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## ENERGYNOW SDG7 Action Forum 2025: 24-25 September 2025

With just five years until 2030 and discussions on the post-2030 development agenda already getting underway, only 35% of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets are on track or making moderate progress, while nearly half are progressing too slowly. SDG7 – ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all – is considered essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs. There is also widespread recognition that the global community must focus on the interconnectedness of the SDGs, rather than approaching them in silos, in order to make significant progress by 2030.

However, progress on SDG7 targets has been insufficient, with energy poverty, increasing demand, and the need for rapid decarbonization continuing to present major challenges. More than 660 million people still lack access to basic electricity, 85% of whom are in Africa. At the same time, around two billion people lack access to clean cooking – around one-quarter of the global population. Without accelerating the scale up of clean cooking, the world will fall short of its 2030 target.

SDG7, in particular, cannot be addressed in isolation, particularly given its links to issues of gender, human health, economic growth, and climate change. SDG7 is also critical for meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change. The UN General Assembly (UNGA) decision in 2024 to extend the [UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All](#) until 2030 is intended to keep energy at the center of global sustainable development efforts.

Within this context, the [ENERGYNOW SDG7 Action Forum 2025](#) served as an important platform to review progress, sustain momentum, and drive ambitious action, particularly in the lead-up to the third review of SDG7 at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2026 (the final review of SDG7 before 2030) and the SDG Summit in 2027, which will help shape the direction of sustainable development beyond 2030.

While focusing on remaining challenges, the Action Forum, which consisted of a high-level segment, three plenary sessions, and eight parallel sessions, also highlighted successes. For example, USD 1.6 trillion in investment has been pledged by 2030 through “Energy Compacts,” voluntary commitments by states, businesses, and other actors and entities to advance global clean energy goals. The

Energy Compacts, launched in 2021, now number over 200 commitments.

The Third Global Report on Climate and SDG Synergies was also presented at the Action Forum. This new report highlights that synergistic allocation of funds could reduce total government spending by up to 40%. It also draws attention to various other benefits resulting from synergistic policies and actions.

Action Forum sessions addressed: innovative and dynamic projects being implemented by African youth; advances made on gender data in sustainable energy; considerations related to ensuring AI systems are efficient, clean, and inclusive; work at the water-energy nexus in fields such as agroindustry and utilities; and action that can be taken to mainstream gender into energy and development planning.

The [ENERGYNOW SDG7 Action Forum 2025](#) took place from 24-25 September 2025, in New York City. It brought together representatives of governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, international organizations, and UN agencies. It was organized by UN-Energy, supported by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), and was held on the sidelines of the 80th session of UN General Assembly.

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UN-Energy is a consortium of nearly thirty UN agencies and international organizations that collaborate on various aspects of energy with the aim of catalyzing achievement of SDG7 by 2030, and net-zero emissions by 2050.

### A Brief History of the ENERGYNOW SDG7 Action Forum

In September 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres convened a High-Level Dialogue on Energy to promote implementation of energy-related goals and targets for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG7 on affordable and clean energy for all. The Dialogue, which marked the first UN General Assembly event on energy in 40 years, garnered the participation of 130 Heads of State and Government, and many global multi-stakeholder leaders. A key outcome of the Dialogue was the “Energy Compacts” – voluntary commitments from Member States and other stakeholders, to take action to accelerate the energy transition and to achieve universal energy access, with clear tracking frameworks towards 2030. To date, around 200 of these Energy Compacts have been mobilized. The Dialogue also resulted in the UN Secretary-General’s [Global Roadmap for Accelerated SDG7 Action](#), launched in November 2021. The Global Roadmap sets out the milestones needed to achieve a radical transformation of energy access and transition by 2030.

UN DESA, which served as the Dialogue’s Secretariat, convened the [first ENERGYNOW SDG7 Action Forum in September 2022](#), bringing together a range of stakeholders to take stock of progress on the Energy Compact commitments, discuss opportunities and remaining challenges, and consider further ways to accelerate energy access and the energy transition. Eight roundtables focused on the global context, accelerating SDG7 action, and partnerships for action. During a closing session, participants reflected on the findings of the [Energy Compacts Annual Report 2022](#), including that, one year after the Compacts were launched, 51% had reported progress.

The [ENERGYNOW SDG7 Action Forum 2023](#) convened more than 15 events in September 2023, on the sidelines of the 78th session of UNGA. Events addressed topics such as mobilizing climate finance for powering health care, clean cooking, gender, the [24/7 Carbon Free Energy Compact](#), and global synergies for climate action and the SDGs, among others, and launched the [Energy Compacts Annual Report 2023](#).

The [ENERGYNOW SDG7 Action Forum 2024](#) took place from 25-27 September 2024 in New York on the sidelines of the 79th session of UNGA and just after the [Summit of the Future](#). Twenty sessions focused on advancing progress on SDG7 and the global energy agenda towards 2030 and beyond. Sessions addressed various topics, including: themes related to energizing sustainable development, including a session on distributing renewable energy technologies in rural and remote areas; creating pathways for investments, including a high-level ministerial segment on how to ensure that critical mineral resources in Africa benefit Africans, instead of being exported; and accelerating a just and inclusive energy transition, with sessions on universal energy access, digitalization, and gender. The [Energy Compacts Annual Progress Report 2024](#) was also launched.

### Report of the ENERGYNOW SDG7 Action Forum 2025

Minoru Takada, UN-Energy Secretary, UN DESA, opened the Forum on Wednesday morning, 24 September, noting progress on SDG7 regarding universal access to green energy, increasing renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and innovative financing solutions. He highlighted upcoming milestones toward the HLPF 2026, which will include a final pre-2030 review of progress on SDG7. He also invited ideas for a post-2030 framework.

The report below summarizes the discussions in the three plenary sessions, eight parallel sessions, and high-level segment, starting with the plenary sessions.

### Mobilizing a Final Push on SDG7 and Roadmap Towards the SDG7 Review at HLPF 2026

This plenary session was organized by UN-Energy and the SDG 7 Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and moderated by Riad Meddeb, Director, Sustainable Energy Hub, UNDP. Meddeb said green investment must nearly double to USD 600 billion a year by 2030 to maintain projects at the required level. He noted energy poverty as the biggest constraint on socioeconomic transformation, lamenting the huge “development divide” in which countries export raw materials and must then import renewables processed from them. He said AI and digital centers will consume as much power as Canada and the UK combined by 2030, but added that, if managed properly, AI could enhance efficiency and assist a just transition. He explained that every dollar invested in renewable energy delivers four dollars in health, food security, education, and livelihoods. He called for discussions on, among others, reinventing international cooperation to offset declining ODA, and aligning policies to make energy available and affordable for all.

