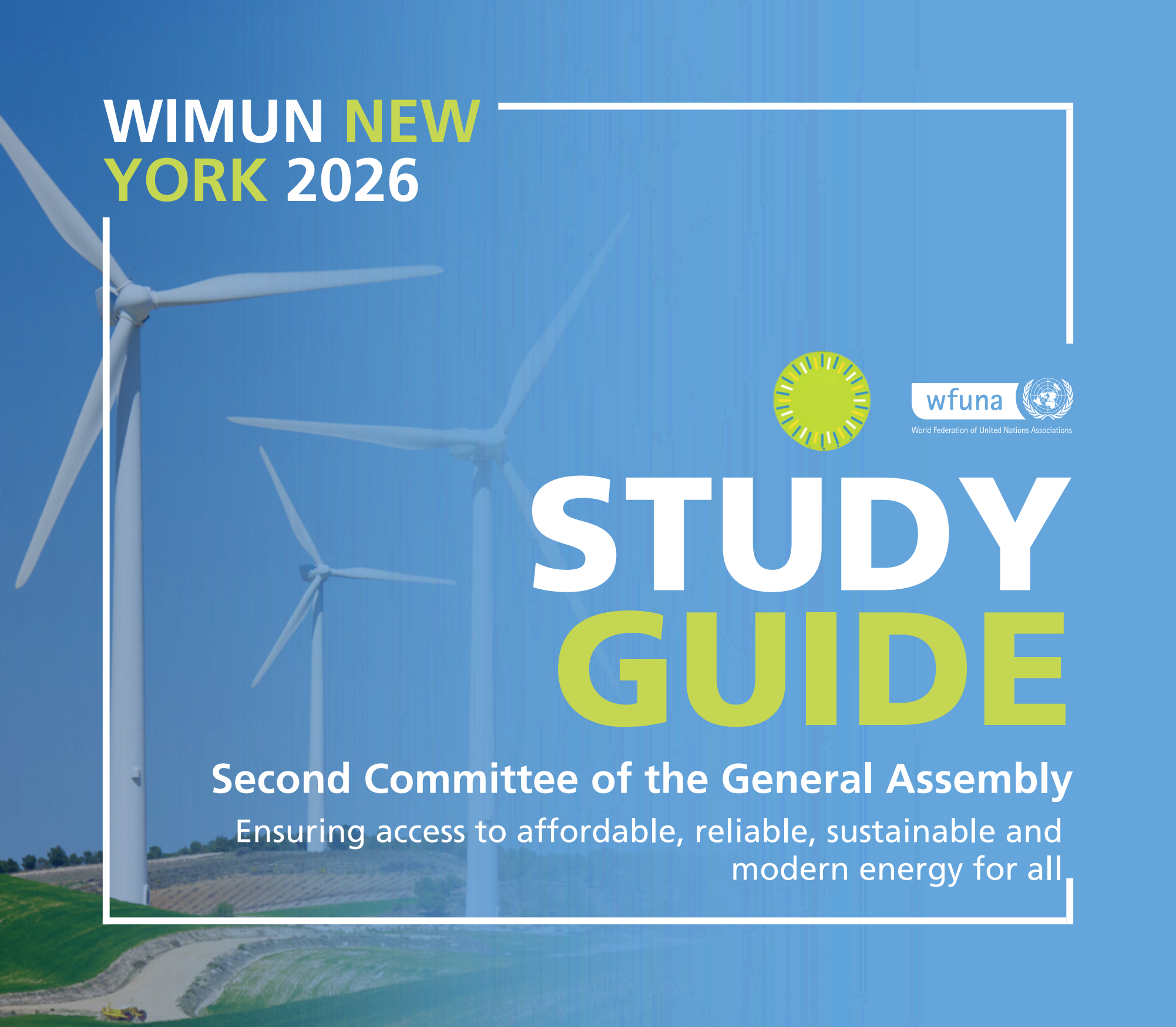

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STUDY GUIDE

Second Committee of the General Assembly

Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

United Nations A/79/501

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Sustainable Development

Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/157, contains an overview of the progress made towards ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. In the report, the Secretary-General distils lessons learned from the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014–2024) and presents the main outcomes of the global stocktaking held in April 2024, marking the completion of the Decade and aiming to further accelerate the implementation of Goal 7 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The report also includes a discussion on the need for robust arrangements to follow up on the Decade going forward. In addition, it includes an update on UN-Energy efforts to strengthen coherence and coordination within the United Nations system and mobilize multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of Goal 7.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/157, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit, at its seventy-ninth session, a report on the implementation of the resolution, including activities carried out to mark the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014–2024).

II. Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

2. With only six years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is in peril. The fragility of past hard-earned progress has been compounded by the climate crisis, conflicts and a global economic outlook constrained by high debt levels, strong inflation, rising inequality and frequent supply chain disruptions.

3. The climate crisis is worsening as greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. Under a range of possible greenhouse gas emissions scenarios assessed in the most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the midpoint of the first 20-year running average during which long-term global warming exceeds the critical 1.5°C threshold lies in the first half of the 2030s. 1 Catastrophic and intensifying heat waves, droughts, flooding and wildfires have become far too frequent.

4. The energy sector plays an important role in driving these crises. The production and use of fossil fuels for energy and industrial uses remain the largest source of global greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for around 85 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions, while fossil fuel price shocks have contributed to painfully high energy prices and high inflation in recent years. On the other hand, the climate crisis, conflicts and a constrained global economic outlook have negatively affected many energy issues.2 This includes questions of climate resilience of energy infrastructure, energy security, the stability of global supply chains, the availability of critical raw materials in support of the energy transition, international and domestic investment in Sustainable Development Goal 7, including clean energy and more.

5. At the same time, energy is an essential ingredient for getting the world on track towards meeting all the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Goal 7, on clean and affordable energy, is inextricably linked to many other Goals, including poverty eradication, food security, health, education, prosperity, gender equality, jobs, transport, infrastructure, ocean, forest and land management, water and sanitation, and the empowerment of women and young people. At the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, participants underlined the centrality of a clean energy transition to climate action.

6. Building on commitments made at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties – on doubling energy efficiency, tripling renewables, transitioning away from fossil fuels and ending deforestation, all countries must strengthen political commitments,

1 Hoesung Lee and others, Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report – Summary for Policymakers (Geneva, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023).
2 The interconnections between the different global crises and the need to enhance synergies towards the effective implementation of national climate and development policies and actions have been highlighted by the recent report, Synergy Solutions for Climate and SDG Action: Bridging the Ambition Gap for the Future We Want (United Nations publications, 2024).

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1 Definition

This was a global initiative to promote universal access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy, improve energy efficiency, and increase the use of renewable energy to support development goals; it has now been extended to 2030 by the General Assembly through resolution A/RES/79/211.

3 Interesting Facts

The 1.5°C limit was formally recognized in the 2015 Paris Agreement, as scientific evidence showed that warming beyond this threshold significantly increases risks to natural and human systems. At 2°C of warming, the world would suffer changes that threaten food security, water availability, public health, and economic stability.

4 Definition

Sustainable Development Goal 7 promotes access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy.

Notable progress on this Goal includes:
- A rise in global electricity access from 84% in 2010 to 92% in 2023.
- An increase in access to clean cooking solutions from 64% to 74% since 2015.
- Renewable energy is currently the fastest-growing energy source and is projected to overtake coal by 2025.

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4 Did You Know That

Around 80% of people worldwide (about 6 billion) live in countries that import more fossil fuels than they produce, making them highly susceptible to geopolitical shocks and sudden increases in fuel prices.

5 Something to Think About

Despite an increase in the usage of renewable energy in electricity, sectors like transport and heating still rely heavily on fossil fuels, why is it harder to transition these sectors to clean energy?

5 Something to Think About

How does access to clean, affordable energy serve as a cornerstone for escaping poverty and building economic prosperity? Think about how reliable power creates jobs in new industries, boosts business productivity, and increases household incomes, making a tangible difference in people's lives and communities.

