

**Africa Regional Review meeting on the Implementation of the  
Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries  
(LDCs)**

**Session 8 “Building climate resilience and accelerating the energy  
transition in African LDCs”**

**26 February 2021; 8:00 – 9:45 EST**

---

*Guiding question: Additional power generation capacity is needed to increase access to energy in African LDCs. How can it be ensured this additional capacity will mainly utilize renewable energy? What is the role of renewables in COVID-19 recovery plans and how can it help African LDCs to simultaneously increase their climate ambition and accelerate energy transition?*

Distinguished Colleagues and Friends,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- It is an honor to contribute to this important meeting today. I would like to express my appreciation to UNOHRLLS for its continued efforts in moving the Agenda of the Istanbul Programme of Action forward.
- To answer the question, I would highlight the essential need to consider the short-term response with the medium and long-term objectives of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. This is a message that we have been emphasizing at IRENA from the beginning of the pandemic, and we charted the way forward in our post-COVID recovery report.
- Even before the pandemic, we were not on track towards achieving SDG7. The world's access deficit is still increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, where more than half of the population lacks access. In addition, millions of people only have minimal or unreliable electricity access. Without more urgent

actions, 620 million people globally will still be left without access to electricity in 2030, and 85 percent of them living in sub-Saharan Africa.

- The pandemic could further derail advances made unless we ensure sustainable energy is an integral part of the global response.
- Energy is the key to achieving most of the SDGs and, to achieving the priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action. By placing energy transitions at the centre of national recovery plans, African LDCs can pave way for increased socioeconomic resilience that includes reliable energy access, resilient-livelihoods and long-term social security.
- Africa is endowed with renewable energy resources and could meet nearly a quarter of its energy needs from indigenous and clean resources. Renewable energy can be a game-changer in Africa's development path. They are cost-competitive, fast to deploy, support energy independence and security, while reducing dependence on imported fuels. They can provide timely access to clean electricity that protects health and the environment.
- And renewables can do so while creating millions of new jobs, stimulating industrial development along the value chains and shaping a different future for Africa's youth. With over 60% of its population younger than 25, now more than ever, the African youth requires jobs and opportunities. For every 1million US dollars invested in renewable energy, 25 jobs are being created globally. For Africa, our estimation shows that energy transition related investments focused on renewables, efficiency and infrastructure would yield more jobs in the continent than in the rest of the world.
- Overall, renewables can provide a foundation for resilient economies and societies as the effects of climate change intensify.
- African LDCs cannot achieve this transformation on their own. Coordinated efforts from the global community and all of us will underpin efforts to close the access gap.

- IRENA is collaborating with UNDP and NDC Partnership to support countries enhance and implement their Nationally Determined Contributions. We are working with several African LDCs including Benin, Chad, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia.
- We are working with Burkina Faso to assess electrifying primary healthcare facilities as part of the country's efforts to support the over-burdened health sector. This work is currently being expanded to several other countries as well.
- We know that access to financing is a big barrier in scaling up renewables in LDCs. Through the Climate Investment Platform, we are facilitating the creation of a pipeline of bankable projects. So far in Africa, 97 projects worth over 38 billion have been registered, and 198 private and public partners have expressed their interest in collaborating in this region. IRENA is closely collaborating with MASEN as well to explore synergies for the implementation of the activities under the Sustainable Energy Access Coalition. Our collaboration will address key challenges hindering energy access, including access to finance.
- In addition, we are very pleased to be working with UNOHRLLS on a joint report on *Scaling Up Renewable Energy in LDCs* which will inform the LDC5 conference in Qatar next year as well as the next ten-year programme of action. The report will include recommendations and actions on how to build a renewables-based and resilient energy system, close the energy access gap and harness the associated socio-economic and environmental benefits.
- IRENA, with its global Membership, remains deeply committed to the African LDC agenda. We look forward to working with you with the determination to leave no one behind and ensure a just and sustainable future for all. Thank you.