



**United
Nations**



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

Ministerial Thematic Forums

21 – 25 June 2021

Event name: [Enhancing sustainable energy access for the urban and peri-urban poor during COVID-19 pandemic and post recovery times.](#)

Event date and time: [23 June 2021, 11.30 - 12.45 EST](#)

Organizers: [UN-HABITAT](#)

Number of participants: [35](#)

Main speakers and brief summary [max 300 words]:

Moderator:

- [Mr. Vincent Kitio, Lead Urban Energy Solutions, UN-HABITAT. Nairobi, Kenya.](#)

Speakers:

- [Mr. Luc Severi, Program Manager, Powering Healthcare, Sustainable Energy for All. Washington DC, USA.](#)
- [Mr. Thomas Fohgrub, Head of the Coordination Unit for the Global Platform for Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement \(GPA\), United Nations Institute for Training and Research \(UNITAR\). Geneva, Switzerland.](#)
- [Prof. AbuBakr S Bahaj, Professor of Sustainable Energy, Head, Energy and Climate Change Division, University of Southampton, UK.](#)
- [Ms. Suzanne Hounsell, Energy Sector Lead, SNV, Kenya & Zambia](#)

Brief Summary

The side event brought together energy experts to discuss issues related to energy access for the urban and peri-urban poor during the COVID-19 pandemic and how governments and development partners could strategically position themselves to develop a post recovery plan and actions by building back better. The exchange of experiences and lesson learned from participants during the discussions contributed to concrete action points for the post recovery period. The discussions touched issues related to policies, regulations, innovation, technology, finance, partnerships and displace populations. Panelists were asked the following questions: (i) What actions are needed to foster the

uptake of cleaner energy deployment in informal settlements looking at the new norms and challenges brought about by COVID-19 pandemic? and (ii) What lesson can we learn from this pandemic so that we can build the resilience of the urban poor and improve their livelihoods?

The challenges brought about by COVID-19 pandemic globally has strongly affected the growing trend of energy access in developing countries in general. In fact because of Covid-19 millions of people have fell back to poverty and unable to maintain their electricity access. According to the IEA, in sub-Saharan Africa, while the number of people without access to electricity has steadily declined since 2013 (610 million in 2013 to 580 million in 2019), it is now set to increase in since 2020, making it difficult for countries to achieve universal energy access by 2030. The urban and peri-urban poor as well as displaced populations are more affected by the poor access to energy.

With the confinement, the need for a reliable, secure, affordable and sustainable energy access in informal settlements, has demonstrated to be critical for the continuation of productive activities and the provision of basic services to the poor.

Key outcomes [max 100 words]:

Here are some highlights of the discussion:

- The main impacts of COVID-19 in relation to energy access in urban areas with focus on the low-income communities.
- The need for reliable electricity access to ensure communication and to certain extend e-learning during the pandemic.
- Energy access has not only been a service but a life-saver - supplying electricity for healthcare services and water supply.
- The central role of energy for ensure livelihood to the community. “We need power to empower”
- The pandemic has proved to be more adverse in the displaced communities due to the limited self-reliance activities caused by the restrictions added on top on other political limitations.

The Actions

- Emphasis on supporting the deployment of renewable/clean energy to address both energy poverty, reliability, and resilience.
- Embrace the notion of “power to empower” so as to promote equitable distribution of energy and COVID-19 vaccination to all.
- Promotion of self-reliance through appropriate financing mechanisms which include integrated forms like grants, green financing, guarantees, affordable loans and carbon market.
- Promote productive use of energy rather than looking only at the social angle.

- Embrace energy mix to bring reliability - Promote the use of digital platforms for conducting businesses such as e-learning, working as the pandemic has proved to be with the societies for long before the ultimate solution can be found

Links to livestream recording/website/social media:

Live recording can be found [here](#)

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