6 Interesting Facts

Heavy dependence on firewood and charcoal for energy accelerates environmental degradation. Clearing forests for fuel drives deforestation and soil erosion, which reduces biodiversity and weakens ecosystems. The release of stored carbon further intensifies climate change. As natural buffers vanish, communities face heightened risks of disasters, declining agricultural productivity, and worsening food insecurity, making this energy reliance increasingly unsustainable.

establish ambitious national climate plans and catalyse a massive expansion of affordable public and private finance to fuel ambitious new climate plans and deliver clean, affordable energy for all. Global production and consumption of all fossil fuels must be reduced by at least 30 per cent by 2030. This necessitates commitments from developed countries: ending coal usage by 2030, transitioning to fossil fuel-free power systems by 2035 and reducing oil and gas supply and demand by 60 per cent by 2035. Governments must demonstrate, through their nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement, how countries will contribute to the global transitions essential to 1.5 degrees – putting us on a path to global net-zero emissions by 2050.

7. Although off track, Goal 7 is still within reach and can be achieved if all stakeholders step up and strengthen their efforts. This would include ensuring a supportive framework for intergovernmental dialogue and cooperation on energy at the United Nations, considering that 2024 is the final year of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All.

III. Progress towards ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all3

A. Global overview

8. Despite some progress on some of the indicators, the current pace is not adequate for achieving any of the 2030 targets of Goal 7. Among the major economic factors impeding the realization of Goal 7 globally are the uncertain macroeconomic outlooks, high levels of inflation, currency fluctuations, debt distress in a growing number of countries, lack of financing, supply chain bottlenecks, tighter fiscal circumstances and soaring prices for materials.

Access to electricity

9. Target 7.1 on ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services, is still off track, with an estimated 685 million people in 2022 without access to electricity.

10. Despite the global access rate rising from 78 per cent in 2000 to 91 per cent in 2022, population growth outpaced access growth, leading to an increase in the number of people without electricity for the first time in over a decade.

11. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for the largest part of the global unconnected population, representing 83 per cent of the global access deficit, up from 50 per cent in 2010. While Central and Southern Asia have made significant progress towards universal access, reducing the access gap from 414 million in 2010 to 33 million in 2022, the situation is very different in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2022, the number of people without electricity in that region surged to 570 million, exceeding the 2010 figure of 566 million, primarily due to population growth outpacing new connections.

12. To close the electricity access gap, it has been estimated that the annual rate of growth in electrification would have to rise to 1 percentage point per year from 2022

3 The present report draws on Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report 2024, a joint report of the International Energy Agency, the International Renewable Energy Agency, the Statistics zDivision of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Bank Group and the World Health Organization. The regional overview section is based on inputs from the five regional commissions of the United Nations and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

[1] Materials from that meeting are available on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs at https://meetings.unoda.org/.

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6 Did You Know That

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) reports that renewable energy is now the most cost-effective power option in most regions, with solar electricity costs dropping 85% and wind costs falling around 50% between 2010 and 2020. These falling prices make renewables especially attractive for low and middle-income countries, where electricity demand is growing.

7 Something to Think About

What political negotiations, financial frameworks, and international commitments must be strengthened or established to ensure that SDG 7 is achieved by 2030, especially in the face of global crises and widening inequalities?

9 Did You Know That

Despite ongoing progress, the pace remains too slow. At the current rate, 645 million people will still be without electricity by 2030.

11 Did You Know That

The number of people without electricity in the region has increased by 2.5% since 2010, worsening poverty and slowing development.

This deepens the challenge of achieving the inclusive growth and sustainable energy goals outlined in the African Union's Agenda 2063, particularly Aspiration 1 (a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development) and Aspiration 6 (development driven by the potential of African people, especially women and youth).

onwards. Since 2000, the highest achieved rate of electricity access increase was 0.77 per cent per year, in the period 2010–2020.

13. If no additional efforts and measures are put in place, some 660 million people, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, will still remain without access in 2030.

