

Transforming Commitments into Action: Delivering on the Outcomes of the High-Level Dialogue on Energy: 4 May 2022

We currently spend eight times more “subsidizing our own downfall by fossil fuels” than it would cost to achieve clean energy for all. This juxtaposition of policy outcomes set the stage for the launch of two new tools for the UN system to help accelerate sustainable energy shifts and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The half-day launch event titled, “Transforming Commitments into Action: Delivering on the Outcomes of the High-level Dialogue on Energy,” took place eight months after the UN’s summit-level event on sustainable energy – the High-level Dialogue on Energy. That Dialogue resulted in two key outcomes: a global road map to achieving SDG 7 by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050; and over 200 voluntary compacts in which a range of stakeholders outlined commitments to support global targets on the energy transition. Following up on the September 2021 Dialogue, a virtual event on 4 May 2022 launched the UN-Energy Plan of Action towards 2025 and the Global Energy Compact Network.

Speakers during the 4 May event included the heads of UN agencies, UN member states, and partners in four Energy Compacts. Multiple speakers called for “radical and immediate action” to preserve the chance to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius or even 2 degrees. Speakers also highlighted the new challenges that the war in Ukraine has introduced for global energy supplies and policy, and the urgent need to address fossil fuel dependency. Speakers also addressed the need to keep focused on the themes of the High-level Dialogue on Energy – energy access and the energy transition – noting that 2.6 billion lack access to clean cooking fuels or technologies and renewable sources produce 17% of our energy, despite being the cheapest option for most countries, among other highlights.

A Brief History of the Launch Event

UN General Assembly resolution 74/225 invited the UN Secretary-General, with the support of the relevant UN system entities, to convene a high-level dialogue in 2021 to promote implementation of the energy-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – which include Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 on affordable and clean



Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of the High-level Dialogue on Energy

energy for all, among others – in support of implementation of the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014-2024).

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through the Division for Sustainable Development Goals, served as the Secretariat for the Dialogue and engaged the UN-Energy Secretariat in preparations. The UN-Energy Co-Chairs—Achim

In This Issue

A Brief History of the Launch Event	1
Report of the Meeting	2
Launching Ceremony: Accelerating SDG 7 Action	2
Launch of the UN-Energy Plan of Action towards 2025	2
Launch of the Energy Compact Action Network	2
Messages by Heads of UN-Energy Organizations	3
Interventions by Member States	4
Transforming Commitments into Action: Energy	4
Compact Coalitions	4
Closing	6
Upcoming Events	6



Achim Steiner, Administrator, UN Development Programme

Steiner, Administrator of the UN Development Programme, and Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Chief Executive Officer of Sustainable Energy for All —served as Dialogue Co-Chairs.

To prepare a substantive outcome for the High-level Dialogue, a series of technical consultations was convened to develop recommendations in five areas: energy access; energy transition; enabling the SDGs through inclusive, just energy transitions; innovation, technology, and data; and finance and investment. A ministerial forum on each theme held in June 2021 provided government endorsement for the recommendations as the basis for an action-oriented SDG 7 roadmap to 2030 in support of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

On 24 September 2021, the Dialogue convened with the participation of 130 Heads of State and Government and global multi-stakeholder leaders. This event was the first summit-level UN event on energy in 40 years. An outcome summary from the UN Secretary-General drew on the preparatory process and offered a four-page global road map to achieving SDG 7. Another outcome from the Dialogue was a set of over 200 voluntary commitments from Member States and other stakeholders in the form of “Energy Compacts.” These compacts identify key outcomes, milestones, and implementation timelines, with clear tracking frameworks towards 2030.

Report of the Meeting

Eight months after the High-level Dialogue on Energy, the launch of the UN-Energy Plan of Action and the Energy Compact Action Network took place during a half-day virtual event on 4 May 2022.

