



High-level Dialogue on Energy 2021 FACTSHEET¹

What is the High-Level Dialogue on Energy?

The world is not on track to meet its climate and sustainable energy goals. We need to considerably scale up and accelerate action if we are to achieve universal access to clean, affordable and reliable energy by 2030 – Sustainable Development Goal 7. Forty years after the last United Nations conference on sustainable energy, held in 1981, the High-Level Dialogue on Energy will build a grand coalition of countries, businesses and civil society to raise ambition and accelerate action on sustainable energy through concrete new plans.

The UN General Assembly, through its resolution 74/225, invited Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, with the support of the relevant UN system entities, to convene the High-level Dialogue in 2021 to promote implementation of the energy-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – specifically SDG7. The one-day Dialogue will be held at the summit level during the 76th session of the General Assembly in September 2021 in New York or virtually; the exact date and format are to be determined.

Held just ahead of the pivotal COP26 climate conference, the High-level Dialogue on Energy will be a key milestone in the decade of action towards 2030. The time between now and September will be dedicated to charting a path forward for the next decade on how to achieve universal energy access and a just, inclusive energy transition, and mobilizing the commitments and actions needed.

What will the outcomes of the Dialogue be?

The Dialogue will mobilize political capital and inspire greater, long-lasting action for sustainable energy. Since we cannot reach net-zero emissions by 2050 without having delivered sustainable energy for all by 2030, the Dialogue aims to put SDG7 at the forefront of the global policy agenda ahead of COP26 – a critical milestone to put the world on track to meet the Paris Agreement targets.

The Dialogue will have two main outcomes: a **global roadmap** setting out a ten-year action plan to accelerate achievement of SDG7 by 2030; and voluntary commitments and actions from Member States and other stakeholders in the form of “**Energy Compacts**”, to advance all SDG7 targets in support of achieving the SDGs by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. A monitoring and tracking framework,

¹ Updated on 9 March 2021.

supported by UN-Energy – the coordination mechanism for UN system entities that work on energy issues -- will be established to ensure progress and enable reporting back on achievements over time.

Energy Compacts will bring together voluntary commitments and actions from Member States, cities, businesses, civil society organizations and other stakeholders, for achieving SDG 7 by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. Energy Compacts – including ambitious actions, commitments, policies, finance and investments -- will be aligned with and complement existing commitments, including the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement on climate change. A template and more information on the Energy Compacts will be shared on the Dialogue’s website.

How will the High-Level Dialogue be structured?

Leadership

UN-Energy Co-Chairs, Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the UN Development Programme, and Ms. Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, have been designated as the Dialogue Co-Chairs. Ms. Ogunbiyi also serves as the Dialogue High-level Champion.

The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Liu Zhenmin, has been designated as the Dialogue Secretary-General. Under his guidance, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs serves as the Secretariat for the Dialogue.

Five Themes

The High-level Dialogue will be structured around five over-arching themes:

- 1) Energy access
- 2) Energy transition
- 3) Enabling SDGs through inclusive, just energy transitions
- 4) Innovation, technology and data
- 5) Finance and investment.

Each theme will be supported by:

- 1) Member State Global Theme Champions represented at the ministerial level;
- 2) A multi-stakeholder Technical Working Group; and
- 3) A Ministerial-level Thematic Forum.

Global Champions

The Global Theme Champions will: 1) act as advocates on a specific Dialogue theme to advance SDG 7; 2) conduct outreach and mobilize Energy Compacts; 3) serve as a co-host for the Ministerial-level Thematic Forum on that theme; and 4) provide high-level advice to the Technical Working Group for that theme. The current list of over twenty Global Theme Champions can be found [here](#). Additional Champions may be announced over the coming weeks, to facilitate balanced support across the themes.

Technical Working Groups

Each theme will be examined by a multi-stakeholder Technical Working Group, which will bring together experts from a wide range of backgrounds, including from national energy agencies, businesses,

foundations, academia and groups advocating on behalf of women, youth and the disenfranchised. Each group will make recommendations in its thematic area, in the form of a report that will contribute towards the global roadmap for achieving SDG 7 by 2030. Each Working Group will be co-led by three UN system or international organisations. The current list of co-leads and members for each of the five Working Groups is posted [here](#).

Ministerial Thematic Forums

Five Forums, one for each theme of the Dialogue, will bring together Ministers and other high-level representatives from a broad range of stakeholders to share experiences and discuss opportunities for scaling up action for SDG 7. The Forums will also provide a highly visible platform to launch Energy Compacts and encourage all stakeholders to mobilize further voluntary commitments. The Forums -- which will be co-hosted by the Global Champions for that theme -- will most probably take place in June/July 2021, virtually or in a hybrid fashion depending on the conditions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

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10 facts and figures on sustainable energy

The energy sector is the biggest contributor to climate change, accounting for 73% of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.²

To follow a 1.5°C-consistent pathway, the world will need to decrease fossil fuel production by roughly 6% per year between 2020 and 2030. Countries are instead planning and projecting an average annual increase of 2%, which by 2030 would result in more than double the production consistent with the 1.5°C limit.³

The energy transition is in large part an investment issue. Pathways limiting global warming to 1.5°C are projected to involve annual average investment needs of around \$2.4 trillion in the energy system alone between 2016 and 2035, representing about 2.5% of the world's Gross Domestic Product.⁴

Energy efficiency is key: the right efficiency policies could enable the world to achieve more than 40% of the emissions cuts needed to reach its climate goals without new technology.⁵

Without action to address energy efficiency, energy demand for space cooling will more than triple by 2050 – consuming as much electricity as all of China and India today.⁶

789 million people -- 1 out of 10 people in the world -- still lack access to electricity. Over half, 548 million, are in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁷

² World Resources Institute, 2020, [Climate Watch Platform](#)

³ UNEP, 2020, [Production Gap Report](#)

⁴ UNDP-UNFCCC, 2019, [The Heat Is On: Taking Stock of Global Climate Ambitions, p. 24](#)

⁵ IEA, 2018, [Energy Efficiency, Analysis and Outlooks to 2040](#)

⁶ IEA, 2018, [The Future of Cooling](#)

⁷ IEA, IRENA, UNSD, The World Bank, WHO, 2020, [Tracking SDG7, The Energy Progress Report](#)

The lack of access to clean technologies and fuels for cooking is a crisis: 2.8 billion people have to rely on solid fuels for cooking.⁸ Household air pollution generated by dirty stoves or open fires leads to a staggering 3.8 million deaths per year – nearly half of all air-pollution related deaths.⁹

Sustainable Development Goal 7 -- access to clean, affordable and reliable energy -- underpins the achievement of nearly all other SDGs, from poverty alleviation to improved healthcare and education, gender equality, climate action, sustainable cities, and more.

Clean energy is an engine for job creation and economic growth: the transition to clean energy could create 18 million jobs by 2030, even when taking into account the inevitable jobs lost in the fossil fuels sector.¹⁰ In 2019 alone, renewables accounted for 11.5 million jobs worldwide.¹¹

The financial case for clean energy is stronger than ever: solar PV is now consistently cheaper than new coal- or gas-fired power plants in most countries, and solar projects now offer some of the lowest cost electricity ever seen.¹²

⁸ Ibid

⁹ WHO, https://www.who.int/health-topics/air-pollution#tab=tab_3

¹⁰ International Labor Organization, 2018, [World Employment and Social Outlook](#)

¹¹ IRENA, 2020, [Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review](#)

¹² IEA, 2020, [World Energy Outlook](#)