

1st Meeting of the Technical Working Group on Innovation, Technology and Data

2 March 2021 – 8:00 to 11:00 AM (NY Time)

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome remarks by the Co-Leads

Mr. Tareq Emtairah, Director, Department of Energy, UNIDO, welcomed participants and thanked them for taking their time to participate. He commented that industrial transformation continues to be a priority for UNIDO and has a key role in supporting SDG 7 and the broader sustainable development agenda.

Mr. Zitouni Ould-Dada, Deputy Director, Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, FAO, discussed how innovation is central in achieving SDGs, particularly SDG 2, and how data and use of technology is critical in lifting people out of poverty, particularly women and girls.

Mr. Andre Dzikus, Coordinator, Urban Basic Services Branch, UN-Habitat, commented on how innovation is a key element of their work. SDG 7 is critical for sustainable urban areas and supports their development pathway. Most cities they work with lack reliable energy supply and one of their goals is to make the building sector more resource and energy efficient.

2. Overview of HLD Energy 2021:

Mr. Minoru Takada, Team Leader, Secretariat of the High-level Dialogue on Energy, DESA provided a brief presentation on the role of the working group and expected outcomes. He highlighted the need to focus on key recommendations the group can make to leverage innovation, technology and data to achieve SDG 7 by 2030.

3. Innovation, Technology and Data: Role of TWG 4 and Presentation of Concept Note

Ms. Rana Ghoneim, Chief, Energy Systems and Infrastructure Division, UNIDO, made a brief presentation on the initial outline of the report, including five potential focus areas: Enabling technologies, Financial and social innovation including disruptive business models, Digital technologies and GIS to improve data availability and planning of energy in end-use sectors, Innovation in policy and governance, Capacity and skills. Ms. Ghoneim also raised five key questions, related to good practices in innovation and data, improving energy ecosystems, challenges in infrastructure and investment, priority actions, and best tracking mechanisms.

4. Open Discussion

The open discussion included interventions from members of the Working Group, Global Theme Champion representatives, and representatives of member organizations of UN-Energy. Some of the issues raised include:

- Innovation in energy development should not only concern energy but also the use of energy and its outcomes.

- Innovation must help in addressing tradeoffs and harnessing synergies in the use of energy and other resources.
- Social innovation, notably the need to address the clear data and technology gap between developed and developing countries that is slowing the pace of development.
- The need to proactively invest in long-term skills building as a means to drive innovation and make the most of South-South collaboration.
- Capacity building for youth must receive more attention. Digital skills building and technical roles can be filled by young people who also bring unique social innovation skills.
- Policy and governance innovation, notably the need to ensure that innovation and data management do not increase inequalities and therefore have policies that are workable and adapted to the needs of the citizens in particular the poor and vulnerable people, including women and youth.
- Financial innovation, highlighting the need to fully quantify and benefit from the economic multipliers of SDG 7.
- Technology transfer, including how to resolve fundamental energy access disruptions.

5. Conclusion and Next steps

Mr. Vincent Kitio, Chief, Urban Energy Unit, UN-Habitat, concluded the meeting by highlighting the importance to fill both the digital gap as well as the data gap. He also mentioned that facilitating innovation is about building capacity, creating enabling environment, finance, and that each innovation is complex and not one-size fits all.

This group will meet four times before the High-Level Dialogue:

- Based on the concept note and the discussions, the Co-Leads will draft an annotated outline which will be sent by 12 March for comments. Working Group Members can submit written inputs to the Secretariat at david.koranyi@un.org.
- Comments on the annotated outline from Members will be due by 19 March.
- The First draft report will be sent to Members by 9 April.
- Second Meeting (week of 12 April 2021): First draft, with a draft Matrix of Actions.
- Third Meeting (Last week of April 2021): Cross-Technical Working Groups discussions to ensure synergies and coherence.
- Fourth Meeting (week of 17 May 2021): Final report, with the final Matrix of Actions.