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**Remarks by H.E. Peter Thomson,
UN-DESA Energy Grant Ceremony**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to participate in the Award Ceremony for the winner of the second UN-DESA Energy Grant.

The ‘Powering the Future We Want’ programme is a creative initiative that promotes and funds innovative activities related to sustainable energy – an issue that goes to the heart of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

When world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda last year, they recognized that humanity was on a path towards unsustainability, with only a narrow window left to move towards a more sustainable future.

Through the 17 interconnected and mutually reinforcing Sustainable Development Goals, world leaders acknowledged that for humanity to achieve a world in which we eliminate extreme poverty, increase prosperity, empower women and girls, combat climate change, and protect our environment, we must ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy.

Programmes such as today's are therefore invaluable in raising awareness, building partnerships, and rewarding ingenuity in promoting sustainable energy.

The theme of this year's award – energy for sustainable transport – is a prescient one.

For decades, transport policies focused almost exclusively on the speed and safety of motorized transport, with insufficient attention to the social, health, environmental and economic costs of ‘business as usual’ models.

As it is, around 3.5 million people currently die each year from outdoor pollution of which transportation pollution is a major source; 23 percent of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions come from the transport sector; and road congestion places enormous downward pressure on economic growth.

It is therefore vital to our efforts to move towards a sustainable future that we establish transport systems that are smart, clean, affordable, and powered by renewable energy.

The finalists whose work we are honouring today are at the forefront of efforts to find innovative and practical solutions for sustainable transport.

Their work demonstrates how science, technology and innovation can drive practical solutions to improve our world.

I also congratulate SINTEF – the winner of the 2016 Energy Grant.

SINTEF's efforts to develop a low-cost, environmentally sustainable, solar-powered electric ferry service is very innovative, and has the potential to drive clean energy solutions on a much larger scale.

The benefits of the project go far beyond the energy sector, including potentially impacting the state of the ocean by reducing marine pollution.

The perilous state of Ocean's health is an issue of deep concern at the United Nations. The Ocean Conference to be held here at the UN on 5-9 June next year will be humanity's best opportunity to reverse the cycle of decline in which the Ocean is currently caught. I encourage all interested parties to attend the Conference.

In closing, I would like to commend once again everyone involved with today's award.

While there may only be one prize, each and every one of you is leading global efforts to find world-changing innovations that benefit humanity.

I thank you for your ideas, your drive, and your dedication to sustainable development, and to forging solutions that will ultimately transform our world for people, planet and prosperity.

Thank you.