**Third Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies**

**between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

*Tokyo, Japan / Online*

*20-21 July 2022*

*Side Event Summary*

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| **Event title**  |
| *Just, Inclusive and Equitable Energy Transition for the SDGs and Net Zero* |
| **Overview of event and key messages** |
| *An inclusive and just energy transition can catalyse transformational co-benefits for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Energy is inextricably linked to virtually all the SDGs: transforming the world’s energy systems will create new jobs, advance gender equality, and empower people, communities, and societies. Based on the concept of 'leaving no one behind', a just and inclusive energy transition will enhance human well-being, health, and capabilities, increase resilience, and drive innovation towards a sustainable society at all levels, while also driving huge investments. Although the transition pathways will vary based on the individual needs of countries and regions, all pathways must be just and inclusive in order to accelerate collective actions to deliver on the SDGs and the Paris Agreement and to ensure the ‘future we want’.* |
| **Speaker notes (including remarks by moderator)** |
| ***Mr. Minoru Takada, Team Leader (Sustainable Energy), Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA,*** *presented SDG7 on affordable and clean energy which represents the first ever universal goal on energy and consists of the three pillars universal access to energy, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. He highlighted that since progress on achieving SDG7 has slowed over the last years and regional disparities have widened, immediate and swift action is needed.****Ms. Radia Sedaoui, Chief of Energy Section, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, UN ESCWA****, underlined the importance of recognising the varying cultural and regional backgrounds and resulting different pathways in implementing SDG7. She further stressed the need to leave no one behind, as inequality and conflict shape and prolong the transition.****Ms. Sheila Oparaocha, Executive Director, ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy****, underlined the sense of urgency in achieving SDG7 given the recent set-backs due to Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine. She further highlighted that moving forward energy access must not be seen as solely a development issue, but rather a human rights and political issue as well.****Ms. Leena Srivastava, Deputy Director General for Science, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Vienna Austria****, stressed that energy access is not a binary problem, but varies in the quantity and quality of energy access. She further called for not overlooking fairness in the process of achieving SDG7 and therefore change the approach on how to deal with energy access.****Ms. Doris Agbevivi, Energy Analyst, Energy Commission, Ghana****, reiterated the issues raised by the other panellists, namely different pathways to SDG7, energy access as a human right, and fairness. She further highlighted the last-mile-issue and how to address it, as well as big picture questions about the exploitation of natural resources in Africa.* |
| **Q&A** |
| ***Q from Minoru to Leena****: Considering long term energy transitions, do you think we should limit fossil fuel use in developing countries? Or are they win-win-solutions?****A from Leena****: It is necessary to have different, individual pathways to net zero. However, even then global net zero could be achieved by 2030. Also, who is we? We should not impose actions on other countries, but rather empower them and give them the choice. Moreover, engaged dialogue is necessary, as we keep on saying context matters, but do not actually know the context of other countries, which leads to an oversimplification of country specific challenges.****Q from Minoru to Radia****: In the Arab region there’s a lot of oil producing countries which are rich, but also lots of poverty. How can we solve this?****A from Radia****: It is a question of capacity and access to / lack of finance. The oil producing nations are heavily investing in renewable energies with the goal to remain energy superpowers and global market players. The disparities in the region pose a huge problem, but the energy transition can also function as a significant opportunity in this matter.****Q from Minoru to Sheila****: Should we just forget about clean cooking given that the number of people not having access has risen from 2 billion to now 2.4 billion? Should we just give up or is there anything we could do differently to progress on this issue?****A from Sheila****: We cannot afford to give up due to the immense impacts on health – particularly women and children – and climate change. So the question should be why we continue to have problems with access to clean cooking. Going back to the rights issue, it just hasn’t been on the public agenda like electricity issues for example. To achieve progress the same willingness and instruments should be applied by governments regarding access to clean cooking.****Q from Minoru to Doris****: Is access to clean cooking a top priority in Ghana?****A from Doris****: While Ghana’s top-priority remains energy access, clean cooking solutions are a priority in the energy sector as well. However, it is difficult to achieve as even if once supplied with other solutions, as soon as they run out, people would fall into old habits.****As from Sheila and Leena****: Clean cooking should be priority and human right. It’s also a question of prioritization, as rural areas which often lack clean energy solutions would use considerably less energy than their urban counterparts. Therefore, theoretically if urban areas would decrease consumption, more energy would be available for rural areas.****Qs from virtual participants****:*1. *Mexico as an example for governmental policy and administrative changes stopping civil society projects instead of accelerating improvements. What is your opinion about this? Is this an isolated case?*
2. *What level of energy access is considered acceptable? What would you consider the modern energy minimum?*
3. *Only 20% of energy production is renewable. Can renewable energy replace fossil fuels?*

