyah's enduring legacy, reflecting his vision, leadership and unwavering commitment to sustainable development within the energy sector.

In his opening remarks, H.E. Dr Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Sada also paid tribute to the late H.E. Al-Attiyah, describing him as a visionary leader whose dedication and foresight helped transform Qatar into a global LNG powerhouse. H.E. Al-Sada highlighted his contributions to nation-building, energy leadership, human capital development and the creation of opportunities for future generations. Turning to the discussion theme, H.E. Al-Sada observed that energy security has re-emerged as one of the most pressing strategic concerns facing governments worldwide. He noted that energy security is increasingly shaping policy decisions across many countries, pointing in particular to the strategic importance of Gulf energy exports and the risks posed by disruptions to critical transportation routes.

#### Moderator:



Stephen Cole,  
Journalist, and  
International Broadcaster

#### Speaker



Janos Pasztor,  
former UN Assistant  
Secretary-General for  
Climate Change and Senior  
Advisor to UN Secretary-  
General (UNSG)

#### Speaker



Amal Al Dababseh,  
UNDP Regional Technical  
Advisor for Climate Change  
Mitigation and Energy for  
the Arab States Region

#### Speaker



Aldo Flores-Quiroga,  
former Deputy  
Secretary of Energy for  
Hydrocarbons at Mexico's  
Ministry of Energy

#### Speaker



Erik Solheim,  
former UN Environment  
Executive Director and  
Under-Secretary-General of  
the United Nations

## Erik Solheim

Erik Solheim opened with a detailed discussion of China's renewable energy sector. Using the example of the solar manufacturer Tongwei, he argued that China has become the world's dominant clean-energy power. His key observations included:

- China dominates solar manufacturing;
- China dominates battery production;
- Chinese renewable manufacturing is highly automated and technologically advanced;
- No other region currently matches China's scale in clean-energy production.

Mr. Solheim concluded that China achieved this world leadership as a response to severe urban air pollution where public demand for cleaner air drove political action. Government leadership then aligned with public expectations and consequently environmental policy became a major economic opportunity.

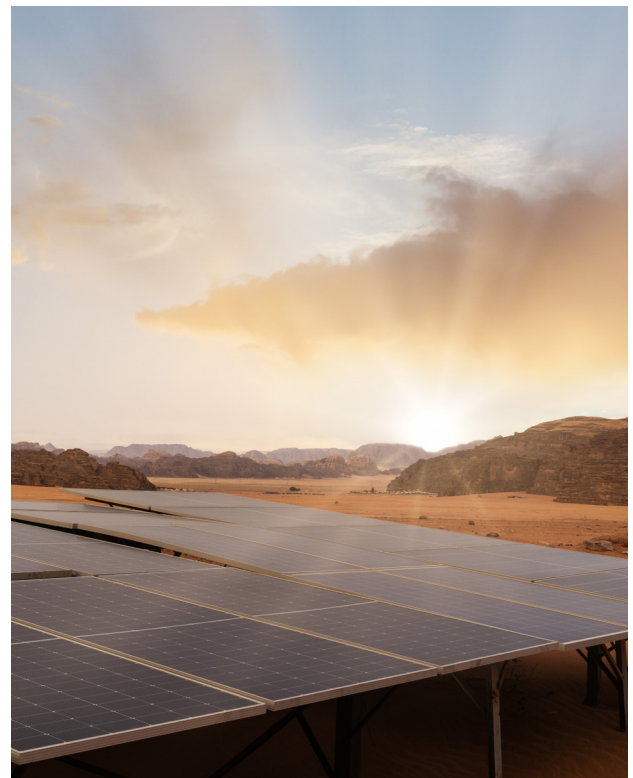
He further argued that clean-energy creates jobs and that renewable deployment improves national competitiveness. Electric transport is increasingly outperforming conventional transport economically.

Mr. Solheim's overarching argument was that the transition is now largely inevitable and likely to happen faster than many conventional forecasts suggest.

