



Your Excellency, Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the
United Nations,
Excellencies,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the High-Level
Dialogue on Energy.

Allow me to be direct: energy is critical to both our recovery
from the global pandemic and our efforts to tackle climate
change. It is, quite literally, a win-win, situation.

First, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the stark
divide between energy haves and energy have-nots. Much like
the digital divide, where some of us were able to switch to
remote work while others had no alternative, the energy divide
is indicative of deep, deep inequality. For billions, energy is a
luxury.



If we are to recover from this pandemic and reignite socio-economic growth, then closing the energy divide is essential. Communities and businesses need reliable access to energy if they are to ensure access to health, education, and jobs and livelihoods.

In this way, energy access is very much an ‘SDG accelerator’, as progress on this one SDG can speed up progress across the entire set of 17-goals.

Second, there is simply no path to carbon neutrality or maintaining temperature rise at 1.5 degrees without a broad, global, and comprehensive transition to renewable energy.



Today, there are around 760 million people who are currently living without electricity; 2.6 billion people still relying on harmful fuels for cooking. We need to address this to ensure everyone will be able to access to clean, decarbonized energy by 2030. But to do this, a political commitment at all levels is a must.

Excellencies,

A substantial increase in clean energy finance is essential for all countries, but particularly for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, where energy poverty equates to poverty, full stop.



International public financing flows to developing countries in support of renewable energy reached US\$21.4 billion in 2017. This is a two-fold increase from 2010. However, it is also estimated that only a small proportion of this funding reached the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

Financing for clean cooking is even more worrisome. Of the US\$ 4.4 billion needed, only US\$32 million has been made available to achieve universal access to clean cooking. Innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships play a key role here in supporting countries in special situations to ensure that no one is left behind.

For donors, investors, and national governments alike, investing in achievement of SDG7 and the Paris Agreement is low-hanging fruit. The benefits are immense. There are few investments that offer as much return.



It is a known fact that strategic partnerships and so-called, ‘Energy Compacts’, are key mechanisms to drive leadership and urgent action on SDG7. I encourage all Member States and the UN System to continue pursuing these options.

As President of the General Assembly – and under the theme of a ‘Presidency of Hope’ – I am pleased to note that both climate action and sustainable recovery from COVID-19 are amongst our five rays of hope.

As stated at the outset, there is no path to either of these solutions without access to clean, renewable energy. I therefore intend to leverage the General Assembly to its fullest extent to support efforts towards SDG7 and SDG13.



This includes a meeting next month ahead of COP26 on raising ambition, political will, and capacities, including on renewables, as well as a ‘supersession on the environment’, later in the session, to emphasize the interconnected environmental issues we face.

Excellencies, I look forward to working with you in this regard.

I thank you.