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Remarks
Opening Session
Global SDG7 Conference

Bangkok, 22 February 2018

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As co-convener of this conference, it is a pleasure to join Thailand and UN ESCAP in welcoming you all to this gathering.

I also join my co-convener to express our sincere gratitude to our supporters, namely, Norway, China, Republic of Korea, The Netherlands, the European Commission, as well as ENERGIA and the HIVOS, for their generous contributions to make this important gathering possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is about realizing tremendous opportunities for billions of people, especially those who are being left behind.

The 17 SDGs are about eliminating poverty, creating decent jobs, providing quality healthcare and education, protecting the environment and combating climate change.

Energy cuts across all of them. That is why the 2030 Agenda has established the first-ever universal goal on energy, SDG7: to “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.”

Achieving SDG 7 on energy – with its targets on universal access, energy efficiency and renewable energy – will open a new world of opportunity for businesses, for scientific and technological community, for youth and all other stakeholders.

But let us start with facts on the ground.

One billion people today still lack access to electricity.

Close to 3 billion rely on wood, charcoal, animal and crop waste or other solid fuels to cook their food and heat their homes.

At the current pace of progress, there will be more than 600 million people without access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa in 2030.

We cannot let this continue. We must re-double our efforts.

The first review of SDG7 at this year’s High Level Political Forum provide a critical milestone to strengthen our commitments.

We need a fact-based understanding of where we are now, and what opportunities exist.

We need best practices. We must scale up and accelerate innovation, finance and capacity building.

That's why we, the co-conveners, decided to organise this first Global SDG7 Conference, to review where we are, share experiences to-date and reflect on a way forward to advance SDG7.

To support the SDG7 review, UNDESA as the secretariat for HLPF, has convened an Ad Hoc Technical Group on SDG7. It is composed of governments, UN entities, international organizations and other multi-stakeholders.

I warmly welcome the 27 Policy Briefs on SDG7 and energy's interlinkages with other SDGs that were delivered by the group. I am convinced that when finalised, these will provide key technical input for the intergovernmental discussions leading up to the High Level Political Forum.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the heart of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement lies energy.

Achieving SDG7 on energy can unlock vast potential for economic growth in all regions and for all people, while significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We must promote synergies between SDGs and climate change to advance win-win solutions. That is why the Secretary-General is convening a Climate Summit in 2019. That is why we are convening a global symposium this year on synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

We are building on initiatives and actions already underway.

Globally, over half of the investment in the power sector is now made in renewable energy.

About 10 million people already work in the renewable energy industry.

Investing in energy efficiency could boost cumulative global output by \$18 trillion dollars.

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to provide peace, prosperity, opportunity and dignity for all on a healthy planet.

SDG7 is key to this vision.

I look forward to fruitful discussions and outcomes from this conference.

Thank you.