## Aldo Flores-Quiroga

Aldo Flores-Quiroga argued that energy transitions have historically taken decades to unfold and that new energy systems typically complement, rather than immediately replace, existing ones. He noted that policymakers often underestimate the time required for such structural transformations, leading to unrealistic expectations about the pace of change.

A central theme of his remarks was the importance of affordability. Mr. Flores-Quiroga stressed that public support for climate policies depends on energy remaining affordable, warning that rising costs can quickly generate political resistance. In his view, policymakers cannot assume that public backing for decarbonisation will remain unconditional if households and businesses face significant financial burdens.

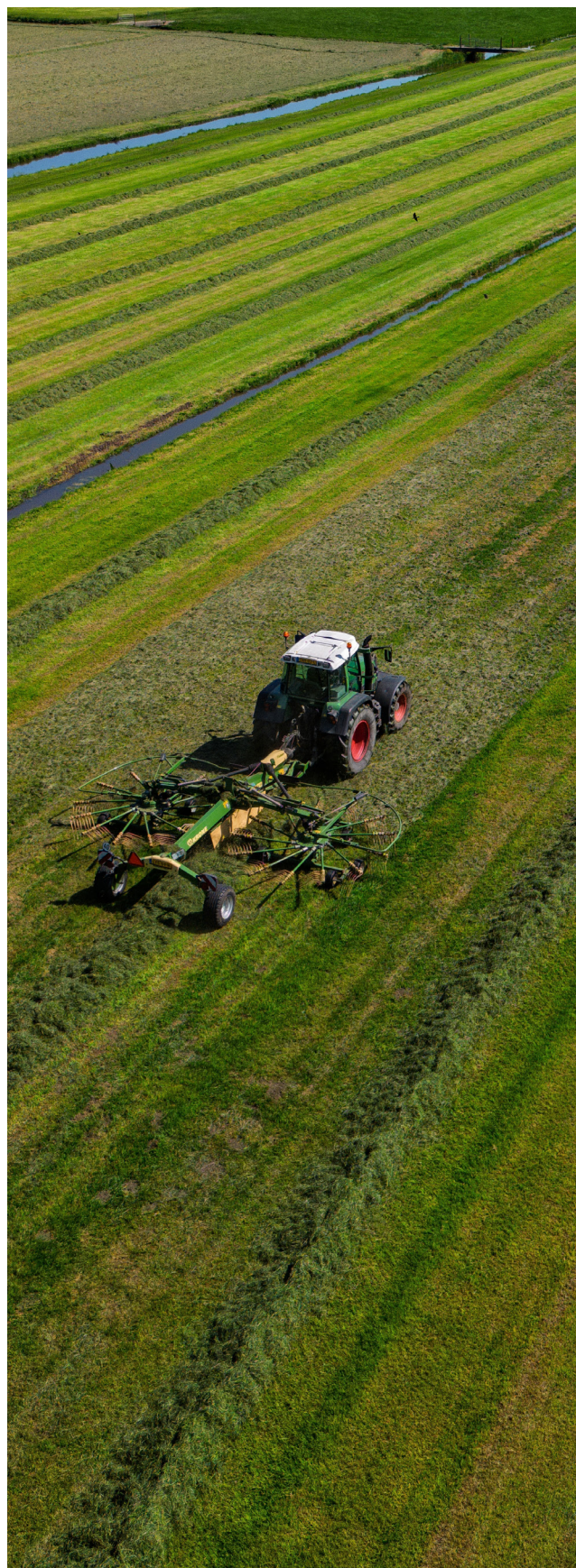


He also highlighted a range of practical challenges that can slow the energy transition, including:

- Land requirements – Renewable energy projects often require substantial areas of land, creating competing demands for space.
- Community opposition – Local resistance to infrastructure developments is increasingly delaying project approvals and implementation.
- Investment risk – Investors require stable and predictable policy frameworks before committing capital to long-term projects.
- Political cycles – Frequent changes in government priorities can undermine investor confidence and disrupt long-term planning.

Mr. Flores-Quiroga repeatedly emphasised the perspective of developing economies. He pointed out that many lower-income countries have contributed relatively little to cumulative global greenhouse gas emissions and continue to view fossil fuels as an important tool for economic growth and poverty reduction. These countries often argue that today's industrialised nations achieved prosperity through the extensive use of hydrocarbons and should not deny similar development opportunities to others.