Access to clean cooking solutions

14. In 2022, 74 per cent of the global population had access to clean cooking fuels and technologies, an increase of 16 percentage points since 2010. Despite the progress, some 2.1 billion people still use polluting fuels and technologies for most of their cooking.

15. The global access rate has been improving only slowly over the past few decades. If current trends continue, only about 79 per cent of the global population will have access to clean cooking fuels and technologies by 2030. That would leave 1.8 billion people continuing to rely on traditional and inefficient stoves paired with solid fuels – such as wood, charcoal, coal and crop waste – and kerosene for cooking.

16. In total, 92 per cent of the progress in the global access rate since 2010 is attributed to advancements in six countries – India, China, Indonesia, Nigeria, Viet Nam and Pakistan – meaning that only 8 per cent of the global progress was attributed to all other countries combined. If current trends persist, the overall access rate to clean cooking in low- and middle-income countries, excluding the five most populous ones, is projected to reach only 61 per cent.

17. Since 2000, there has been a consistent decrease in the access deficit of clean cooking across Eastern Asia, South-East Asia, Central Asia and Southern Asia. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the sole region where the number of people lacking access is still increasing. The number there has more than doubled from 1990 to 2022 due to population growth, resulting in 923 million individuals without access to clean cooking technologies in 2022. If the current trend persists, the access deficit in sub-Saharan Africa could surpass 1 billion by 2030, impeding the achievement of the 2030 target.

18. In low- and middle-income countries in 2022, the majority of people relied on gaseous fuels for cooking (60 per cent), followed by unprocessed biomass (26 per cent), electricity (8 per cent) and charcoal (4 per cent). If current trends continue, by 2030, projections suggest that 67 per cent will use gas, 18 per cent biomass, 8 percent electricity and 5 per cent charcoal.

19. Between 2022 and 2025, 408 million people are projected to gain access to clean cooking, followed by an additional 505 million people between 2025 and 2030. These figures highlight the urgent necessity to intensify initiatives, aiming to provide clean cooking solutions to one billion more people by 2025.

Reneweable energy

20. Sustainable Development Goals target 7.2 is to substantially increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030. Progress toward that target is assessed by the share of renewable energy in total final energy consumption. In 2021, the global share of renewable energy sources in total final energy consumption, including traditional biomass, stood at 18.7 per cent. Over the past three decades, that share has remained relatively stable, with a slight upward trend in recent years, increasing by 2.7 percentage points over the past decade. That trend is attributed primarily to the accelerated deployment of renewables in the electricity sector.

21. Electricity has had the largest and most dynamic share of renewables in final consumption, increasing from 23 per cent in 2015 to 28.2 per cent in 2021. Renewable

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14 Definition

Clean cooking involves using fuels and technologies that produce significantly lower emissions of harmful pollutants than traditional methods like open fires or basic stoves. It ensures safer and more efficient cooking, while protecting health and reducing environmental impact.

15 Interesting Facts

Traditional, non-clean cooking, characterized by relying on open fires and solid fuels for cooking, remains a major global health and environmental issue, affecting nearly half of the world's population and contributing to around 4 million premature deaths annually. Women and children are especially vulnerable, facing harmful smoke exposure and the negative effects of environmental deterioration directly.

17 Did You Know That

In 2000, 40% of people without access to clean cooking lived in Central and Southern Asia, another 40% in Eastern and South-eastern Asia, and 20% in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2022, Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for half of the global lack of access, and is set to increase to 60% by 2030.

19 Something to Think About

If nearly a billion people are expected to gain access by 2030, who is still being left behind, and why? What strategies are needed to reach the most remote or vulnerable populations?

electricity represents one third of global renewable energy consumption and half of the modern use of renewable energy consumption.

22. In 2021, renewable energy sources contributed to 23.5 per cent of global energy consumption for heating. Notably, over half of that renewable heat represented traditional use of biomass, of which 95 per cent is concentrated in Africa and Asia.