Daniel Schroth, Director, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Department, African Development Bank (AfDB), discussed country-level actions that could free up “fiscal space” or a government’s financial flexibility to spend on priority areas. As fiscal budgets are limited, he questioned how to bring in the private sector, particularly in African countries, and how to tap into institutional capital, noting Africa’s USD 455 billion in pension funds. He urged establishing national sovereign wealth funds so they can play a role in financing infrastructure projects.

Annika Blakstad Otterstedt, Assistant Director General, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida),



**Daniel Schroth**, Director, Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Department, AfDB



**Annika Blakstad Otterstedt**, Assistant Director General, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

said we need to do a better job at ensuring the global financial system understands risk and opportunities at the local level. She emphasized bringing electricity and the green transition to all regions, and identified energy as one of the most important tools to ensure that development benefits all people and communities. She also stressed adopting a gender perspective and ensuring accessibility to all.

Rana Ghoneim, Director, Division of Energy and Climate Action, UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), discussed: opportunities for developing and emerging economies; diversifying the supply chain; and creating value closer to where demand is. She explained that some barriers are climate related. Pointing to links with SDG7, she emphasized SDG9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) as the engine for economic growth. She drew attention to the [Energy Efficiency for Sustainable Livelihoods in Africa \(EELA\) Program](#), launched by UNIDO and Sida.

### ***Future Energy Discussions Beyond 2030***

This plenary session took place on Wednesday afternoon. It was moderated by Hans Olav Ibrekk, Special Envoy for Climate and Security, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and SDG7 TAG Co-Facilitator, who emphasized that energy is a growing geopolitical issue. Minoru Takada summarized past and potential future milestones on SDG7.

Morgan Bazilian, Director of the Payne Institute for Public Policy, Colorado School of Mines, noted that current rapid political, social, and economic changes, including tariffs and continuing global population growth, are driving changes in energy use. He urged tying energy to poverty and households rather than to industrial power loads. He commended massive imports of Chinese photovoltaics into Africa, but also suggested manufacturing them in Africa, given that Sub-Saharan Africa is well endowed with the necessary minerals. He raised AI as a critical emerging issue to be included in any post-2030 framework, saying that in five years data centers will be powered by natural gas.

Rana Adib, Executive Director, REN21, lamented that phasing out fossil fuels was not an SDG7 target and called for raising awareness, building political momentum, mobilizing

all relevant stakeholders, and addressing energy access in urban planning and industrialization. She called for shifting to a renewables-based economy through addressing structural barriers, embracing complexity and uncertainty, and developing new rules collaboratively. She noted opportunities presented by the [UN Decade of Sustainable Transportation 2026-2035](#). Adib called renewable energy the least cost option and an economic decision, as the cost can be controlled, and it is resilient to shocks. She commented that 20% of Kenyan households run on solar photovoltaics (PV) from China, which is cheap and more reliable than grids.

Sheila Oparaocha, Co-Facilitator of the SDG7 TAG and Executive Director of ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, reiterated that SDG7 helps deliver on other SDGs. She highlighted energy quality as well as access, and supported a gender target for energy in the post-2030 development agenda. She noted that during the review of SDG5 (gender equality) at HLPF 2025, all five energy custodian agencies, along with UN-Women and civil society representatives, agreed that including gender in global energy reporting was critical.

Dhruvak Aggarwal, Programme Lead, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), called for exploring how data is used to communicate and engage with consumers. On clean electricity, he highlighted focusing on how to expand grids and utilize land, questioning how to spread electricity's cost across sectors.

To a question from an audience member on why hydropower has not been addressed, responses pointed to its ecological impact, impracticality in shipping and aviation, and issues with storage, transmission, and distribution.

In conclusion, Hans Olav Ibrekk urged finding synergies and adopting a simple post-2030 framework that policymakers and ministers can understand.

### ***Promoting Synergies for Accelerated Progress towards the SDGs and the Paris Agreement***

This Thursday plenary session focused on work being undertaken by the Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies,



**Dhruvak Aggarwal**, Programme Lead, CEEW

co-convened by UN DESA and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to quantify the co-benefits for governments and others to tackle the climate and sustainable development crises synergistically.

**Welcome Remarks by the Co-Convenors:** Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, UN DESA, highlighted the recent launch of the third Global Report on Climate and SDG Synergies, highlighting that 80% of the SDGs are tied to climate action. He said climate and development strategies and planning must be integrated, particularly on such issues as energy, food systems, and transportation.

James Grabert, Director, Mitigation Division, UNFCCC, underscored work supported by the UNFCCC and UN DESA on SDG-climate synergies since 2022. He said the findings of the Report can inspire real world action to reduce trade-offs, work across silos, use resources more effectively, and focus on practical entry points such as energy, health, and gender.

**2025 Global Report on Climate and SDGs Synergies: Presentation of Key Findings and Recommendations by the Report's Co-Leads:** Luis Gomez Echeverri, Emeritus Research Scholar and Senior Advisor, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), and Co-Lead, Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, said the focus of the third global report on synergies is on quantifying the benefits of synergies, noting three entry-point thematic reports on nature-based climate solutions, disaster insurance, and climate action by cities. He underscored the importance of this moment as countries introduce new climate commitments. He also highlighted key messages, including that evidence guides effective action and synergies will be central to informing a post-2030 development framework through unlocking efficiencies at scale.

Elena Rovenskaya, Program Director and Principal Research Scholar, IIASA, pointed to an estimated 40% in savings in government expenditures resulting from synergies between climate and development policies. She described the modeling exercise used to estimate the savings, through using selected development and climate targets.

**Interactive Dialogue: Key Entry Points for Synergistic Action:** Bahareh Seyedi, UN DESA, moderated the dialogue. Kaveh Guilanpour, Vice President for International Strategies, Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions and Expert Group on



**Navid Hanif**, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, UN DESA

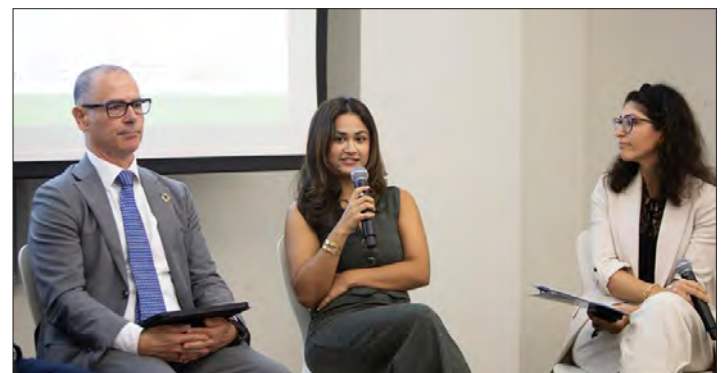
Climate and SDG Synergies, said countries' national climate strategies must now serve as their development strategies. He marked a shift, from referring to SDGs at UNFCCC COPs only after outcomes had been negotiated, to referring to SDG synergies in the Just Transition Work Programme text currently under negotiation for COP 30. He predicted that developed countries will not increase their development assistance, calling instead for aligning the USD 1.3 trillion already targeted for climate action under the Paris Agreement. He said the Climate Action Agenda should be aligned with the Global Stocktake (GST) under the Paris Agreement, stressing development as a core part of such an alignment.

