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HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON
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PRESS RELEASE

Over 20 Minister Champions Call for Urgent Action in Lead-up to Energy Summit

Expert Groups Prepare 2030 Roadmap for Universal Energy Access and Net-Zero Emissions, as UN Launches Accelerated Drive for Energy and Climate Action

New York, 10 March—Over twenty ministerial-level “Global Champions” from UN Member States have issued messages today calling for urgent action to achieve affordable, clean energy for all by 2030. The messages were issued as the UN is launching a year of accelerated action, kicking off substantive preparations for a Heads of State and Government High-level Dialogue on Energy in September 2021.

[Note to media: video remarks from ministers and Dialogue leadership can be viewed from 9:00 a.m. NY time today, at www.un.org/en/conferences/energy2021 or follow @UN_Energy on Twitter]

The messages and virtual launch mark the start of deliberations by five Technical Working Groups that together will prepare a global roadmap for achieving affordable and clean energy for all (SDG 7) by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050, to inform the Dialogue, a summit-level meeting to be convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres. This will also be an important contribution to addressing the climate crisis, as energy consumption accounts for three-quarters of all greenhouse gas emissions.

“Renewable energy is a key dimension of climate action and is crucial for building a sustainable, prosperous and peaceful future,” said Mr. Guterres. “Our challenge is clear: to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, the world must cut carbon emissions by at least 45 per cent below 2010 levels within the next decade. With the world way off track, we must use COVID-19 recovery to build a sustainable economy driven by renewable energy. If we want this energy transition to be just, and to succeed in creating new jobs, a cleaner and healthier environment and a resilient future, developing countries need strong support. This year’s High-Level Dialogue on Energy is an opportunity to advance practical solutions to accelerate the deployment of renewables globally and ensure that the developing world has access to them.”

In the months ahead, the Global Champion Ministers have agreed to take the lead in galvanizing voluntary commitments. These will take the form of Energy Compacts that national governments, cities, businesses and civil society organizations will present as contributions towards achieving SDG 7 and net-zero emissions, aligned with enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions and long-term climate goals under the Paris Agreement.

The global roadmap and Energy Compacts will put forward solutions not only for an energy transition away from fossil fuels, but also to meet the needs of about 800 million people who still lack access to electricity and the nearly 3 billion who lack clean, modern cooking and heating fuels. Solid cooking fuels cause over 1.6 million premature deaths a year, mostly women and children, from indoor air pollution, in addition to their environmental impacts.

“The push this year on sustainable energy, leading up to the large-scale commitments we expect to be announced by many stakeholders in advance of the High-level Dialogue, should help us take a giant leap towards achieving SDG 7 by the 2030 deadline,” said Dialogue Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. “This will bring us closer to net zero emissions by 2050.”

“We urgently need to scale up investment and financing to drive forward access to sustainable energy for all -- a key element of the SDGs.” said Achim Steiner, Co-Chair of the High-level Dialogue and Administrator of the UN Development Programme. “With the cost of renewables coming down dramatically, it makes sense economically for national and local governments, businesses and others to invest now in smart technologies, helping to create new green jobs and supporting a sustainable recovery.”

“During such a critical year for the energy transition, we need bold action to ensure we leave no one behind,” said his Co-Chair, Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All. “From powering health clinics to creating new jobs, energy is at the heart of a prosperous future for all. Faster progress on SDG7 will support climate action, allow us to recover better from COVID-19 and achieve our global goals. The High-Level Dialogue will be the global platform where governments, businesses, youth and key stakeholders can come together to recommit to a bold energy future.”

Alongside the High-level Dialogue on Energy, 2021 will see a series of UN summits and conferences including the Global Sustainable Transport Conference, the Food Systems Summit, and the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26) that will provide major opportunities to advance the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

Mobilizing Commitments

Each Ministerial-level Champion will work to mobilize voluntary commitments and actions in one of the five thematic areas of the Dialogue: energy access; energy transition; enabling the SDGs through inclusive, just energy transitions; innovation, technology and data; and finance and investment. They will also co-host Ministerial Forums on these issues in June/July.

Their advocacy will be based on the findings of the five Technical Working Groups that will put forward, for each area, a roadmap for actions needed by 2030 to achieve SDG 7. Each Working Group, co-led by three relevant UN and international agencies, consists of 25-40 experts from government and international agencies, businesses, development banks, civil society organizations, academic institutions and others. A list of the Global Champions and Co-lead agencies for each issue area follows:

Energy Access -- *Global Champions:* China, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia. *Technical Working Group Co-leads:* UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Office for Least Developed, Landlocked and Small Island Developing States (UN OHRLLS), World Bank.

Energy Transition – *Global Champions:* Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Germany, India, Nigeria, Spain, United Kingdom. *Technical Working Group Co-leads:* International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP).

Enabling SDGs through Inclusive, Just Energy Transitions – *Global Champions:* Iceland, Nauru, Panama, Portugal, United Arab Emirates. *Technical Working Group Co-Leads:* UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA), World Health Organization (WHO).

Innovation, Technology and Data – *Global Champions:* Mauritius, Morocco, Russian Federation,* *Technical Working Group Co-leads:* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

Finance and Investment – *Global Champions:* Dominican Republic, Netherlands,* Pakistan, Saudi Arabia*. *Technical Working Group Co-leads:* European Investment Bank (EIB), International Energy Agency (IEA), UN Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA). * *Supporting role.*

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See media contacts for partner organizations on the Dialogue website.

On the Web: un.org/en/conferences/energy2021 | Twitter: @UN_Energy