Moderator Nisha Pillai opened the event and emphasized that the September 2021 High-level Dialogue on Energy had generated 200 voluntary commitments that must now be turned into action, and the Energy Compact Action Network will support members in achieving their commitments. She said the need to address energy poverty while not compromising net-zero emissions targets had become even more pressing amid the Ukraine crisis.

A short film noted that while current energy use is the cause of 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), switching to a system that provides affordable, renewable, and sustainable energy for all is the answer to two problems at once: ending energy poverty and limiting climate change.

Launching Ceremony: Accelerating SDG 7 Action

Opening the launching ceremony, Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and the Secretary-General of the High-level Dialogue on Energy, said the Ukraine crisis has affected food, energy, and finance markets, hurting the world’s most vulnerable people and slowing SDG progress and climate action.

Liu said the UN Secretary-General’s outcome summary of the High-level Dialogue – the global roadmap to accelerate action on SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy) – charts a clear path to SDG 7 and net-zero emissions. Liu said implementing the roadmap will enable the delivery of five requirements: bring electricity to the 759 million people who lack it, and clean cooking options for 2.6 billion people – these two challenges comprise the “energy access gap”; rapidly decarbonize energy systems through renewable energy deployment and increased energy efficiency; triple global investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency; make the energy transition just, inclusive, and equitable; and leverage the potential of innovation, technology, and data.

Liu expressed the UN system’s commitment to help reach SDG 7 and net-zero emissions and said the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) will support UN entities and other partners in implementing the global roadmap.

Launch of the UN-Energy Plan of Action towards 2025

Achim Steiner, Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN-Energy Co-Chair, and Co-Chair of the High-level Dialogue on Energy, launched the Plan of Action towards 2025, created by UN-Energy. He said the Plan of Action will guide UN-Energy in translating commitments from recent summits on energy and climate change into concrete support for the most vulnerable. He noted that through the Plan, the UN system will increase its inter-agency collaboration, offer monitoring and analysis to assess SDG 7 progress and gaps, and work to “walk the talk” by achieving net-zero facilities, procurement, and operations.

Launch of the Energy Compact Action Network

The Energy Compact Action Network was launched by Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), UN-Energy Co-Chair, and Co-Chair of the High-level Dialogue on Energy.



Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All



Qu Dongyu, Director-General, UN Food and Agriculture Organization

She said the pledges amount to over USD600 billion in funding and investment, and billions more in SDG 7 financing are expected to be leveraged by partnerships among foundations and industry associations.

Ogunbiyi reported that compact commitments from national governments would translate to energy access for 800 million more people, and private company pledges would provide access to over 1 billion more people. She said the Network will monitor progress against the indicators in each energy compact, showcase leadership, and match offers from the compact coalitions with requests for support. The Network is led by UN-Energy with support from SEforALL.

Messages by Heads of UN-Energy Organizations

The heads of 11 UN-Energy organizations provided messages in a series of pre-recorded videos. Qu Dongyu, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), said water, energy, and food security should be a priority at the next two UN Climate Change Conferences (UNFCCC COP 27 and COP 28). He noted the joint energy compact developed by FAO and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) on renewable energy solutions for agri-food systems.

Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said all low-carbon energy resources are needed for meet our climate goals – “and that includes nuclear.” He highlighted new nuclear technologies such as small modular reactors.

Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), said near-term change can be achieved through high-performance buildings, reducing methane emissions, and sustainable production and management of resources. Long-term, UNECE is helping countries utilize carbon capture and storage, renewable and nuclear energy, and developing a hydrogen ecosystem.

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), said ESCAP will shortly present specific regional actions through which the region will help to achieve the Plan of Action towards 2025. She noted that the Asia-Pacific region is the largest energy consumer in the world.

Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), recalled that the Glasgow Climate Change Conference (COP 26) called for a fast



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization

energy transition through: more clean power generation, stronger energy efficiency measures, phasing down unabated coal power, and phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

Gerd Müller, Director General, UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), urged “progress by innovation” – meaning energy and resource efficiency, clean energy technology, and massive investment in infrastructure. Transformative solutions include green hydrogen, clean capture, utilization and storage, and decarbonizing steel and cement.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO), observed that the global roadmap for SDG 7 calls for reducing household air pollution and setting a global target to bring sustainable electricity to health facilities, which he said will lead to healthier lives.

Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), said energy is the sector with the highest proportion of emissions, followed by transport. Solar photovoltaic solutions are now available for the transport sector, he said, and noted that adopting solar, wind, and nuclear energies would lower geopolitical tensions, enhance air quality, and avoid further disrupting precipitation patterns.

Amir Abdulla, World Food Programme (WFP), said renewable, clean energy solutions are critical to people’s



Amir Abdulla, Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme



Mari Pangestu, Managing Director, Development Policy and Partnerships, World Bank

immediate needs for heating, cooking, and using communications devices, as well as powering agricultural value chains and achieving zero hunger (SDG 2).

Mari Pangestu, World Bank, said closing the energy access gap is at the heart of the World Bank's operations. She highlighted the Bank's energy compact with commitments to provide new or improved electricity access and clean cooking access.

Francesco La Camera, Director-General, IRENA, said anything short of radical and immediate action will "diminish and possibly eliminate" the chance of a pathway to 1.5 degrees or even 2 degrees Celsius in global temperature rise. He said the energy transition requires farsighted choices, holistic policy frameworks, and wise investments.

Interventions by Member States

Nine UN Member States provided statements during the launching ceremony. Jorge Rivera Staff, National Energy Secretary, PANAMA, highlighted its inclusive approach to energy issues, including a roadmap on the women and energy nexus, and a survey of children and adolescents to inform an energy compact for youth. Panama is proposing observing a "world sustainable energy day" every 24 September to ensure accountability for SDG 7 and net-zero goals.

Carlos Efrain Segura Aragon, Permanent Mission to the UN, EL SALVADOR, said 86% of El Salvador's energy mix



Francesco La Camera, Director-General, IRENA

comes from hydrothermal, geothermal, biomass, and other renewable sources, and noted the government's national green hydrogen agenda to help create green jobs. He called for debt support for middle-income countries (MICs) to finance energy adaptation.

Hans Olav Ibrekk, Special Envoy, Climate and Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NORWAY, said his country has established a climate investment fund to finance renewable energy in developing countries, and will double its climate finance to 14 billion Norwegian kroner by 2026.

Muhammed Imran Khan, Permanent Mission to the UN, PAKISTAN, called for more investment in energy infrastructure. He noted Pakistan's plans to increase its share of renewable energy to 20% by 2025 and 30% by 2030. He said Pakistan chairs the Group of Friends on Sustainable Energy alongside Denmark, Ethiopia, and Norway.

Dimitry Chumakov, Permanent Mission to the UN, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, said the Plan of Action does not reflect the compromises reached in the Paris Agreement and COP 26 outcome regarding 1.5-degree temperature rise and redirecting fossil fuel subsidies, and there is a need for more solutions for countries that depend on fossil fuels.

Sneha Dubey, Permanent Mission to the UN, INDIA, called for sensitivity to the energy mix of different countries. She noted India's energy compact, said the country has achieved universal access to electricity, and highlighted plans to make India a global hub for green hydrogen production and export.

Kavish Jayant Raj Bisseswar, Permanent Mission to the UN, the NETHERLANDS, welcomed the Plan of Action's proposal for an annual SDG 7 Action Week each September. He noted his country's energy compact and called for all stakeholders to help increase energy access.

Adriano Bonotto, Permanent Mission to the UN, BRAZIL, said the "well negotiated" SDG 7 road map provides an indicative set of actions, but it must be calibrated for different national circumstances. He noted Brazil's two energy compacts, aiming to reduce carbon intensity in the transport sector through biofuels, and to develop a clean hydrogen national plan.