Malcolm Dalesa, Climate Attaché, Permanent Mission of Vanuatu to the UN, emphasized Vanuatu's vulnerability and its development pathway to boost resilience. He said the ambitious targets in its NDC produce synergies across such areas as health, gender, and economic transformation. On financing, he mentioned Vanuatu's National Green Energy Fund, which blends mostly public and donor financing for clean energy, noting that private sector financing will also be blended into it.

George Gray Molina, Head of Inclusive Growth and Chief Economist, UNDP, said an integration process is needed to create policy coherence between NDCs and financing and other frameworks. He said 50% of climate financing comes from the private sector, particularly for renewables, transportation, and energy efficiency in buildings. He called for revitalizing planning and observed that investments in energy transition and social protections are finally bearing fruit.

Kashvi Chandok, Climate and Energy Fellow, Third Way, and SDG7 Youth Constituency, said the private sector needs incentives for involvement. She called for mechanisms for risk sharing and public/private sector collaboration, particularly given that climate change perils are now of significant importance. She called young people "the vocal cords of the climate movement," calling for efforts to remobilize them despite their recent skepticism.

In ensuing discussion, participants noted: insurers' lack of interest in funding communities on the front lines; a disconnect between work at the global and grassroots levels and the need for translatable outcomes; sectors and communities that are not generating bankable outcomes; the role of youth from Vanuatu in the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; government's regulatory role in ensuring corporations' profits are



**Kashvi Chandok**, Gender Equality and Climate Justice Champion; Climate and Energy Fellow, Third Way; and SDG7 Youth Constituency

within the goals of the Paris Agreement; and the need to expand existing knowledge and data to inform policymaking processes and share knowledge and best practices on climate and SDG synergies.

In closing, Seyedi underscored further connecting the intergovernmental SDG and climate processes.

### High-level Segment

This session convened on Thursday morning, 25 September.

**Welcoming Remarks:** Bjørg Sandkjær, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination, UN DESA, said current profound global challenges underscore that global problems require global solutions. She commended the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Special Event on Climate Action on 24 September, which saw the announcement of multiple new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

**Opening by the UN-Energy Co-Chairs and Launch of the Energy Compact Progress Report 2025:** Damilola Ogunbiyi, CEO and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, highlighted that the Energy Compacts are delivering progress on the ground, having now garnered USD 1.6 trillion in commitments. She drew attention to the Just and Inclusive Energy Transition (JIET) Compact, launched in 2024 under Brazil's G20 Presidency. She noted significant increases in access to electricity and to clean cooking fuels, and broad private sector support. However, she noted that 2.1 billion people still lack access to clean cooking, underscoring this as the fifth largest cause of death for African women.

Marcos Neto, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, said "energy is development." He lamented that USD 620 billion in fossil fuel subsidies still exist, but lauded increases in funding to developing countries for clean energy. He stressed the need to: attract private capital; advance South-South and triangular cooperation; and embrace digitalization and AI, which has already transformed the way energy systems are managed. He said UNDP is helping countries design and implement their updated NDCs, noting that recently-announced NDCs all have energy targets.

**Special Remarks:** María Erla Marelsdóttir, Climate Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iceland, said the 2021



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



**Marcos Neto**, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

Energy Compacts mobilized sustainable finance for electricity access, energy efficiency, and more, proving that trackable commitments can advance progress. However, she expressed concern at uneven progress on clean cooking, gender equity, remote electrification, and affordable energy access. She urged ensuring that benefits reach everyone, including workers in regions dependent on fossil fuels, and called for transparency and accountability through data and reporting.

**Launch of the SDG7 Policy Brief on Employment:** Francesco La Camera, Director-General, IRENA, presented this policy brief on links between SDG7 and SDG8 (decent work and economic growth), which contains data tracking progress on jobs in renewable energy. He noted findings of widening inequality and rising costs, but said renewables offer an escape from poverty towards a more equal society. He explained that the cost of renewables is lower than fossil fuel alternatives, but the benefits reach few countries and sectors.

**Launch of the SDG7 Policy Brief on LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS:** Roland Mollerus, Director, UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Development Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States, (SIDS), presented on this policy brief, noting its findings that LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS are not on track to meet SDG7, have wide rural-urban disparities, and lack access to climate technology, renewable energies, energy-efficiency technologies, and adequate financing. He highlighted as critical steps: access to concessional loans and grants; prioritizing finance for those lacking access to clean energy; and national energy plans and policy coherence.

**High-level Remarks:** Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, said cities produce 70% of emissions and consume 75% of global energy, while almost two billion urban dwellers lack adequate housing or basic services, and one billion live in slum conditions. She said UN-Habitat's new strategic plan forms a basis for systemic change to meet urban, climate, and environmental challenges.

**Remarks by the Co-Facilitator of the SDG7 TAG:** Sheila Oparaocha, Executive Director, ENERGIA, reiterated that achieving SDG7 is indispensable to achieving the rest of the SDGs, highlighting the [SDG Report 2025](#). She stressed the importance of gender reporting, observing that the [Gender and](#)



**Anacláudia Rossbach**, Executive Director, UN-Habitat

[Energy Compact](#) has more than 100 signatories. She lamented that SDG7 is one of six SDGs that lack a gender-specific indicator and called for gender disaggregated data, highlighting that better data can change the narrative.

### **Parallel Sessions**

In addition to the plenary sessions and high-level segment, the [ENERGYNOW SDG7 Action Forum 2025](#) also included “parallel sessions” covering a range of specific topics in-depth. Two sessions were held in parallel each morning and two each afternoon, making eight sessions in all across the two days. The section below provides a short overview of what was discussed in each session, in the chronological order in which they took place.

**United for Clean Cooking – A Joint UN Effort: Transforming Energy Systems to Protect Health and Advance Sustainable Development:** This session took place on Wednesday morning, and was organized by the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, UNDP, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO).

Fanny Missfeldt-Ringius, Practice Manager, Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), World Bank, provided opening remarks. She said that overcoming the fact that 2.1 billion people still lack clean cooking, with its disproportionate impacts on women and girls, requires policy reform, financing, technical support, and capacity building. She highlighted [Mission300](#), which aims to provide electricity to 300 million people in Africa by 2030.

