



Global progress on affordable and clean energy must be accelerated in order to close energy gap, new report says

Ensuring access for all, particularly in small island states and least developed countries, would foster more inclusive, climate-resilient and sustainable societies

New York, 23 May 2019—Governments, businesses and civil society organizations have made tremendous strides in bringing affordable and clean energy to more people in recent years, but this progress has been largely uneven and must be accelerated in order to leave no one behind, says a new collection of policy briefs compiled by the multi-stakeholder SDG 7 Technical Advisory Group (SDG7-TAG) and convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Urgent reinforced action and more investment, particularly in least developed countries and is needed to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 on energy by 2030.

Advancement on SDG 7 has the potential to spur progress across the SDGs on poverty eradication, gender equality, climate change mitigation and adaptation, food security, health, education, sustainable cities and communities, clean water and sanitation, jobs, innovation, transport, and refugees and other situations of displacement.

The briefs in the compilation, [“Accelerating SDG 7 Achievement: SDG 7 Policy Briefs in Support of the High-level Political Forum 2019,”](#) focus on the links between SDG 7 and the SDGs under review at the upcoming High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July: SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and SDG 17 on partnerships. This stock-taking report is being issued at the midpoint of the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All 2014-2024 with the aim of also informing a series of intergovernmental discussions this year, including the SDG Summit, Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit, Mid-term Review of the Samoa Pathway and Mid-term Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries.

Closing the energy access gap to benefit the remaining unserved people will be challenging. Maintaining and extending the pace of progress will require strong political commitment, long-term energy planning, stepped-up private financing, and adequate policy and fiscal incentives.

“There is still much to do to ensure universal access,” said **Liu Zhenmin**, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. “Despite increases in electrification over the last 2 years, about 840 million people still lack access to electricity. Meanwhile, around 3 billion people rely on

wood, charcoal, animal and crop wastes, or other solid fuels to cook their food and heat their homes, and the rate of progress towards cleaner fuels and technologies in fact slowed down between 2009 and 2017.”

Sheila Oparaocha, Executive Director of the ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy and co-facilitator of the SDG 7 Technical Advisory Group, said: “We have been witnessing tremendous progress in the adoption of renewable technologies, along with rapid cost declines and strategic shifts in policies that are transforming energy systems in many parts of the world. Though we have strong momentum, we must continue to mobilize greater political will and cooperation, as well as higher levels of public and private investments in a sustainable energy future.”

Hans Olav Ibrekk, Policy Director, Section for Energy and Climate Change at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and co-facilitator of the SDG 7 Technical Advisory Group, added: “We are proud to present the second edition of the policy briefs to inform this year’s critically important gatherings: the Mid-point Conference on the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All in May, the High-Level Political Forum in July, and the SDG Summit and Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit in September. We sincerely hope that Member States and all stakeholders—including the international organizations, multilateral development banks, businesses and civil society groups—will find the analysis and recommendations useful as they review and renew their commitments to achievement of the SDGs.”

Furthermore, SDG 7 will be discussed at UN Headquarters on 23-24 May at a High-level Dialogue on the implementation of the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All 2014-2024: A Mid-point Review. Experts from all sectors, including governments, the energy sector, civil society and the UN system will discuss major issues and demonstrate action related to the implementation of the Decade, with a focus on the links between SDG 7 and the other SDGs. On Thursday there will be a series of roundtables about energy issues like clean cooking, transportation and climate change, and a high-level briefing and interactive dialogue will take place on Friday.

Key findings from the report:

- US\$1.3 to \$1.4 trillion per year is required to meet SDG 7, more than twice the current level. Current investment is not spread equally.
- More than 230 million children go to primary schools without any electricity, compromising educational and development outcomes.
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy investments continue to act as robust socio-economic drivers. Employment in renewable energy stood at 10.3 million in 2017 and could reach potentially 24 million by 2030.

Information on the High-level Briefings and Interactive Dialogues about the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All:

What: This high-level plenary session will review the progress towards the goals of the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, and its global plan of action. Senior representatives of Member States and other stakeholders will be invited to share remarks, followed by an open dialogue session on accelerating the implementation of the goals of the Decade. Key speakers include DESA USG Liu Zhenmin and the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Climate Action Summit Luis Alfonso de Alba.

When: Friday, 24 May 2019, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Where: ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQ

Webcast: <https://webtv.un.org>

Background on the Decade of Sustainable Energy for All 2014-2024:

In 2012, the General Assembly unanimously approved resolution 67/215, by which it declared the Decade of Sustainable Energy for All 2014–2024, underscoring the importance of energy issues for sustainable development. The General Assembly called for the rapid implementation of the strategic objectives of the global plan of action for the Decade, including in resolution 72/224. More recently, through resolution A/73/236 on “Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”, the General Assembly invited “the Secretary-General, within existing resources, to convene dialogues, which could consist of a series of events including discussions among energy policy makers and other multi-stakeholders in 2019 to be supported by the Secretariat, in order to discuss the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, including the global plan of action for the Decade as described in the report of the Secretary-General.”

Further information:

The full report, SDG 7 Policy Briefs in Support of the High-level Political Forum 2019, can be downloaded here:

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/22877UN_FINAL_ONLINE_20190523.pdf

Background about Sustainable Development Goal 7: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg7>

More about the Sustainable Energy for All initiative: <https://www.seforall.org/>

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Media contact:

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Ms. Ariel Alexovich, T: +1 212 963-5897 | E: alexovich@un.org