

Of course, Germany must act, but Germany alone, that is not enough

Klaus Töpfer, member of the board of trustees of Global Energy Solutions, focuses on the circular economy

Klaus Töpfer has a global view. For eight years he was Executive Director of UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme, in Nairobi. "We know so much about the state of the climate and possible solutions," says Töpfer. "In that, hydrogen is most certainly and synthetic fuels and methanol and others are extremely significant." According to Töpfer, the German government's hydrogen initiative and the EU's European Green Deal also speak for this. With existing knowledge, one can already act today. But it is just as important to push ahead with innovations. The search for solutions with the help of science is far from over. "We will be able to produce solar energy even more cheaply." The same applies to wind energy. And other techniques will also be used in electrolysis. Töpfer also considers the circular economy to be crucial, "because it will allow us to save energy again and deal with resources in such a way that even a world of eight or nine billion can live under humane conditions."

Of course, Germany must act, but Germany alone, he says, is not enough. "We have to prove in our country that we have a technology that can enable CO₂-free economic stability." Töpfer pleads for science and industry dealing with energy and climate issues to be brought together and bundled. "Go to Tunisia, where a lot of research and work is being done in the field, especially in wind and solar energy. In Morocco it is comparable." Töpfer knows the conditions from his own experience. "We will not be able to overcome the problems of the developing countries and especially Africa beyond the Maghreb by satisfying our needs there and producing hydrogen for ourselves. But by creating value chains in these countries that give the people growing up their prospects for their lives and create jobs." So that young people in their home countries approached things with optimism and did not resign.

"Africa has a lot of sun and a lot of wind." But what is often lacking on the continent is water. And these problems will become even greater as climate change progresses. This is another reason why Töpfer is counting on the circular economy to save water. The more capital-intensive a technology, the more difficult it is to use in developing countries, including Africa. Instead, labour-intensive technologies are needed there. It would also be wrong to export hydrogen from countries that suffer from energy shortages themselves. After all, sufficient energy is a prerequisite for economic development. "So, I

think this is a task that goes far beyond energy technology. It goes all the way to a peace policy in one world." To the interview [here](#) and [here](#).