

Remarks by the Executive Director, UN-Habitat
Event: UN-Energy Principals meeting for the High – Level Dialogue (HLD) on Energy 2021
Date: 9.12.2020

Thank you, Damilola and Achim for your remarks and for outlining the vision of the High-Level Dialogue on Energy to be held alongside the General Assembly in September 2021.

In 1981 when the first UN conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy was held, the world population was 4.53 billion, of which 40% was urban. Currently, the world population is nearly 7.8 billion of which more than 55.7% is urban.

In these last four decades the global urban population has grown by more than 2.53 billion people - approximately comparable to the combined population of China and India, the two most populous countries in the World.

It is in this backdrop of rapid urbanisation, the climate crisis and Covid 19 - the defining health crisis of our time, that the High-level Dialogue on Energy will be held. We must make this event a landmark in emerging from the current crises and in “building back better and greener”.

In preparation for the High-Level Dialogue on Energy, UN-Habitat would specifically like to support the Technical Working Group on Energy Transition and the one on Energy Access.

As the principal interagency mechanism within the UN system related to Energy, UN Energy is the key player in this transition. The SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda provide us the overall direction and a road map for UN Energy. I believe that there is potential to further ‘grow’ the role through innovative initiatives on the ground.

UN-Habitat has been focusing on improving access to energy for the poor, and has advocated for energy efficient design, and construction standards for buildings. We have also promoted the uptake of electric mobility. We are also supporting cities to improve waste management and develop waste to energy projects.

In a revitalised UN Energy, UN-Habitat is committed to take forward more initiatives as such, in close coordination with sister agencies in the UN Energy network.

As what the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in his recent speech at Columbia University, “It is time to flick the *green switch*. We have a chance to not simply reset the world economy but to transform it.” He also said: “A sustainable economy driven by renewable energies will create new jobs, cleaner infrastructure and a resilient future”.

To ensure cities and communities build back better, greener and fairer, UN-Habitat looks forward to deepening our partnership with UN Energy to advocate for renewable energy, to ensure no one and no place is left behind in our urbanising world.

Thank you.

Background

UN Habitat has been a member of UN Energy since its inception in 2004. Below is the web link listing the members of UN Energy.

<https://un-energy.org/newpartners/>

UN-Energy is the United Nations' mechanism for inter-agency collaboration in the field of energy.

UN-Energy was established by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in 2004 as the United Nations 'mechanism for inter-agency collaboration in the field of energy.

To accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, countries increasingly adopt sustainable energy solutions, embarking on an energy transition by creating the enabling conditions that catalyse public and private investment to scale-up action on energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency. By making their energy sectors more sustainable, their economies can follow a more equitable growth path, contributing to poverty eradication while combating climate change and increasing their resilience.

UN-energy aims to:

- Promote coherence in the UN system's multi-disciplinary response to achieve SDG7 in support of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement;
- Enhance coordination and collaborative actions within the United Nations with regards to policy development, implementation and knowledge sharing in the area of energy.

High-level Dialogue on Energy 2021 under the auspices of the UN General Assembly

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/225, the Secretary-General will convene a High level Dialogue on Energy at a summit level during the 76th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2021 in New York, to accelerate SDG 7 action for the achievement of the 2030. Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The Dialogue represents the first inclusive global gathering on energy under the auspices of the General Assembly since the UN Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy held in Nairobi in 1981. It presents a historic opportunity to provide transformational action in the first years of the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs and support the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Leadership Arrangements

The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Liu Zhenmin, has been designated as the Dialogue Secretary-General to facilitate the organization of the Dialogue. Under his leadership, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Division for Sustainable Development Goals, will serve as the Secretariat for the Dialogue and ensure the full engagement of the UN-Energy secretariat during the Dialogue preparations.

The UN-Energy Co-Chairs, namely, Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, and Ms. Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sustainable Energy for All, have been designated as the Dialogue Co-Chairs to facilitate substantive content development, multi-stakeholder mobilization and inter-agency support.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, Ms. Damilola Ogunbiyi, has been also designated as the High-Level Champion to drive global advocacy for the Dialogue.

Objectives of the High-Level Dialogue on Energy 2021

The overarching goal of the High-level Dialogue on Energy is to promote the implementation of the energy-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Dialogue should raise ambition and accelerate action towards the achievement of the SDG7 targets by catalysing innovative solutions, investments and multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs and accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

This overarching goal will be supported by a series of objectives including:

- Strengthen political commitment to the achievement of SDG7.
- Promote green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic through sustainable, decarbonised energy solutions.
- Catalyse multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments by all stakeholders.
- Leverage energy action for advancing other SDGs.
- Catalyse finance, investment, innovation, new technologies, capacity building and quality data for SDG7 acceleration, including maximizing its contribution to combatting climate change.
- Strengthen synergies with major intergovernmental processes, including on transport, ocean, biodiversity, gender equality, food systems and climate change.
- Accelerate delivery of United Nations support and services for Member States on energy related issues at all levels.