



Global Expert Group Meeting in Support of the Mid-Point Review of SDG7 at the HLPF 2023: Ensuring Universal Energy Access and Advancing Just, Inclusive and Equitable Energy Transitions

11-12 May 2023

Conference Room 12, UN Headquarters, New York

Concept Note

SDG7 on Affordable and Clean Energy

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include a dedicated and stand-alone goal on energy, SDG 7, calling to "ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all". Energy lies at the heart of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all will open a new world of opportunities for millions of people through new economic opportunities and jobs, empowered women, children and youth, better education and health, more sustainable, equitable and inclusive communities, and greater protection from, and resilience to, climate change.

While much progress has been made since 2015, the world is clearly not on track for the achievement of SDG 7. The multiple interconnected global crises affecting energy in recent years are further narrowing the prospects of getting on track. Globally, 733 million people were still lacking access to electricity and 2.4 billion people did not have access to clean cooking fuels and technology in 2020. In terms of renewable energy, globally there were already close to three terawatts of renewable energy capacity in 2020, representing nearly 29% of all power generation, and renewables accounted for 82% of newly installed capacity that year. However, fossil fuels still made up about 60% of global power generation capacity. In addition, the current average annual rate of energy efficiency improvement must increase from the current 0.8% to 3.0%.

In 2021, the [High-level Dialogue on Energy](#) resulted in the [Global Roadmap for Accelerated SDG 7 Action](#) which provides a guide for collective action on energy across sectors that transcends individual and piecemeal approaches and delivers scaled-up and broad impact. Importantly, the Roadmap also includes two sets of milestones for 2025 and 2030. The Dialogue also triggered some 200 [Energy Compacts](#) with voluntary commitments of over US\$600 billion into SDG 7. These achievements must now be used as the foundation for transformational change through just, inclusive and equitable energy transitions.

The High-level Political Forum

The [High-level Political Forum \(HLPF\)](#) is the central United Nations platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level. It is the apex of the architecture for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda established by the 2030 Agenda and General Assembly resolution 70/299. The Forum meets annually under the auspices

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of the Economic and Social Council for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment and every four years there is an SDG Summit at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly for two days, as will be the case in 2023.

Marking the mid-point of the 2030 Agenda, the theme of the 2023 HLPF is “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels”. The 2023 HLPF will have an in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goals 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. The forum will consider effective and inclusive recovery measures to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all Sustainable Development Goals and the integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature of the Goals.

The 2023 HLPF is envisioned as an opportunity for stakeholders to assess progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda in its entirety including the interlinkages between Goals, and to promote integrated actions that cut across the three dimensions of sustainable development creating co-benefits, addressing trade-offs, meeting multiple objectives in a coherent manner, and leaving no one behind. The 2023 HLPF will be the second time that SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy will be under review. The first time was at the 2018 HLPF.

This year, the HLPF will also play a crucial role in informing and shaping the SDG Summit taking place at the General Assembly in September. The ECOSOC President's Summary of the HLPF will provide a key input for the political declaration coming out of the Summit. The review of SDG7 at the 2023 HLPF also carries particular significance given the important role of energy for climate action and the UNFCCC COP28 taking place in late 2023. Moreover, the review will provide insights towards the Global Stocktake on SDG7 Implementation to take place in 2024, as mandated by the General Assembly.

The Expert Group Meeting

To support the review of SDG 7 at the HLPF, a global expert group meeting (EGM) will be convened by DESA, in collaboration with UN-Energy, to discuss progress and challenges regarding SDG 7, share lessons learned including on synergies with other SDGs, and distil key recommendations on way forward. The meeting will build on a variety of inputs resulting from the broader process of consultations, including Regional Sustainable Development Forums convened by the UN Regional Commissions, and thematic and multi-stakeholder consultations, such as the SDG7 Technical Advisory Group, and produce a summary note which will inform the background note for the review of SDG 7 at the HLPF. This year's HLPF, including the review of SDG7, will inform the SDG Summit to be held at the UN General Assembly in September, presenting a significant opportunity to strengthen political commitment and scale up collective action towards the achievement of the SDGs and the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

Organisational Arrangements

The EGM will take place at UN headquarters in New York, Conference Room 12. This will be an in-person meeting. Online participation will be made available in a limited manner. The working language for the meeting will be English. Interpretation into other languages will not be available.

Annex:



**Global Expert Group Meeting in Support of the Mid-Point Review of SDG 7 at
the HLPF 2023: Ensuring Universal Energy Access and Advancing Just, Inclusive
and Equitable Energy Transitions**

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Draft Programme

11 May 2023, 10:00 – 18:00

10:00 – 10:10 **Opening remarks**

10:10 – 10:15 **Special remarks**

10:15 – 10:30 **Setting the Scene**

This segment will set the scene by providing an overview of progress on the 2030 Agenda, drawing on the latest Global Sustainable Development Report and the special edition of the SDG Progress Report, which were developed to inform the SDG Summit this year, and situating the Expert Group Meeting in the broader context of global efforts to accelerate sustainable development.

10:30 – 13:00 **Interactive Discussion 1: Where do we stand on SDG7? Opportunities
and Challenges**

This session will review the progress made on SDG7 at its mid-point and assess the trajectory towards 2030 and beyond, including towards net-zero emission by 2050, taking into consideration also the impacts of the multiple interconnected global crises affecting energy in recent years. The gaps will be identified, allowing for the elaboration of the key challenges and opportunities in accelerating progress, including on the interlinkages of SDG7 with other SDGs, such as energy and gender. Issues regarding data and monitoring will also be discussed.

A panel of experts will open the session followed by an open discussion. Each intervention from the floor is limited to 2 minutes.

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13:00 – 15:00

Lunch Break

15:00 – 17:30

Interactive Discussion 2: How can we achieve SDG7? Mobilizing Partnerships and Taking Action

This session will explore ways and means to ensure universal energy access and to advance just, inclusive and equitable energy transitions in support of the 2030 Agenda and net-zero emissions. This will include policy recommendations, specific examples of best practices, technology innovation, capacity-building, measures for improved accountability and transparency, and dramatically scaling-up action and investments, including through partnerships such as the Energy Compacts. Special attention will be given to the needs of the most vulnerable, such as the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, as to leave no one behind.

A panel of experts will open the session followed by an open discussion. Each intervention from the floor is limited to 2 minutes.

17:30 – 18:00

Wrap-up of Day 1

12 May 2023, 10:00 - 12:00

10:00 – 10:15

Opening of Day 2

10:15 – 11:30

Interactive Discussion 3: How can we strengthen global cooperation on SDG7?

This session will consider how best to strengthen global cooperation on SDG7, including regular intergovernmental dialogue on energy, enhancing political commitment, raising ambitions and scaling up action, while also creating further synergies with other mechanisms, such as the UNFCCC process on climate change. The SDG summit in particular will present an opportunity to strengthen commitments, enhance cooperation and mobilize action. Part of this will be to also explore the strengthened involvement of crucial driving forces for energy access and energy transition, such as the youth.

A panel of experts will open the session followed by an open discussion. Each intervention from the floor is limited to 2 minutes

11:30 – 11:45

Way Forward to the HLPF and Beyond

11:45 – 12:00

Closing

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