The group then engaged in a **roundtable on clean cooking and health** moderated by Minoru Takada, UN-Energy Secretary, UN DESA. Citing three million deaths a year from lack of access to clean cooking, Heather Adair-Rohani, Acting Head, Air Quality, Energy and Health, WHO, pointed to chronic diseases, including lung cancer, warning about risks to safety and well-being, particularly for women and girls. She highlighted the aim of reducing the health impacts from anthropogenic sources of air pollution by 50% by 2040. She promoted action in four areas: knowledge and evidence; measuring progress; institutional capacity strengthening; and global leadership and coordination.

Michelle Hallack, Senior Specialist, ESMAP, World Bank, highlighted ESMAP’s aim to energize health and education. She cited effective cross-sectoral collaboration and three pillars related to this: analytics and tailoring country support; operationalizing the health and clean cooking nexus; and

education and awareness raising for health sector workers, including integrating clean cooking into their training curriculum.

Riad Meddeb, Director, Sustainable Energy Hub, UNDP, underscored a lack of awareness and access to markets. Noting solutions already exist, he highlighted the need for the appropriate ecosystem, development of local markets, innovation spaces, political will, and integrating clean cooking into energy planning and healthcare systems. He said USD 8 billion annually is needed to achieve universal access to clean cooking, that clean cooking must be treated as a viable market, and that more than 40% of NDCs include measures related to clean cooking.

Michela Morese, Energy Team Leader and Senior Natural Resources Officer, Office on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, FAO, highlighted links between clean cooking and food security, with such benefits as decreased cooking time, better food safety, ability to cook a greater variety of food, and healthier and more balanced diets. She explained that clean cooking enhances better water and food sanitation and food digestibility. She noted that FAO is working with UNDP and UNEP to have countries include clean cooking in national policies and NDCs.

Providing a regional perspective on the transition to clean cooking, Anis Zaman, Energy Transition Specialist, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, said 1.2 billion still lack access in that region. He highlighted the importance of partnerships, cultural and social aspects of cooking practices, and potential sources of funding for national rollouts.

Hallack provided a perspective from Latin America and the Caribbean, where 73 million still lack access, and discussed a clean cooking roadmap for the region. She highlighted education to close this gap and said Brazil, as current G20 President, has launched a clean cooking strategy.

Adair-Rohani called for a global roadmap for a just and inclusive clean cooking transition, and eliminating cooking poverty by 2030. She stressed political buy-in, integration across sectors, and on-the-ground learning in the long term. In the short to medium term, she highlighted building on existing partnerships and networks, global and country implementation roadmaps, and in-person meetings or workshops.

Missfeldt-Ringius then moderated an **open discussion**. Ed Brown, Director, Modern Energy Cooking Services Research,



**Michela Morese**, Senior Natural Resources Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)

emphasized integrating electric cooking into electricity planning, and supporting governments in this effort.

Zafar Samadov, Programme Officer, Partnerships, IRENA, reiterated that clean energy solutions are affordable and technologies exist. He drew attention to the Global Coalition for Energy Planning, launched by Brazil and IRENA in June 2025.

Arisa Andreani Inagaki, Communications, Advocacy and Partnerships Analyst, SEforALL, discussed introducing clean cooking in schools and other opportunities for joint action among UN partners.

Sheila Oparaocha, ENERGIA, said the clean cooking target under SDG7 is one “proxy” for meeting women’s energy needs. She highlighted that political will must translate into planning to encourage investment, and rural electrification plans linked to national development goals.

During these discussions, participants raised issues related to:

- plugging Solar Cookers International into the UN’s clean cooking action plan;
- increasing production of energy services to bring down cost;
- incentivizing the private sector to switch from LPG to clean cooking; and
- the need to privatize electrification, which, one said, would lead to long-term sustainability.

**From Energy Burden to Engine of Transition: Centering Equity in the Age of AI:** This parallel session was organized by the SDG7 Youth Constituency and SEforALL and moderated by Josh Oxby, Energy and Youth Programme Analyst, UNDP, and Global Focal Point, SDG7 Youth Constituency. Oxby called AI a societal challenge, with vast potential but a huge carbon footprint. He said the Global South has many data centers but lacks in skills, and questioned how to overcome the exclusionary design of AI infrastructure.

Rana Ghoneim, Director, Division of Energy and Climate Action, UNIDO, reported on UNIDO’s work developing a common standard to align AI with renewable energy and SDG7, noting the difficulty of bringing digital technology to communities without current access to reliable energy or fast internet access. She stressed: skills mapping for the future; enhanced urban, infrastructure and energy planning; and government derisking of infrastructure development to obtain private sector investment while ensuring inclusivity.



Sheila Oparaocha, ENERGIA

Casey Weston, Senior Manager, Public Policy and Economic Graph, LinkedIn, said the number of AI engineers with green skills is not meeting demand, calling for collaboration between people with AI skills and those with green talent. He acknowledged difficulties in knowing how to balance spending on new, cutting-edge technology in the Global North with providing financing to get electricity to the “fringes.”

Dominique Souris, Head of Climate at Goodwall, an app for young people to develop skills and work opportunities, reported on Goodwall’s gamified learning pathways and other educational content for basic digital literacy in AI, which enables youth to address justice issues themselves. She stressed incentives and/or compensation to encourage interest in AI training.

Ava Strasser, Gender and Youth Analyst, SEforALL, said we must ensure AI advances gender equality in co-creation, noting relatively few women’s voices are heard in critical AI-related fields.

Alankrita Dayal, North America Focal Point Lead, UN Major Group for Children and Youth, observed little youth participation in AI development, underscoring that who gets to write code influences empowerment of whole communities, and that influence over design and decisions is the most important aspect of justice. She said 90% of AI power, and frequently its rewards, are concentrated in the Global North, far from the communities feeling its consequences. She called for Global South co-ownership of platforms shaping its energy futures, more relevant and equitable solutions, and greater youth engagement with the UN.

On safeguards for AI, panelists also suggested:

- requiring AI systems to prove they share value fairly;
- inclusive digital systems with access to data;
- channeling funding for AI centers toward education and putting early skills building into the curriculum;
- combatting AI-generated misinformation; and
- questioning creation of AI “ministers” in countries where capacities are limited.

During the ensuing discussion, panelists stressed:

- launching or strengthening laws on digital privacy and collection and use of data;



Dominique Souris, Head of Climate, Goodwall

- increasing university programmes combining AI and sustainable development and developing standards for “green” AI;
- networks for considering the ethics of AI;
- developing frameworks to understand skills needed, such as engineering for creating AI agents to build code, and to measure job displacement, particularly for women;
- oversight of what AI produces;
- better gender- and age-disaggregated data from the Global South;
- multistakeholder development of product specifications before designing and engineering; and
- considering whether to prioritize AI or other development efforts, as not every country can develop AI.