***A from Leena (Q3)****: This achievement only happened in the last decade or so. Technology, investment, and efficiency of renewable energies are improving, so no need to be pessimistic about this.****A from Minoru (Q3)****: Agrees on not being pessimistic. The financial investments in renewable energy would have to be tripled or quadrupled, which is plausible. However, we should also focus on the question of equality when addressing this issue and investments.****A from Doris (Q3)****: We have to make a business case for renewables; oil has these business structures already, but they can be implemented for renewables as well.****A from Doris (Q1)****: This is happening in a lot of countries. However, the 2030 SDG Agenda has helped solving these problems. As countries now have to account for their SDG progress on an international level. Therefore, the UN managed to “force” governments to be accountable, without actually forcing them to be accountable.****A from Sheila (Q2)****: The starting point should be to look if the access is providing the services needed and the level of energy that is needed to be productive. Therefore, it should not only be a question of quantity, but rather, as already evoked earlier, of quality as well.****Q5 from the in-person audience****: The clean cooking agenda is important from the deforestation perspective as well, as better (transitional) cooking technologies are healthier, and more sustainable combating deforestation and desertification. How much are governments willing to invest in transitional solutions?****A from Radia (Q2)****: It’s a technical question, but through an integrated approach including social, educational, health and environmental aspects this is achievable.****A from Leena(Q5)****: Why should they not have state-of-the-art technologies, who is deciding that? Should suppliers or consumers drive the transitions and in which direction? Those are some of the questions that need to be asked when implementing just and fair transitions.****A from Leena (Q2)****: We should not talk just about the numbers anymore, but rather focus on satisfying the needs of energy supply. Through government policies good markets can be developed.****A from Doris (Q5)****: Clean cooking stoves in Africa as a solution to cleaner cooking solutions. However, there this also poses a problem as the term is used as well in marketing to promote environmentally bad cooking stoves. We should focus on the bigger context, set goals, and contextualize the timelines on a country specific basis.* |
| **Closing Remarks** |
| ***Mr. Minoru Takada*** *stressed that the message should be to remain hopeful and determined that long term transition is possible. However, he concluded that we would continue to encounter smaller hick-ups on the way, which must be addressed and managed. There is no straight pathway!****Ms. Sheila Oparaocha*** *highlighted, that crises must not be seen as a distraction but can instead be opportunities to alter the business-as-usual approach. She further expressed her hopes for COP27 to increase the profile of African countries in these matters., while accelerating the sense of urgency.****Ms. Radia Sedaoui*** *highlighted the interconnectedness of energy and geopolitics. She further called for international and regional collaboration in financing and investing in the energy transition in developing nations, while recognising the inter-generational character of the challenges ahead.****Ms. Doris Agbevivi*** *stressed the importance of fairness in the process of energy transition, admitting that while the language of COP26 was watered down it was at least fair to everybody. She called for a change in the investment strategies in Africa from grants to equitable partnerships and highlighted the need of a business case for renewables.****Ms. Leena Srivastava*** *stated that while disruptions are part of life, negative as positive, these can be a set of new opportunities. She further stressed that adjustments will be necessary to achieve long term goals.* |