He further noted that significant financial barriers remain, as many low-carbon technologies are still more costly than conventional alternatives. As a result, many developing countries will require substantial financial and technical support if they are to pursue ambitious decarbonisation pathways while continuing to meet their development objectives.





### **Amal Aldabshe**

Amal Aldabshe framed energy security primarily as a development issue. She argued that energy security should encompass:

- Access
- Affordability
- Reliability
- Sustainability
- Energy Efficiency

In her presentation, she emphasised the importance of energy efficiency. She stressed that while efficiency is frequently overlooked, it is proven to deliver the fastest gains. Reducing demand can improve energy security just as effectively as increasing supply.

She advocated that diversified energy sources reduce dependence on single supply pathways and give greater resilience against disruptions.

Ms. Aldabshe highlighted the importance of private investment within appropriate regulatory frameworks. In her view, this creates the conditions that support affordable energy services. She further stressed that energy debates are ultimately about people.

### **Janos Pasztor**

Mr. Janos Pasztor argued that energy security is no longer a theoretical policy discussion, but an active crisis. It affects markets, influences investment decisions and reshapes geopolitical relationships.

His principal message was that energy security and climate objectives are twin imperatives. He warned against treating them as competing goals.



Mr. Pasztor stressed the need for both government and corporate leadership, noting that markets alone will not deliver the transition. Governments must provide direction, while companies must invest and innovate. Climate ambition and energy security must be advanced together because failure in either area will undermine long-term economic stability.

In his view, climate risks remain urgent, and current geopolitical crises do not reduce them. Instead, delayed action will increase future costs. He emphasised that the climate crisis remains a real threat and has not dissipated because of immediate challenges such as the US-Iran conflict. The most recent years have been among the hottest since records began, and overshooting the 1.5°C goal is now increasingly likely.

Mr. Pasztor's noted that there are now two competing visions of energy power reshaping geopolitics. On one side, the U.S. is both a superpower and a leading petrostate. It is promoting fossil fuels domestically, pursuing policies against clean-energy, dismantling parts of the international climate architecture and positioning itself as a global swing supplier of oil and gas.

On the other side is China, an emerging superpower and leading electrostate with a long-term strategy. It dominates clean-energy production and use, and influences clean-energy deployment internationally through exports and, significantly, through its Belt and Road Initiative. Its power sector emissions have likely peaked, and it is becoming a clean-energy superpower.

Mr. Pasztor argued that these two directions are

reshaping geopolitics, perhaps more profoundly than the oil shocks of the 1970s. While the world waits to see how this plays out, he said the rest of the world will have to navigate between these two possible futures, including countries in the Gulf region. He concluded by emphasising that the window to act is narrowing fast.





The moderated session engaged the audience under the Chatham House Rule, inviting reflections and questions from participants that cut across a broad range of stakeholders. Some of the issues and the summaries from the discussion were as follows:

- **How long can the Strait of Hormuz remain closed before serious economic damage is inflicted on the Gulf states?**

From one month to six months, the pressure would continue to build. Beyond six months, the situation would become significantly more severe, with economic challenges increasingly exacerbated. However, economic diversification will play a major role in mitigating these impacts. This is likely to become increasingly evident in the years ahead, particularly as countries such as Qatar accelerate efforts to diversify their economies.

- **How are corporate entities coming to grips with this volatile world?**

Corporate entities take the long-term view, with investment decisions usually made over a 30-year time span. The view is that gas and particularly LNG demand will continue to grow, so fundamentals remain unchanged. Corporates have resilience and will continue to build this into their projects. They are looking at capital deployment that extends across the value chain which means there is a trend towards more centralised decision making. Integrated energy companies can take a portfolio view on supply which makes their circumstances easier.

- **Have corporate entities changed their strategies?**

Affordability remains a global concern and continues to shape views on the energy

transition. Corporates are increasingly focused on reducing uncertainty and building resilience into their business models. As a result, sustainability considerations are becoming an integral part of corporate strategy.