**SDG7 Africa Youth Energy Forum:** On Wednesday afternoon, Worship Joshua Frimpong, Executive Director, Eco-Africa Network, moderated the Forum, which was organized by the SDG7 Youth Constituency.

Richard Matey, Executive Director, Green Africa Youth Organization (GAYO), said Sub-Saharan Africa is still very behind in energy access, noting one-third of “people still in the dark” are in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ethiopia.

Hadiza Abdulmumini, Global Focal Point, SDG7 Youth Constituency (via video), stressed partnerships, commitment, investment, and advocacy to unlock African youth’s full potential.

Explaining why youth need to be at the table, Martin Niemetz, Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA, highlighted equity, inclusion, youth as future policymakers, and new ideas and innovation. He urged youth not to be deterred by rejection and to keep pushing their ideas, reconceptualizing them if necessary, as older generations can sometimes be difficult to get through to.

Participants then viewed a video showcasing youth-led energy projects from the [Youth Sustainable Energy Hub \(YSEH\)](#).

Delivering a **keynote address**, Sarbojit Pal, Program Manager, Global Matchmaking Platform Secretariat, Energy and Climate Action Division, UNIDO, noted that youth make up 60% of the African population. He highlighted a structured methodology to engage and collaborate with youth globally as innovators and part of solutions. He highlighted UNIDO’s clean technology

innovation centers, eight of which are in Africa, and a Youth Day at UNIDO’s 2025 General Conference on youth education and empowerment.

A **high-level panel discussion** was moderated by Nthanda Manduwi, Founder, Q2 Corporation. On overcoming barriers to scaling up clean energy projects in Africa, Habiba Ali, Managing Director and CEO, Sosai Renewable Energies, underscored lack of financing, noting inconsistent policies as a source of confusion.

On World Bank support to young entrepreneurs, Johanna Christine Galan, Senior Energy Specialist, World Bank, and Coordinator, Mission 300 Implementation Unit, noted: a doubling of spending on energy by 2030 and use of concessional finance to catalyze efforts; national energy compacts, working closely with the private sector; and scaling up to reach more people faster.

On the energy-agriculture nexus, Michela Moresse, Energy Team Leader and Senior Natural Resources Officer, Office on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, FAO, said policy stability is essential to attract investment and local opportunities must be strengthened. She highlighted energy and agriculture links at FAO, the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP), and establishment of a youth award for innovation.

Simon Benmarraze, Head, Energy Planning and Modelling, IRENA, urged youth to utilize the IRENA Youth Network, be ambitious, explore all instruments that can potentially be deployed, and find new ways to approach financing. He pointed to grants for first time entrepreneurs, urging them to continue developing solutions.

Panelists highlighted the need for: market access for local agricultural products; financing for the implementation of solutions; and making an equity fund available to companies, with “job creation as the mantra.”

Youth then showcased and pitched five innovations in Africa related to: peer-to-peer solar trading; solar-powered milking machines; renewable electric vehicle (EV) charging; solar cold storage for medicine; and ethanol fuel and clean cookstoves.

Jeremiah Thoronka, YSEH, described the 2025 relaunch of the hub for stronger training, better informed membership, and projects primed for impact. He expressed hope for over 500 projects, channeling USD 10 million by 2030, and for formalizing youth in policy processes.



Worship Joshua Frimpong, Executive Director, Eco-Africa Network



Johanna Christine Galan, Senior Energy Specialist, World Bank

Myrah Oloo, Founder and Lead, Community Education Initiatives, Siaya County, Kenya, presented recommendations from a recent forum on intergenerational dialogue to empower young Africans in the renewables transition. In this regard, she highlighted:

- channeling investment to support youth in renewable energy;
- decentralized solutions;
- strengthening technical capacity through access to technical expertise and investments in training;
- regional knowledge-sharing platforms;
- intergenerational dialogue;
- youth access to decision making;
- mentorship across African regions; and
- an embedded accountability mechanism.

Efua Nyamekye Appiah, Energy and Just Transition Coordinator, GAYO, called on all participants to consider funding the projects presented and collaborating with African organizations.

In closing, moderator Frimpong called for giving African youth the opportunity to lead.

#### **Accelerating the Renewable Energy Transition:**

**Champions of Change:** This parallel session was organized by REN21 on Wednesday afternoon. Moderator Laura Williamson, Senior Advisor, REN21, opened the discussion on reshaping energy governance through a multistakeholder approach.

Rana Adib, Executive Director, REN21, warned that misinformation, as well as existing solutions, can shape the future. She said renewable energy still faces structural barriers and called for:

- reconfiguring economies, supply chains, and trade around renewable energy;
- reimagining energy governance and policies to end fossil fuel dependence;
- adopting new metrics to capture renewables' true value; and
- bridging energy supply, demand, and infrastructure silos across all sectors.

Antonella Battaglini, CEO, Renewables Grid Initiative, facilitated a **keynote fireside chat** with two “champions of change.”



**Rana Adib**, Executive Director, REN21

Ramón Méndez Galain, former Energy Secretary, Uruguay, reported on Uruguay's achievement of almost 100% renewable energy use, stabilizing its cost and creating 50,000 new jobs. He said Uruguay now exports renewable energy to Brazil. Méndez recommended defining the conditions for achieving success, noting the value of also hearing about hardships and failures.

James Fletcher, former Energy Minister, Saint Lucia, noted his country's dependence on imported fuel and supply chain uncertainty. He said wind power is being explored but the main goal is 35% solar energy, emphasizing that renewable energy is even more cost-effective than subsidized natural gas.

Two panel discussions were then moderated by Rana Adib, Executive Director, REN21.

During a **panel discussion on building political confidence in renewables and bringing in diverse perspectives**, Joyce Kabui, Office of the Climate Envoy, Kenya, said Kenya works with African entities but also needs global partnerships. She said Germany and the Green Climate Fund are allies of Kenya and Africa on investment in renewables. and noted attempts to change the fact that 80% of African projects fail at the planning stage. She said civil society must be engaged during planning.

Eamon Ryan, former Minister for the Environment, Climate, Communications and Transport, Ireland, reported that while investment in renewables has reached USD 2 trillion faster than expected, Africa has been mostly excluded. He urged the EU to develop an integrated market and called for public movements to influence politics, given that public consciousness and demand for renewables have decreased in recent years.

Charley Roberts, Senior Policy Advisor, Clean Energy Transition Partnership, International Energy Finance, E3G, lamented the tension between civil society working for transition to renewables versus government and private sector's fear of losing out on investment in fossil fuels, noting that 2024 saw the largest amount of fossil fuel financing ever.

