

REMARKS
UNDP ADMINISTRATOR - MR ACHIM STEINER
HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON ENERGY

24 SEPTEMBER

**LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE 1: ACCELERATING ACTION TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL ENERGY ACCESS AND
NET ZERO EMISSIONS**

Date & time: 24 Sept, 10-11:30am

Session title: Leadership Dialogue 1, Accelerating action to achieve universal energy access and net zero emissions

"Check Against Delivery"

Opening

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to join Heads of State and of Government from across the world as they embark on new, courageous commitments to **ensure that *everyone* has access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy.**

I believe that today's **High-Level Dialogue on Energy can be a seminal moment in the history of international cooperation.**

It is a moment where we can decide to not only leave a lasting legacy to the next generation.

Making bold decisions today will have a positive impact on the many generations to come.

Where we Stand

As we have heard over the past two days, *seismic shifts* are happening in the energy landscape.

Not only is the energy revolution *already* here.

It is now rapidly accelerating.

Our challenge is to ensure that *every country, every community, and every person--* can reap the benefits of the energy revolution.

At the same time, we must ensure that this upheaval is fast enough – with *decisive action* to drive down carbon emissions -- **to ensure that we can outpace the relentless march of climate change.**

“Disrupting” the System to Reap the Benefits.

To do that, we must *disrupt* the historic energy systems, which are often deeply ingrained into the fabric of countries.

Doing so will create a “petri dish” **for an extraordinary array of socio-economic benefits to expand and multiply.**

An accelerated energy transition offers a massive 40% of the emission reductions we need to meet our **climate goals.**¹

More than 30 million jobs could be created in clean energy, energy efficiency and low-emissions technologies by the year 2030.²

This new access to clean energy **will improve livelihoods and social mobility, gender equality, women’s empowerment, and people’s health.**³

For regions like sub-Saharan Africa where half of second-level schools have no power and healthcare centres grind to a halt due to lack of electricity -- new momentum will help to literally turn on the lights.⁴

For others, renewable, clean energy will increase access to vital services like **affordable broadband – the “nervous system” of tomorrow’s green economy.**

Achieving **universal clean energy access is therefore instrumental to achieve all 17 SDGs.**

UNDP

As the UN’s lead development agency, the United Nations Development Programme is itself making an **unprecedented commitment.**

UNDP’s own **Energy Compact** pledges to provide access to clean and affordable energy to 500 million **additional people** by 2025, focusing on the world’s most vulnerable communities.

And we will build on initiatives already underway.

¹ <https://www.seforall.org/news/un-climate-action-summit-shows-energy-transition-key-to-curbing-climate-change-energy-poverty>

² These include freshly created jobs, for example due to efficiency upgrades. They also include new roles for existing workers in construction, in the manufacturing of emissions-reducing products like EVs and hyper-efficient appliances, and in innovative technologies such as hydrogen. IEA’s Net-Zero Emissions by 2050 (NZE) Scenario

<https://www.iea.org/commentaries/the-importance-of-focusing-on-jobs-and-fairness-in-clean-energy-transitions>

³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/06/1011541>

⁴ <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2019/11/13/more-than-half-of-sub-saharan-africans-lack-access-to-electricity>

Look, for instance to the **Africa Minigrids Programme** that improves the financial viability of renewable energy mini-grids in 18 countries. It has the potential to close the energy gap for 570 million people without electricity in sub-Saharan Africa.⁵

Closing

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our current energy system is the leading cause of the climate crisis, **which hits the world's poorest and most vulnerable the hardest.**

And at this time of an unprecedented crisis, we all need to **step-up.**

That means prioritising cooperation and “co-investment” to create a green, more inclusive, and more sustainable future -- for both people *and* planet.

For better or for worse -- we will be judged if we do not seize the opportunity and openings that now lie before us.

If ever there was a moment, now is the time to make courageous choices.

Thank you.

END

⁵ Other example: UNDP's **Solar for Health programme** brings clean, reliable, and affordable energy to 900 health facilities in 13 countries