23. The transport sector represents only 9 per cent of global modern use of renewable energy consumption, making it the end-use sector with the lowest renewable energy penetration, at only 4 per cent of final energy consumption in 2021. Biofuels (90 per cent) dominated the renewable energy use in transport. Remarkably, renewable electricity used in vehicles and trains expanded 34 per cent compared with 2015, driven by the rise in electric vehicle sales and a higher proportion of renewables in transport.

24. In 2022, the global share of installed renewable energy-generating capacity reached its peak, at 40.3 per cent, with 424 watts per capita of installed renewable capacity. While the share of renewables is almost equal in developed and developing countries, renewable wattage per capita differs vastly. Developing countries had 293 renewable watts per person in 2022 installed, almost doubling their watts per person since 2015. Developed countries stood 3.7 times larger, at 1,073 watts per person, indicating large disparities in how renewable electricity serves population in developing countries.

25. Despite progress on renewables, achievements in the past decade lag far behind ambitions. The outcome of the first global stocktake at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties – which includes the ambition to triple renewable energy capacity globally and double the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030, and transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner – has significant implications for accelerated energy transition.

26. Demand for critical minerals is expected to grow many times by the middle of the century, driven by clean energy investments, especially for wind turbines, solar panels, electric vehicles and battery storage. That growing demand will have to be managed carefully, considering its potential impacts on international security, environmental sustainability and social issues worldwide. An important aspect of this will be to leverage this growing demand in support of creating new development pathways based on building and strengthening local value chains.

Energy efficiency

27. Target 7.3 calls for doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency over the average rate during the period 1990–2010, which means improving energy intensity by 2.6 per cent per year between 2010 and 2030. Between 2010 and 2021, global energy intensity improved by an average annual rate of 1.6 per cent, surpassing the 1.2 per cent rate observed in the previous two decades but falling below the target of 2.6 per cent.

28. The low rates of improvement in 2020 and 2021, at 0.6 per cent and 0.8 per cent, respectively, were even lower than those in the preceding decade, bringing the average for the period 2010–2021 to 1.6 per cent. To meet target 7.3, annual improvement through 2030 must accelerate to an average of over 3.8 per cent.

29. End-use trends showed improvements in energy intensity across all sectors in the period 2010–2021. In industry, which comprises energy-intensive economic activities, energy intensity improved by an average of 1.6 per cent per year. Passenger transport achieved a similar rate (1.6 per cent), though the rate of improvement in freight transport was significantly lower (0.4 per cent). The residential sector, which comprises final uses such as heating, cooling and cooking, showed an average annual

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22 Something to Think About

Should biomass really count as "renewable" in the optics of sustainability? Considering traditional biomass (like firewood or charcoal) makes up a large part of this total, is it often inefficient and polluting?

24 Definition

Renewable wattage per capita calculates the amount of renewable energy capacity, measured in watts, available for each person in a population. It shows how much clean energy is installed or accessible per person. Although similar in shares, equitable distribution of renewable energy varies due to internal factors such as infrastructure, policy, and economic conditions.

26 Something to Think About

Which specific minerals are essential for renewable energy technologies, and where are they primarily found? How are countries without these resources ensuring access to them?

26 Something to Think About

How can countries rich in minerals avoid exploitation and environmental damage? Is it possible to promote global standards for fair mining and trade?

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27 Interesting Facts

Over 120 nations adopted this pledge at COP28 as part of the Global Renewables & Energy Efficiency Pledge, agreeing to double the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements from about 2% to over 4% through 2030.

27 Definition

Energy intensity means the amount of energy used per unit of GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Lower energy intensity = more efficiency. Globally, a 1% drop in energy intensity can reduce emissions by hundreds of millions of tons of Carbon Dioxide.

improvement of 0.9 per cent. Energy intensity in agriculture improved at an annual rate of 1.6 per cent for the period 2010–2021, matching the rate for industry and passenger transport.

30. As the energy crisis curbed energy consumption and prompted the rapid implementation of new policies and an increase in energy efficiency investments, energy intensity is expected to improve at a more rapid pace in 2022 and 2023, but improvement will still not be sufficient to reach Goal 7. Stronger government policies on energy efficiency are needed to meet the target 7.3 by 2030.