Gisela Strand, SIDA, SWEDEN, said clean energy services improve health, public services, the economy, and the environment – key dimensions of poverty alleviation. She called for gender-sensitive indicators for monitoring energy programs' impacts, and said SIDA is a founding signatory of the gender-energy compact.

Transforming Commitments into Action: Energy Compact Coalitions

Presentation of Energy Compact Action Network

Activities: Speakers then showcased featured selected Energy Compacts that have been announced and explained the activities of the Energy Compact Action Network. A brief film explained that the Network aims to support delivery of the commitments in the energy compacts, which amount to over USD600 billion in funding and investment pledges. New compacts are also welcomed to the Network. The Network's specific activities include: matching offers of support in one compact with requests



Sharon Ikeazor, Minister of Environment, Nigeria

made in another; showcasing leadership; building coalitions; and monitoring progress against each Compact's indicators.

Speakers then highlighted the motivations behind four Energy Compacts and discussed their elements for success.

Coalition Compact: Green Hydrogen: The Green Hydrogen Compact aims to create a market for green hydrogen to help decarbonize the most "hard to abate" sectors. Speakers discussed a new catalogue of partners to support this process and invited others to join the catalogue.

Tom K. Alweendo, Minister for Mines and Energy, NAMIBIA, announced that Namibia has joined the green hydrogen compact catalog to provide its perspectives to the conversation. He said Africa has the potential to be a world supplier of green hydrogen and called for common policies and regulations.

Francesco La Camera, Director-General, IRENA, said green hydrogen is key to meeting climate change targets by decarbonizing shipping, aviation, and cities. Policy measures include: investment to lower the cost of green hydrogen; prioritizing green hydrogen over other low-carbon fuels; and creating markets for production, trade, and use of green hydrogen.

Rafael Mateo, CEO, Acciona Energía, said building a value chain for green hydrogen requires incentivizing the development of electrolyzers and other technologies for production, and increasing demand. He remarked that we have just five years to develop green hydrogen, while it took 20 years to develop other forms of renewable energy.



Rafael Mateo, CEO, Acciona Energía

Country Showcase: Nigeria: Sharon Ikeazor, Minister of Environment, NIGERIA, shared her country's energy compact and its commitment to net-zero emissions across the country's economy by 2060. Other targets include electrification for 25 million people by 2023 using solar power, which will create 50,000 new jobs, and establishing micro-distribution centers for LPG cooking fuel.

In a panel discussion, Asmau Jibril, Federal Ministry of Environment, NIGERIA, said that the 2060 goal for carbon neutrality in Nigeria was originally announced at COP 26 and was approved in February 2022. Glenn Pearce-Oroz, SEforALL, highlighted the Solar Naija geospatial platform to identify households that need electricity access.

Stephanie Held, UNDP, discussed a program to improve the financial viability of mini-grids in 18 countries. UNDP's most ambitious energy access program to date, she said it also aims to inform larger grid projects.

Manoj Sinha, CEO, Husk Power Systems, said his company is able to quickly scale up mini grids, and it plans to build on its nine current mini grids in Africa to have 500 operating in the next four years and 5,000 mini grids by 2030. He said Nigeria's mini grid policy has made it the "north star" for Africa, and other countries could adopt a similar policy framework.

Held noted that the mini-grids initiative could avoid over 300 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent in Nigeria. Jabril added that challenges include building relevant skills, finding funding, and making more people familiar and comfortable with the new technologies.

Multi-Party Coalition: Gender and Energy: A short film introduced the Gender and Energy Compact, which aims to ensure that women can equally lead, participate in, and benefit from sustainable energy solutions. In a panel discussion, Sheila Oparaocha, Director, ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, said sustainable energy should enable women to create wealth, going beyond subsistence. She said women must be positioned as decisionmakers and investors in energy sectors.