During a **panel on building partnerships to accelerate the shift to renewables-based economies and societies**, Elizabeth Press, Director, APRA Implementation Office, UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), described the Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA) partnership as a strategy for development, with renewables enabling countries' economic



**Simon Benmarraze**, Head of Energy Planning and Modelling, IRENA



Joyce Kabui, Office of the Climate Envoy, Government of Kenya

ambitions. She agreed champions should “teach” rather than try to “convince” others.

Anne Jellema, CEO, 350.org, said the fossil fuel industry has turned from denying climate change to denying solutions through “extreme disinformation.” She agreed on establishing renewables as an enabler for a new economy to fight the pro-fossil fuel, right-wing populism spawned by extreme inequality post-financial crisis and post-COVID.

Liming Qiao, CEO and Founder, Future Energy Storage and System Integration Alliance (FESSIA), said renewables are winning in the economic and energy independence spheres. She called for trade and industrial policy to foster markets rather than block them in order to obtain investment. She cautioned that expansion will be limited unless systems integrate, which is one reason FESSIA was established.

**Power in Numbers: Leading the Way on Gender Data in Sustainable Energy:** Held on Thursday morning, this parallel session was organized by the World Bank and ENERGIA. Participants heard detailed explanations of the need for gender data in the area of renewable energy and the solutions being pursued by various entities. The session highlighted that politics in 2015 had prevented agreement on including any indicators related to gender in SDG7, but now general agreement exists to rectify this in the post-2030 framework, with momentum starting to build.

Fanny Missfeldt-Ringius, World Bank, noted the launch of a policy brief, [Gender Indicators for Sustainable Energy: A Call to Action](#) in July 2025. She called for disaggregated and targeted data showing the different experiences of women and men, to help identify solutions to achieve SDG7.

Minoru Takada, UN-Energy Secretary, UN DESA, urged participants to compile and publish whatever data exists now to get it on the agenda for the SDG7 review in 2026 in preparation for policymakers’ discussions on the post-2030 agenda.

During a **moderated discussion**, Papa Seck, Chief, Research and Data Section, UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), explained how data indicators should be chosen, starting with existing indicators and finding gaps. He noted shifts from collecting household data to collecting individual data, in some cases to uncover gender disparities. He emphasized defining the data needed, what it is

for, and who will use it, with participation of all stakeholders involved, and said its use must be monitored. He invited participation in a collaborative citizen data collection network.

Umar Serajuddin, Manager, Development Data Group, Development Economics (DEC), World Bank, said gender data lags behind data on other SDGs. Noting a discovery that often data collected is not processed for sex disaggregation, he said rectifying this enables more information to be mined from existing statistics. Serajuddin said the World Bank maintains a dashboard of indicators’ scores on accessibility, trust, relevance, quality, and coverage across time and space.

Matthieu Prin, Policy Analyst, People-Centred Clean Energy Transitions, International Energy Agency (IEA), described an IEA-initiated expert group that agreed on G20 principles on gender data, exploring how countries translate the principles into policy design and what gaps exist. He said the results are being published at the fourth G20 Energy Transitions Working Group Ministerial Meeting in October 2025.

Konstantina Kalogianni, Senior Data Analyst and Project Manager, IEA, described the IEA’s [Gender and Energy Data Explorer](#), comprising five topics with numerous indicators under each. She said geographical coverage depends on the data available, with few sources of gender information for the energy sector.

Samson Bel-Aube Nougbohou, Head, Energy Information System and Statistics Division, African Energy Commission (AFREC), said all AFREC Member States have a National Energy Information System and indicators on gender are currently being added. He noted that AFREC translates donor support into technical assistance to Member States, supporting capacity building and guidance, harmonization of indicators and data, and national energy data banks that will incorporate gender.

Leonardo Souza, Chief, Energy Statistics Section, UN Statistics Division (UNSD), spoke on prioritizing data on women and girls through an interagency group. He said energy data and gender statistics are not yet merged, calling for momentum to identify gaps, propose ways to fill them, and potentially develop guidelines. He said unharmonized indicators limit comparability and case replicability, while harmonization facilitates indicators’ acceptance.



Panelists during the session “Power in Numbers- Leading the Way on Gender Data in Sustainable Energy”

In closing remarks, Sheila Oparaocha, Executive Director, ENERGIA, emphasized robust gender data is fundamental to drive a gender-just transition. She said ENERGIA advocates for gender-disaggregated data on enabling environments, regulations, budgets, and investments. She concluded that gender is “ahead of the game” and a driving light on lessons and insights for the post-2030 framework.

**Advancing a Just Energy Transition through 24/7 Carbon-Free Energy:** Held on Thursday morning, this parallel session was organized by the [24/7 Carbon-Free Energy \(CFE\) Compact](#), and Compact members SEforAll, the Global Renewables Alliance, and Google.

In opening remarks, Damilola Ogunbiyi, CEO and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, said the [JIET Compact](#) was launched at COP 29, and emphasizes a fair, human rights-based, sustainable, and secure transition. She said the 24/7 CFE Compact enables clean generation and inclusive deployment, and promotes policies, markets, and regulatory frameworks that support this.

Naoki Sakai, CEO, D-Sharing, highlighted a pilot project funded by the Government of Japan that developed a half-hourly trade platform for EV charging connected to a nationwide smart meter system, with the installation of 18 million smart meters. He noted a shift in demand for EV charging, highlighting an appropriate regulatory framework to mainstream the project.

María Erla Marelsdóttir, Climate Ambassador, Iceland, said “the path we choose now will define the future of communities everywhere” and the transition is not optional. She explained how the 24/7 CFE Compact, which aims for reliable clean power at all hours, can drive the JIET Compact. She noted that clean energy must be reliable, equitable, and procurable, bringing new investments, local jobs, and stronger grids.

Sakshi Chandra, Engagement Officer, SEforALL, explained that 24/7 carbon-free energy can enable a just transition via clean energy procurement, highlighting the need to match clean energy use with supply. She explained that power purchase agreements have helped drive down the cost of solar by 90% and wind by 70%, but that governments and regulators must provide frameworks.

During a high-level panel on **Commitment to Delivery: Advancing Equity through 24/7 CFE**, Divya Kottadiel,

Principal Specialist, Energy, SEforALL, moderated the discussion. Panelists outlined efforts their organizations and companies are engaged in.

Miguel Muñoz Rodríguez, Head, Climate Policies and Alliances, Iberdrola, said his organization plans to invest EUR 58 billion by 2028 in grids in the US and UK. On ensuring capital reaches low-income communities, he urged going beyond financing plans and numbers. He highlighted “4 As”: ambition; action; advocacy; and accountability. He prioritized delivery and enabling policy conditions to accelerate the clean energy transition.

Alex Piper, Head, US Policy and Markets, EnergyTag, said 24/7 is about taking responsibility for emissions. He commended the voluntary procurement market, noting incentives for companies to do more. On designing just energy policy frameworks, Piper underscored bringing clean energy everywhere, with accountability, honesty, and transparency. He described proposed reforms to the [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#) accounting rules to account for electricity emissions on an hourly and locational basis.

