

SDG 7 Opening Speech

Ms. Marianne Hagen, State Secretary, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Unfortunately, when it comes to reaching SDG 7, we are not on track.

That is the clear message of the International Energy Agency's Special Report, *Energy Access Outlook 2017*:

- Given current policies, technologies and investment trends, the international community is set to fall far short of reaching the goal of sustainable energy for all by 2030.
 - In fact, nearly 700 million people will still be without access to electricity;
 - around 2.3 billion people will still rely on polluting fuels for cooking; and
 - we will fail to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

Chair,

At this conference, we need to send an equally clear message to the High-Level Political Forum:

- We cannot afford to fail.
- Without energy, there can be no sustainable development.
- The solution to climate change is energy policy.

The challenge is clear:

- In order to accommodate a growing world population, which is estimated to increase by 1.5 billion people by 2030, we have to transform our energy systems.

The good news is that we have started this process of transformation.

- Global power markets are making the transition and moving towards more sustainable infrastructure.
- We are seeing a permanent shift that will clearly affect the energy mix of the future.
- Investments are shifting from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy.
- Over 90 % of renewable energy investments globally are from private sources, and
- New jobs are being created in the field of renewable energy.

Energy and geopolitics have always been closely linked.

- The global energy landscape is now changing dramatically.
- This in turn will have a profound impact on geopolitical dynamics.
- Energy security is essential when addressing pressing foreign policy challenges, such as combating terror, fighting climate change, and preventing humanitarian disasters.

Moreover:

- Eradicating poverty, and achieving the SDGs, will only be possible if we connect the billions of people currently lacking access to electricity and clean fuels and technologies for cooking.
- In fragile settings and conflict-ridden countries, a powerful contribution can be made to economic growth, employment opportunities, gender equality and stability by improving access to modern energy.

In order to gain a better understanding of these changing dynamics and ensure that policy-makers receive the information they need, the Norwegian Government, together with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Germany, and the United Arab Emirates, has established **the Global Commission on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation**.

- The Commission, headed by former President of Iceland Olafur Grimsson, will examine the immediate and longer-term geopolitical implications of the global energy transformation.
- It will present its report next year.

Chair,

If we are to achieve SDG 7 by 2030, we need to see:

- increased financing, particularly from the private sector;
- bolder policy commitments;
- a rapid increase in energy productivity;
- an integrated approach that embraces centralised and decentralised solutions;
- a growing share of renewables in the energy mix;
- the development of institutions to manage our energy systems; and
- the phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies.

Moreover, the energy transition must be a 'just' transition.

- This means that in our efforts, we need to focus in particular on the most vulnerable groups and countries, especially the least developed countries and small island developing states.
- I am proud to say that Norway is doing its share.
 - We are committed to spending 1 % of our GDP on development cooperation.
 - Through our support for sustainable energy and private sector development, we are assisting countries in their efforts to reach SDG 7.

As the clean energy sector continues to grow and evolve, competitiveness will be dependent on the ability to attract and retain a diverse pool of talent capable of bringing fresh perspectives.

- Many countries have recognised the importance of harnessing all talent and closing the gender gap.
- The energy industry remains one of the sectors where a gender imbalance is most pronounced.
- Closing the gender gap is not only a moral and social imperative; it also makes good business sense.

Chair,

Let me give you a brief overview of the status of SDG 7 in Norway.

- In our Voluntary National Review to the High-Level Political Forum in 2016, we reported that:

- the SDG 7 targets have been achieved or are in line with national policies and goals;
- the share of renewable energy in Norway's total energy consumption, including transport, is around 69 %;
- almost 100 % of our electricity production is from hydropower; and
- stringent environmental regulations, carbon pricing through taxation, and emission trading systems have reduced emissions of greenhouse gases in a cost-efficient way.

Let me round off by stressing that if we achieve SDG 7, this will help us to reach many of the other SDGs, such as those on poverty alleviation, food, education, gender equality, sustainable cities and climate change.

To reiterate, without energy, there can be no sustainable development.

Let us develop partnerships, take action and make sustainable energy for all a reality.

The time has come to deliver on our promises.

Thank you.