Global energy companies also tend to view geographical diversification as not merely desirable, but essential. In addition, greater downstream integration is increasingly important, moving beyond the production of fossil fuels into higher-value activities such as petrochemicals.

- **Are corporates now "off the hook" with actions concerning the energy transition?**

GDP growth is driven by energy. As more nations raise their living standards, more energy will be required. There are some "hard to abate industries" where a dense form of energy will be needed well into the future, meaning all forms of energy will be needed. For oil and gas, investment will be continually needed as reserves continually deplete.

- **Is there a trend towards greater use of electricity as a secondary energy source?**

Yes, there is. However, the electricity sector is generally more heavily regulated than the oil and gas industry, meaning that companies must pay closer attention to regulatory developments and policy trends. That said, well-designed projects with resilience built into their business models are likely to remain viable over the long term. Stakeholder engagement is also critical, as the decisions made by

governments, investors, communities and consumers increasingly influence the direction and pace of energy development.

- **Is the pace of energy transition slowing?**

Yes, perhaps some early expectations were overly optimistic. However, technology is also changing fast which also influences the speed of the transition. Technology change will also bring opportunities for viable projects.

- **How is the world of diplomacy coping with the moves away from multilateralism?**

There is, of course, much diplomatic activity. Perhaps, we are seeing a move away from "consensus agreements" to "consensus - 1".

- **How are governments coping with the energy transition?**

Governments, particularly in democratic societies, typically operate within electoral cycles of four to five years. However, successful energy investments often require much longer planning horizons. As a result, companies need regulatory certainty to make long-term investment decisions, yet such certainty can be difficult to achieve amid changing political priorities.

Attendees agreed that global energy demand will continue to grow and that the world requires more energy than it currently consumes. Meeting this demand will require all forms of energy, which explains why a diverse energy mix remains necessary today. Looking ahead, the key question is how that energy mix will evolve over time.

With an additional two billion people expected to join the global population over the next 30 years, much of that growth will occur in developing economies. As living standards improve, per capita energy consumption is also likely to rise significantly, further increasing the need for reliable, affordable and sustainable energy supplies.

- **Is the COP process now flawed and no longer fit for purpose?**

Many believe that the COP process is flawed and that new mechanisms may be needed to accelerate progress towards global climate goals. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the achievements that the process has delivered, most notably the Paris Agreement.

Participants noted that various "coalitions of the willing" are emerging and could play an important role in advancing the energy transition. At the same time, it was acknowledged that the COP process is, by its nature, a negotiation between sovereign states, each seeking to protect and advance its own national interests. As such, differing priorities and competing objectives are an inherent feature of the process.

- **Is decarbonisation making progress?**

The evidence suggests that little is being achieved. However, the National Oil Companies (NOCs) and International Oil Companies (IOCs) have unique opportunities to ensure that the energy sector is positioned as a champion of decarbonisation.

- **What are the development prospects for Africa?**

Africa has huge resources but lacks infrastructure, particularly with regards to energy. Many industrial practices focus on mining and therefore rely heavily on diesel generation. Access to electricity and clean cooking fuels remains insufficient across much of Sub-Saharan Africa.



To conclude the session, the moderator invited the speakers to share their final thoughts on what to watch for in 2026 and beyond. Several key themes emerged:

Carbon dioxide emissions remain heavily concentrated among a small number of countries, with China and the United States together accounting for approximately half of global emissions. The remaining emissions are spread across the rest of the world, including the G77 nations.

The world appears to be moving away from an era of multilateralism towards one characterised by regional spheres of influence. The European Union, the United States and China are increasingly pursuing their own strategic interests. Africa has the potential to emerge as a resource-rich sphere of influence in its own right, although it has yet to adopt a unified regional approach.

The COP process may need to evolve by placing greater emphasis on the implementation of practical solutions that can accelerate progress on the energy transition.

Artificial intelligence has the potential to play a significant role in advancing climate and energy solutions, although its full impact may depend on the development of more sophisticated and targeted applications.

