



Draft Concept Note
UNDESA Energy Grant
Powering the Future We Want

Seminar on

**Ensuring Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern
Energy for All (SDG7)**

Organized by the Division for Sustainable Development of UNDESA,

In Cooperation with UNECA and UNITAR

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30 June to 1 July 2016

BACKGROUND

Of the sustainable development challenges facing the world today, none is more cross-cutting and deeply embedded in our daily lives and livelihoods than energy. Energy is the life blood of our civilization. The well-being of our people and economy and the health of our environment depend on safe, clean, secure, sustainable and affordable energy.

The energy challenge is characterized by its poverty and environment dimensions. Today some 1.1 billion people lack access to electricity and some 2.9 billion people rely on unsustainable biomass for cooking and heating. At the same time, energy-related greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) contribute to climate change, accounting for almost 80% of GHG emissions in many economies.

In September 2015, Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹ The 2030 Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. SDG 7 is a stand-alone fully dedicated goal on energy. Energy SDG 7 calls to “ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.”

In addition, in September 2011 UN Secretary General Ban-Ki-moon shared his vision for making sustainable energy for all a reality by 2030 by launching the Sustainable Energy for

¹ General Assembly Resolution 70/1, Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/70/L.1 (25-27 September 2015) UNHQ, New York.

All initiative to mobilize action from all sectors of society in support of global objectives on sustainable development. Also the 2014-2024 decade has been declared by the United Nations General Assembly the Decade of Sustainable Energy for All.²

In an effort catalyse and support global sustainable development, Member States have called upon the United Nations system, in cooperation with relevant donors and international organizations, to coordinate and provide information on best practices and lessons learned in applying policies on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication at all levels.

In this context and recognizing the importance of advancing implementation in sustainable development through partnership initiatives to address gaps in implementation, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the China Energy Fund Committee (CEFC), have collaborated on a joint programme that offers a grant in the amount of one million US dollars to fund future capacity development initiatives in energy for sustainable development. The project is titled “Powering the Future We Want: Recognizing leadership and innovative practices in energy for sustainable development”. The Grant is awarded to an individual, institution, or partnership based on past and current achievements as well as on innovative proposals on sustainable energy and future relevant capacity development activities. The grant project is being implemented for an initial period of 5 years.

The first cycle of the energy grant was completed in 2015, and the grant recipient “We Care Solar” was chosen at an award ceremony in September at United Nations Headquarters, New York. Following the award ceremony, the UNDESA Energy Grant Secretariat hosted a Capacity Development Seminar on 14-15 September. This was an opportunity for the finalists of the 2015 Grant programme to disseminate their experiences and knowledge in the implementation of successful projects that promote energy for sustainable development. The participating panellists shared the work of their organizations and openly discussed many of the challenges that they face. At the end of the seminar, participants suggested having more than one Capacity Development Seminar per year for those involved in the UNDESA Energy Grant.

This proposed seminar is a direct output of the first cycle of the Powering the Future We Want Energy Grant and a follow-up to the recommendations of valuable participants and finalists. The Seminar will be conducted in cooperation with United Nations Conference Centre of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

² General Assembly Resolution 65/151, 2014-2024 International Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, A/RES/65/151 (16 February 2011) UNHQ, New York.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants will include around 40 representatives from the top institutions that successfully reached the final stages of the evaluation process as well as practitioners and participants from public, private and non-profits sectors involved in the research, development, management and implementation of energy for sustainable development projects. The Energy Grant Secretariat will cover the travel expenses of these 40 participants. Additional participants will include experts in energy for sustainable development from United Nations agencies and other international organizations. The expectation is to have an event with about 50 participants.

TIMEFRAME

The tentative seminar will be held from 30 June to 1 July of 2016. The event will last one and a half day.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this seminar is to build capacities on best practices and successful implementation of sustainable energy development projects and programmes in developing countries, and to address challenges related to achieving global energy objectives including Energy SDG 7 and its targets from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is intended to bring participants of the 2015 Grant Cycle together to share new ideas, build networks, discuss business models and training tools and increase knowledge of United Nations initiatives in energy for sustainable development.

At the conclusion of this capacity development event, it is anticipated that the participants will gain: (1) knowledge of successful projects of various scales, business models, and training tools for promoting sustainable energy development; (2) enhanced understanding of the issues faced by organizations and/or individuals implementing sustainable energy projects; (3) awareness of major technical, managerial and financial challenges related to the implementations of these projects in developing countries; and (4) familiarity with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Energy SDG 7 goal and targets, the 3 dimensions of energy for sustainable development (economic, social, environmental) and the nexus of energy and education, water, poverty, gender, health, food security and environment.

LOCATION

The seminar will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre of the UN Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.