Julia Souder, CEO, Long Duration Energy Storage Council, emphasized the need for storage so renewable energy can withstand weather events, noting this provides market certainty for companies to support local communities. She explained that long duration storage is bankable and scalable, potentially achieving USD 540 billion a year in savings, but requires more investment. Souder emphasized partnerships, translating data to secure buy in from communities, and using existing tools effectively and efficiently.

Matt Gray, CEO, Transition Zero, noted his company’s work on grid modeling software and analysis in emerging economies and markets. He said the marketing software is free and user friendly. He urged accelerating grid modeling studies for projects, saying many clean energy projects are awaiting connection to the grid, mentioning the US in particular. He stressed effective planning and procurement to avoid delaying the energy transition.

During the ensuing discussion, participants commented on energy security, noting “clean energy is not a silver bullet” and the need for combined energy systems, and stressed defining market boundaries for procurement.



**Leonardo Souza**, Chief of Energy Statistics Section, UN Statistics Division (UNSD)



**Miguel Muñoz Rodríguez**, Head of Climate Policies and Alliances, Iberdrola

In closing remarks, Tatiana Molcean, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), discussed potential impacts of climate change on supply and demand and the need for clean energy systems to withstand shocks. She emphasized fairness, warning against leaving fossil fuel-dependent communities behind, and underscored that transition must be country specific.

#### **Sustainable Energy and Clean Water Access to Ensure Quality Education and Learning Opportunities for All:**

This session was organized by the Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions Network, in collaboration with UN DESA, and moderated by Jorge Alvarez-Sala Torrealano, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Specialist, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). Participants heard from speakers representing diverse entities working at the nexus of water and energy in a variety of fields.

Gonzalo Sáenz de Miera, Director, Climate Change and Alliances, Iberdrola, said cities should:

- recognize electricity's value for development;
- foster stakeholders' collaboration in defining optimal minimum-cost systems, such as inclusion of mini-grids and/or domestic photovoltaics and batteries in isolated areas;
- require higher payments by the rich to make energy affordable
- in poorer communities;
- create a business model for renewables to be economically sustainable; and
- bring in the private sector.

Elias Farah, Head, Civil Engineering Department, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, Lebanon, described the Smart Water for Young Professionals and Experts (SWIPE) Project in Lebanon which addresses Lebanon's unsafe and drought-vulnerable water supplies. He said SWIPE improves water-use efficiency through technical solutions while increasing education and training to produce behavioral changes and empower the next generation. He listed benefits, including leakage and contamination detection, waste reduction, energy optimization, and water bill transparency.

Michela Morese, Energy Team Leader and Senior Natural Resources Officer, Office on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, FAO, noted agrifood systems are the largest global consumer of freshwater resources, consume 30% of global energy, and produce over one-third of global emissions, but are highly vulnerable to climate change, extreme weather events, soil erosion, and loss of biodiversity. She recommended:

- coordinating national policies across sectors and making feasibility assessments to guide investment;
- using evidence-based data collected in the field; and
- increasing agrifood's share of climate financing.

Instead of 100% subsidization of rural electrification through solar panels, she recommended an "energy service" business model, charging users a fee to cover the cost of incentivizing the private sector.

Gustavo Paredes, Manager, International Affairs and Sustainability, Association of Sugar Producers of Guatemala (ASAZGUA), said Guatemala's sugarcane agroindustry is part of the circular economy, 75% of the water it uses comes from rain, and 42% of Guatemala's energy comes from sugarcane bagasse (a byproduct of sugar production), with no fossil fuel use at all. He called on the private sector to help finance-poor governments,

saying ASAZGUA provides information and assistance to local communities. He called on FAO to promote cogeneration using bagasse.

Alejandra Valdivia Espinoza, Co-Founder, Red de Jóvenes por la Transición Energética, spoke on projects for green electrification to provide energy access to remote homes, stating that energy is a human right. She called for: clean energy subsidies; regulatory frameworks to incentivize private sector participation; public-private partnerships; and education and training for youth on skills that are necessary to accelerate progress on SDG7.

Patrick Tonui, Head of Policy and Regional Strategy, Global Off-Grid Lighting Alliance (GOGLA), said education policies must consider needs before designing and electrifying classrooms. He stressed the need for financing for provisioning classrooms, maintaining them, and building the required skills to support this.

In the ensuing discussion, panelists recommended:

- paying attention to context, as no "one-size-fits-all" solution exists;
- keeping language simple for people outside the UN;
- reflecting on needs before incorporating these into national policies, to get investment flowing; and,
- bringing ministers from different sectors together for high-level information exchange.

**Just and Inclusive Transition: Evidence-Based Solutions to Advancing Sustainable Economic Growth, Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women and Girls:** Held on Thursday afternoon, this session was organized by the Gender Energy Compact, and co-led by SEforALL, the Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition, ENERGIA, and UNIDO.

In opening remarks, Ava Strasser, Gender and Youth Analyst, SEforALL, highlighted SDG7 interlinkages with SDG5 (gender equality) and SDG8 (decent work and economic growth). She discussed decent work, unemployment and underemployment, lamenting that 1.2 billion people are working in vulnerable and informal situations, especially women in low-incomes countries who undertake precarious work, with no safety nets and low pay.

Laura Garcia Cancino, Senior Legal Researcher, Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, moderated the discussion.



**Jorge Alvarez-Sala**, WASH Specialist, UNICEF



**Alejandra Valdivia Espinoza**, Co-Founder of Red de Jóvenes por la Transición Energética, and SDG7 Youth Constituency

In a context-setting presentation, Naimat Chopra, Advocacy, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Officer, ENERGIA, stated that “when women thrive, communities prosper.” She explained that a strong evidence base on the intersection of energy and gender can drive policy. She said that energy access improves personal well-being and women’s participation catalyzes development, lamenting cultural biases in some countries. She argued for gender equality to be a design principle embedded in investment and energy policies.

In keynote remarks, María Erla Marelsdóttir, Climate Ambassador, Iceland, underscored that societies flourish when people have equal opportunities to learn and work. Iceland, she noted, has implemented gender responsive reforms, including the requirement that women hold at least 40% of roles in publicly-listed companies. She mentioned that women occupy 32% of decision-making roles in energy-related companies. She also highlighted an Icelandic programme to train fellows from developing countries and that 50% of participants are women.