Means of implementation

31. Achieving Goal 7 and net-zero emissions requires an urgent and steep rise in clean energy investment and finance, especially in developing countries. Worldwide investment in clean energy and energy efficiency will need to triple over the next 10 years to put the world on track for net-zero emissions by 2050, with a priority focus on the needs of the world's least developed countries and universal access to electricity and clean cooking by 2030. Estimates are that around $30 billion annually are needed to achieve universal access to electricity.

32. Indicator 7.a.1 –international financial flows to developing countries in support of clean energy research and development and renewable energy production, including in hybrid systems – reveals that international public financial flows in support of clean energy in developing countries rebounded in 2022, to $15.4 billion. Although the figure represents a 25 per cent increase over 2021, it is still around half of the 2016 peak of $28.5 billion. Moreover, international public financial flows remain concentrated among a small group of countries. In 2022, 80 per cent of commitments went to 25 countries.

33. In 2022, hydropower investments dropped to 7 per cent of total flows, while commitments to renewables, primarily solar energy, rose to 35 per cent. Donors increasingly supported various renewable energy solutions, with 47 per cent of commitments flowing into non-technology-specific programmes. The remaining funds were divided among wind energy (11 per cent), hydropower (7 per cent) and geothermal energy (0.4 per cent). Those trends are expected to continue unless disrupted by major investments in a single technology, such as hydropower, in a particular year. Donors are also increasing the number of loans and grants while reducing the value of each project.

34. During the period 2021–2022, international public financial flows underwent significant changes across developing regions, with exceptions in sub-Saharan Africa. Six regions experienced increases, while two saw declines. Notably, Oceania saw the most substantial surge at 662 per cent, totalling $85.9 million. Western Asia and Northern Africa experienced a 135 per cent rise ($990.5 million); Latin America and the Caribbean increased by 114 per cent ($1,994 million); and Northern America and Europe saw a 24 per cent increase ($90 million). Sub-Saharan Africa witnessed a modest 2.5 per cent uptick ($112.5 million). Conversely, Central Asia and Southern Asia experienced a 39 per cent decrease ($1,166.7 million), while Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia declined by 9 per cent ($135.4 million).

35. In 2022, there was a notable shift in the composition of financial flows, with debt instruments representing a smaller share compared with previous years, comprising about two thirds of the total. Conversely, grants, equity and guarantees saw an increase in their share. Standard loans were the most prominent financial instrument, accounting for nearly half of the flows, while grants reached a record high, making them the second-largest financial instrument. Concessional loans and equity also contributed significantly to the total flows, while guarantees constituted only a small fraction.

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31 Definition

Net zero emissions means balancing the greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere with those removed from it. This can be done by both cutting emissions and enhancing efforts to remove existing ones.

33 Interesting Facts

The decline in hydropower's investment share is largely due to the lack of investments in costly projects and its vulnerability to climate-related shifts in water availability, which have made solar and other modular renewables more attractive to donors and investors.

33 Something to Think About

Could smaller, fragmented projects undermine economies of scale or reduce long-term impact?

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35 Definition

A grant is non-repayable funding, typically provided to support specific projects or goals, especially in lower-income countries.

35 Definition

Concessional loans are a special type of loan offered at lower interest rates and longer repayment terms to make them more affordable for developing countries.

36. With the limited availability of public resources, their strategic use to mobilize additional private capital is key, especially in sectors and regions that private investors perceive as too risky to invest in. The predictability and reliability of policies and regulations are a vital consideration for attracting investors, as they reduce risks related to policy reversals or renegotiations. In that regard, Governments have a key role to play in the establishment of stable and coherent policy and regulatory frameworks.

37. There are significant and persistent policy, technology, finance-related and social challenges to energy innovation, technology development and deployment, and data improvement. Approximately half of the technologies necessary to meet the 2050 target are still in the early stages of development and demonstration. Nevertheless, existing technologies also remain underdeployed, even though they can deliver more than 80 per cent of the emissions reductions needed by 2030.