Paul Mbuthi, Ministry of Energy, KENYA, said the compact helps the government address issues where energy programs, projects and strategies have lacked women's perspectives. He expects the compact to strengthen the Ministry's existing work on clean cooking and electrification.



Shakti Ramkumar, Director of Communications and Policy, Student Energy



Claudio Orrego, Governor of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago, Chile

Mollie Johnson, Natural Resources, CANADA, said the Prime Minister has given the government a mandate to advance inclusion in the energy sector. She said the next step is to use lessons on barriers for women and other underrepresented groups in the energy sector and develop tools to break down the barriers.

Shakti Ramkumar, Student Energy, said it is difficult for young women to find financing for their energy projects and to enter and stay in the clean energy sector. She cautioned against replicating the injustices of the traditional energy sector, and instead making renewable energy an equitable and sustainable field.

Cecilia Ugaz Estrada, UNIDO, said women make up only 32% of the renewable energy workforce overall. The number is even lower at the managerial level, she said. She called for women and men to have equal chances to lead, participate in and benefit from sustainable energy solutions.

Sub-National Collaboration: City of Santiago: A brief film indicated that urban areas consume 75% of global primary energy and are responsible for almost 60% of the world's GHG emissions. Santiago is particularly polluted due to fossil fuel use, it was noted, but "infinite" energy could be made available from renewable sources.

Claudio Orrego, Governor of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago de Chile, said the energy compact is a tool to make the city more resilient and sustainable amid a climate-energy crisis brought on by 13 consecutive years of drought. He said the city's mobility strategy relies heavily on sustainable transport, including electric buses, pedestrian-safe streets, and high-



Francesco Starace, CEO, Enel

standard bike lanes that could make Santiago the most cyclable city in Latin America.

Francesco Starace, CEO of Enel, said the compact aims to electrify 100% of its public transportation by 2030, provide charging points for electric cars, and replace 18,000 woodfired stoves by 2024, all of which will significantly reduce pollution. He said battery storage for solar energy will be a pervasive fixture in the energy infrastructure of the future. The battle of climate and the wise use of energy will be won or lost in cities, he stressed.

Closing

Minoru Takada, Team Leader, Secretariat of the High-level Dialogue on Energy, DESA, closed the event on behalf of Alexander Trepelkov, Acting Director, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, DESA. He said humanity's future depends on progress in achieving the SDGs and arresting the climate crisis, and the UN system is stepping up its efforts to support action. He noted that the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for Energy for All will conclude in 2024, providing for a stocktaking of progress towards 2030 and 2050 goals.

Takada thanked participants and stakeholders who have made active commitments and closed the event at 11:40 am.

Upcoming Events

Sustainable Energy for All Forum: The 2022 SEforALL Forum brings together stakeholders to take stock of progress, showcase success, and identify solutions to achieve faster, broader gains towards sustainable energy for all. It aims to build on momentum from the UN High-level Dialogue on Energy and COP 26 to generate even bolder commitments and raise ambition ahead of COP 27. **dates:** 17-19 May 2022 **location:** Kigali, Rwanda **website:** www.seforall.org/forum

Bonn Climate Change Conference: This conference includes the 56th sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). **dates:** 6-16 June 2022 **location:** Bonn, Germany **website:** newsroom.unfccc.int/SB56

UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: The 2022 session of the HLPF will convene on the theme, 'Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' It will review in-depth Sustainable Development Goals 4 on quality education, 5 on gender equality, 14 on life below water, 15 on life on land, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. The 2022 HLPF will also feature the voluntary national reviews of 45 countries' SDG implementation. **dates:** 5-7 July, 11-17 July 2022 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York, US **website:** sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf#hlpf2022

Sharm el-Sheik Climate Change Conference: The Sharm el-Sheik Climate Change Conference will serve as the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 27).

dates: 7-18 November 2022 **location:** Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt **website:** unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/sharm-el-sheikh-climate-change-conference-november-2022

More events are at sdg.iisd.org/events/calendar/