During a **panel discussion**, Juliette Denis-Senez, Policy Analyst, People-Centred Clean Energy Transitions, IEA, discussed policy interventions for bridging divides for women in the energy sector. She announced that the IEA is convening a new [Global Commission on People-Centred Clean Energy Transitions](#) to develop actionable policy recommendations for



**Josh Oxby**, Energy & Youth Programme Analyst, UNDP

energy and climate ministers and international decision makers on integrating fairness into clean energy policy. She underscored policy interventions to give agency to women. Noting women make up 20% of the workforce in the energy sector, Denis-Senez described innovative training programmes to increase women’s employment in renewables and energy efficiency. She mentioned [Principles for Just and Inclusive Energy Transitions](#), endorsed by G20 members, and a related indicators handbook that is being developed to measure and track success over time.

Josh Oxby, Energy and Youth Programme Analyst, UNDP, and Global Focal Point, SDG Youth Constituency, underscored the need to ensure agency for youth and women, as well as address systemic and policy barriers that prevent them from moving into better jobs. He explained that agency comes through visibility and recognition of their work, which often does not happen in the informal sector, due to biases in procurement processes and perceived lack of experience. Oxby lamented that young people are facing more barriers to entry, and that rapidly changing environments are creating anxiety and uncertainty.

Garcia Cancino presented an example from Colombia’s mining sector, where people believe women around the mine site bring bad luck.

Sarbojit Pal, Program Manager, Global Matchmaking Platform Secretariat, Energy and Climate Action Division, UNIDO, discussed UNIDO’s integration of gender equality into policies and programmes, noting that inherent social biases exist. He said 85% of recent sustainable energy projects include women in some way, which should be celebrated. He provided examples of gender considerations being embedded from the start of projects undertaken in Cape Verde and the Philippines.

Panelists also discussed innovative training programmes to ensure more women work in renewable energy and in trades traditionally dominated by men, including as electricians, construction workers, and engineers. In addition, they underscored: increased energy access for women to further women’s empowerment; the need to raise awareness among men and shift societal norms; the importance of indicators and disaggregated data; and the example of India where more women are going into higher education than men.

During the ensuing discussion, participants discussed: how to bring local urban governments on board; IEA’s Global Observatory on People-Centred Clean Energy Transition, which provides a global snapshot of youth-led energy projects around the world and disaggregated results; and how information exists but needs to be connected to youth on ground.

In closing this parallel session, Martin Niemetz, Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA, said that being serious about “mobilizing the final push towards SDG7” requires women’s empowerment and decent opportunities. He reiterated that women are agents of change and drivers of innovation, noting a higher percentage of women work in the clean energy than the fossil fuel sector. He emphasized evidence-based policies, dismantling structural barriers, and holding ourselves accountable, stressing that women must be at the “heart of the energy transition.”

### Upcoming Meetings

**UNECE Sustainable Energy Week 2025:** This event will convene under the theme “Just Transition for building resilient energy systems.” Groups of Experts will meet on energy

efficiency, cleaner electricity systems, and renewable energy. The UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy will also meet. Topics will include thematic regulatory and policy dialogues and exchanges on renewable energy, energy efficiency in industrial systems and the built environment, full system costing for resilient energy systems, energy connectivity, and e-mobility.

**dates:** 29 September - 2 October 2025 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** [unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/unece-sustainable-energy-week-2025](https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/unece-sustainable-energy-week-2025)

**2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED):** This AGM will focus on “Promoting the Green Transformation for a Harmonious Coexistence Between Humans and Nature.” The Council focuses on four areas of research: global governance and ecological civilization; green urbanization and environmental improvement; innovation, sustainable production, and consumption; and green energy, investment, and trade. Its AGMs offer members opportunities to share views and hold open forums on emerging issues. **dates:** 15-17 October 2025 **location:** Beijing, China **www:** [cciced.eco/events/2025-cciced-annual-general-meeting/](https://cciced.eco/events/2025-cciced-annual-general-meeting/)

**Fourteenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (IFESD-14):** This year’s theme – “From Goals to Action: Powering the Future with Sustainable Energy” – will guide discussions among government officials, business leaders, energy experts and practitioners, as well as representatives of financial institutions, academia, civil society, and international organizations. Key topics on the agenda include energy connectivity, energy security, a just energy transition, and international energy cooperation. The Forum will help shape actionable strategies to accelerate progress toward global sustainable energy goals. **dates:** 28-30 October 2025 **location:** Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia **www:** [unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/fourteenth-international-forum-energy-sustainable-development](https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/fourteenth-international-forum-energy-sustainable-development)

**Off-Grid Expo and Conference 2025:** This two-day conference will bring together stakeholders involved in the green technology industry. **date:** 30-31 October 2025 **location:** Augsburg, Germany **www:** [off-grid-expo.com/en](https://off-grid-expo.com/en)

**21st AGM of the Intergovernmental Forum (IGF) on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development:** The IGF supports more than 75 nations committed to leveraging mining for sustainable development to ensure negative impacts are limited and financial benefits are shared. This meeting will convene on the theme, “Value Beyond Extraction: Rethinking Mining for a Resilient Future.” The event will focus on reimagining how mineral wealth can support diversified, resilient, and sustainable economies. **date:** 3-5 November 2025 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** [igfmining.org/annual-general-meeting/](https://igfmining.org/annual-general-meeting/)

**UN Climate Change Conference:** This Conference will include COP 30, the 20th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP-20), and the seventh meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Paris Agreement (CMA-7). **dates:** 10-21 November 2025 **location:** Belém, Brazil **www:** [unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/un-climate-change-conference-belem-november-2025/the-road-to-belem](https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/un-climate-change-conference-belem-november-2025/the-road-to-belem)

**UNEA-7:** UNEA-7 will convene under the theme “Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet.” It will be preceded by the seventh meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, which will take place from 1-5 December 2025.

**dates:** 8-12 December 2025 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** [unep.org/environmentassembly/unea7](https://unep.org/environmentassembly/unea7)

**International Day of Clean Energy:** This annual observance, created by the UN General Assembly, aims to serve as a call to action as leaders, innovators, and advocates come together to share insights, inspire collaboration, and accelerate meaningful progress in the clean energy transition. **date:** 26 January 2026 with event details to come **www:** [un.org/en/observances/clean-energy-day](https://un.org/en/observances/clean-energy-day)

**HLPF 2026:** Meeting under the theme “Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs for a sustainable future for all,” HLPF 2026 will conduct in-depth reviews of SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals). **dates:** 6-26 July 2026

**location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** [hlpf.un.org](https://hlpf.un.org)  
For additional upcoming events, see [sdg.iisd.org](https://sdg.iisd.org).

## Glossary

CEEW	Council on Energy, Environment and Water
CFE	Carbon-Free Energy
COP	Conference of the Parties
ESMAP	Energy Sector Management Assistance Program
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IEA	International Energy Agency
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
LPG	liquefied petroleum gas
MECS	Modern Energy Cooking Services
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEforALL	Sustainable Energy for All
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization
UN DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	UN General Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization