



**United  
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HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON  
**ENERGY**  
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 2021

## Ministerial Thematic Forums

21 – 25 June 2021

Event name:

Synergies between energy access, efficiency, and expanding renewables in Africa.

Event date and time: 21 June 2021, 6.00 - 7.00 EST

Organizers: Dr. Shonali Pachauri, Research Group Leader, IIASA

Number of participants: 6

Main speakers and brief summary [max 300 words]:

Dr. Shonali Pachauri kicked off the side-event by welcoming everyone and introducing the two speakers. The first speaker was Dr. Anteneh Dagnachew, Researcher & Modeler-Energy & Development at the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL). He presented recent research from his doctoral thesis that applied two integrated assessment modeling frameworks to quantify specific synergies in achieving energy access, efficiency, and renewable energy expansion in sub-Saharan Africa. He highlighted that despite the two models being employed having very different analytical frameworks and approaches, the analysis of both models arrived at similar conclusions that integrated policies stimulate the expansion of energy services, reduces the investment requirements, and the impact on the climate. In particular, he mentioned that there is a large potential for efficiency improvement in sub-Saharan Africa. Energy efficiency improvements can result in much lower demand, allow for providing a wide range of services with distributed systems, that in turn reduce conversion and transmission losses.

The second speaker was Prof. Youba Sokona. Dr. Sokona is Vice-Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). He has over four decades of experience addressing energy, environment, and sustainable development in Africa. His presentation focused on challenges and opportunities for an energy transition in Africa. He highlighted the criticality of developing new energy systems that are flexible, scalable, modular, and prefabricated with technological, engineering, and social innovation fit for the African context. In addition, he emphasized the need to harness renewable energy potentials for development, while simultaneously phasing out traditional use of firewood and charcoal for cooking by 2050, and preferably much earlier. He mentioned the importance of stakeholder mobilization and coordination and cooperation among the policy, practice, and research communities.

Key outcomes [max 100 words]:

Discussion focused on three critical issues. First, the need to achieve universal access to clean cooking, which receives less political attention as compared to electrification, despite the significant benefits of this for health, agriculture, air quality, food, and land systems. Second, the need for electrification to expand its scope to address multiple end-

uses and service needs beyond lighting, alone. Finally, addressing the need for social and behavioral change. In this case, the Covid-19 pandemic provides important lessons on how behavioral change can happen much faster than we expect or believe. But this requires high level political commitment and effective communication.

Links to livestream recording/website/social media:

[https://iiasa.ac.at/web/home/about/events/210621 UN High Level Energy.html](https://iiasa.ac.at/web/home/about/events/210621_UN_High_Level_Energy.html)  
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