While perfect solutions to the energy transition may not exist, practical and workable solutions can be identified and implemented. Cities, in particular, have an important role to play in developing and scaling local initiatives.

The discussion revealed three broad schools of thought:

**Optimists (Erik Solheim)** – The energy transition is accelerating and remains largely inevitable.

**Pragmatists (Aldo Flores-Quiroga)** – Energy security, affordability and political realities are likely to slow the pace of change.

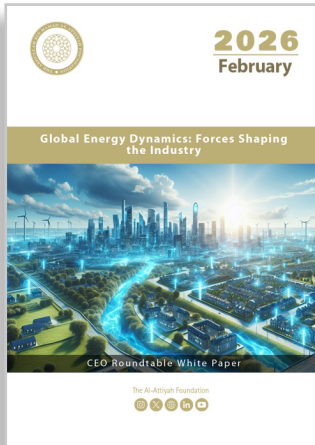
**Integration Advocates (Amal and Janos Pasztor)** – Climate ambition and energy security must be advanced together through diversification, efficiency and coordinated policymaking.

## CONCLUSION

In his concluding remarks, H.E. Dr Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Sada thanked the speakers and attendees for their valuable contributions to what he described as a highly timely and important discussion. He also announced that the Foundation has appointed a new Chairman, Dr Saud bin Abdullah Al-Attiyah, the son of the late H.E. Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah. Following the passing of H.E. Al-Attiyah, the Foundation's Board of Trustees elected Dr Saud to lead the organisation and carry forward his father's vision and enduring legacy.



Do you want to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in energy? All past issues of the Al-Attiyah Foundation's Research Series, both Energy and Sustainability, can be found on the Foundation's website at [www.abhafoundation.org/publications](http://www.abhafoundation.org/publications)



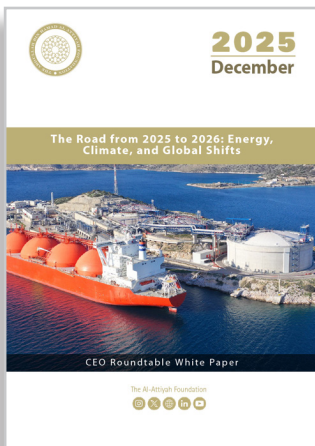
**February- 2026**

**Global Energy Dynamics: Forces Shaping the Industry**

The Al-Attiyah Foundation's first CEO Roundtable of 2026 convened distinguished leaders from the energy industry, drawn from within Qatar and overseas. The Roundtable reflected on the factors (political, economic, and others) that will significantly shape the landscape of the energy industry in 2026 and beyond.



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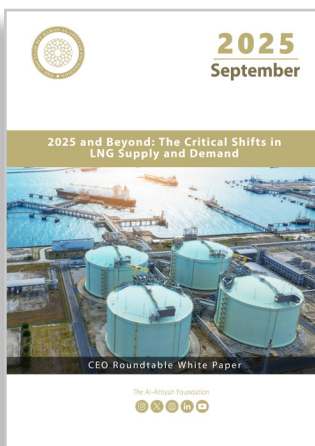
**December- 2025**

**The Road from 2025 to 2026: Energy, Climate, and Global Shifts**

The Road from 2025 to 2026: Energy, Climate, and Global Shifts provided a candid and forward-looking forum to discuss the accelerating pace of the energy transition, the pressures facing global supply and demand systems, and the strategic dilemmas confronting governments and companies during a period of heightened uncertainty.



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**September - 2025**

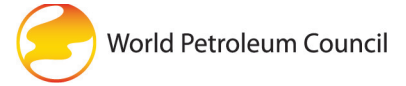
**2025 and Beyond: The Critical Shifts in LNG Supply and Demand**

2025 and Beyond: The Critical Shifts in LNG Supply and Demand facilitated a frank and insightful exchange on short-term market volatility, long-term structural changes in the LNG industry, and the impact of geopolitical developments.





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Our partners collaborate with the Al-Attiyah Foundation on various projects and research within the themes of energy and sustainable development.





## The Al-Attiyah Foundation

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