38. Countries need well-trained and skilled people to work on energy projects, in order to meet their renewable energy ambitions. Support for educational and training programmes, including digital capacity programmes on sustainable energy, to build local knowledge and capacity, and promote renewable energy projects is critical, as is the scaling up of capacity-building efforts, including for enabling frameworks, technology cooperation, investment measures, the transfer of technical know-how and staff training activities.

B. Regional overview

39. As in previous years, rates of progress vary significantly across regions, with some regions making substantial gains towards some targets, while in other cases progress is slowing or even moving backwards.

Africa

40. The constraints on African economies and communities brought on by the continent's persistent energy access deficit have further deteriorated due to global crises, as well as regional shocks, such as the increasing frequency and severity of droughts and floods in the continent because of climate change, affecting lives. livelihoods and assets.

41. A massive energy access deficit on the continent must be closed urgently and at scale if the Goals are to be achieved. The continent has an abundance of energy resources, both renewable and non-renewable, yet public resources are highly constrained. Moreover, the enabling environment for investment and to facilitate businesses to decarbonize industry is lacking. The lack of viable project pipelines needs to be addressed, including through innovative business models and support for project preparation. This has led to uneven and low levels of private sector investment in Africa's energy transformation, with limited support for recovery from financial hardship.

42. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to most of the global population lacking access to electricity, and the disparity between regions is widening. Sub-Saharan Africa now accounts for 83 per cent of the global access deficit, up from 50 per cent in 2010. Progress in sub-Saharan Africa has stalled, as population growth has outstripped new connections. In 2022, 571.1 million people lacked access to electricity, up from 566.1 million in 2010. The deficit grew particularly strong in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa.

43. In sub-Saharan Africa, there has been a clear growth trend regarding the number of people lacking access to clean cooking, as progress in this area has also failed to

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33 Something to Think About

If the private sector is hesitant to invest in risky regions, how can governments and international institutions help de-risk energy investment?

36 Did You Know That

A good example is the PIDG 'GuarantCo' guarantee in Southern Africa, which used a $27 million public guarantee to attract $270 million for renewable energy projects, showing how de-risking tools can multiply investments by ten times.

38 Interesting Facts

The International Energy Agency projects that clean energy employment will outpace fossil fuel jobs by 2030, whoever it is still facing skill shortages across several areas, such as: engineering, project design, electrical installation, grid upgrades, and specialized roles like consultants, wind turbine technicians, and solar PV specialists, among others.

40 Interesting Facts

One of the principal initiatives in this region, known as "Mission 300", backed up by the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank Group and the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL), is currently working to broaden electricity access to 300 million people throughout the continent by 2030.

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41 Did You Know That

Africa holds about 30% of the world's critical minerals for renewable technologies and about 60% of the best solar resources.

41 Interesting Facts

On the flip side, countries like Kenya, South Africa, and Morocco are adopting their energy frameworks to incentivize clean energy investments through tax breaks, guaranteed payments for renewable electricity, and quicker approval for new projects.

41 Interesting Facts

At the most recent Mission 300 Africa Energy Summit, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed emphasized that for renewable energy projects to succeed, public-private partnerships must ensure transparency and accountability throughout the entire project cycle.

42 Something to Think About

With around 600 million people still without electricity in this region, why do you think the international community's financial support has not translated into proportional improvements in electricity access in Sub-Saharan Africa?

keep pace with growing populations. In 2022, an estimated 79 per cent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa were still using polluting fuels and technologies for cooking. That means more than 923 million people in sub-Saharan Africa had no access to clean cooking fuels and technologies.

44. Meanwhile, the penetration of renewables is still slow and as a result has a limited impact on the African population, despite the fact that almost all countries in the region present great opportunities for investments in the renewable energy sector. While renewable energy constitutes more than two thirds of total final energy consumption in sub-Saharan Africa, when traditional is excluded, modern uses of renewables represent only 10 per cent of such consumption in the region.

Arab region

45. While the Arab region has made progress recently towards achieving the Goal 7 targets, continued supply chain disruptions, economic downturns, conflict and instability in several Arab countries have slowed progress, requiring urgent action.

46. Access to electricity in the Arab region was almost 91 per cent in 2022, with many countries having reached 100 per cent. Nevertheless, conflict, political instability and utility sector mismanagement left nearly 43 million people without electricity access that year, across the region.

47. Rural areas suffered the largest deficits. In these, only 83 per cent of the population had access to electricity, compared with 98 per cent in urban areas. The rural-urban divide was most prominent in the least developed countries of the region, where urban electricity access averaged 87 per cent, while in rural areas, it averaged only 51 per cent.

48. While 87 per cent of the population has access to clean fuels and technology for cooking in the Arab region, there are large subregional disparities. In 2022, almost 58 million people in the Arab region did not have access to clean cooking. About 87 percent of these people live in Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen. However, in terms of access to clean fuels, Comoros and Djibouti were the two countries with the lowest access rate of around 10 per cent each.

49. With gross domestic product (GDP) calculated according to a 2017 purchasing power parity baseline, energy intensity in the Arab region increased slightly, from 4.94 megajoules per dollar in 2020 to 4.98 megajoules per dollar in 2021. Over the past decade, however, energy intensity has decreased, having stood at 5.1 megajoules per dollar in 2010. This trend was not uniform, however: while the Gulf Cooperation Council and Mashreq subregions saw this decline in energy intensity, the Maghreb and least developed countries in the Arab subregions saw intensity increase over the same period.

50. Only 5 per cent of the region's total final energy consumption was generated by renewables in 2021, with this mainly accounted for by solid biofuels in three countries: Comoros, Somalia and the Sudan. The region retains an overwhelming reliance on fossil fuels, even though some Arab countries have made substantial progress on utility-scale renewable electricity generation, and five Arab countries have pledged to achieve economy-wide net-zero emissions by 2050 or 2060. 4 Total installed renewable electricity capacity in the Arab region has roughly doubled over the past five years, reaching a little over 32.5 gigawatts in 2023.

[4] Oman and the United Arab Emirates aim to achieve this target by 2050, and Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia by 2060.

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43 Interesting Facts

Basic cooking methods have caused a widespread reliance on wood and charcoal, which not only harms health but also accelerates deforestation.
In East and Southern Africa, this trend is particularly severe, even affecting food security where fruit-bearing trees are cut down for fuel.

44 Interesting Facts

Interestingly, several African nations with the lowest electricity access also rely heavily on renewables in their final energy consumption, highlighting a strong potential for expanding renewable energy across the continent.

45 Something to Think About

How can conflict-affected Arab countries develop resilient energy systems that can endure political and economic shocks?

47 Interesting Facts

The urban-rural divide creates a significant barrier to energy access and clean energy for rural households. Due to lower population density, rural areas often have poor energy infrastructure and higher costs for grid extension. This forces many rural communities to rely on traditional, polluting energy sources like fuelwood, leading to issues like indoor air pollution. While technologies like mini-grids and solar home systems can provide a solution, they require financial support and local expertise for maintenance and sustainability, highlighting a persistent inequity in the transition to clean energy.

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48 Did You Know That

In Sudan, 17.5 million people lack access to electricity, followed by 8.6 million in Somalia and 8.3 million in Yemen, totaling over 34 million without access across these three countries alone.

49 Something to Think About

Why do you think energy intensity increased in the Maghreb and least developed Arab countries, while it decreased in others? What structural or policy differences might explain this?

50 Did You Know That

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fifth Assessment Report, average temperatures in East Africa and the Maghreb could rise by over 2°C, and in some areas, up to 6°C, compared to pre-industrial levels. This level of warming underscores the need for coordinated regional efforts to reduce emissions and invest in climate resilience.

Asia and the Pacific

51. In Asia and the Pacific, the achievement of Goal 7 remains off track, with uneven progress across countries.

52. While most countries have achieved universal electricity access, last-mile electrification in sparsely populated, remote regions remains a challenge. Off-grid solutions are helping, but countries with special needs, particularly Pacific island developing economies, require focused support.

53. Clean cooking remains far off track. In 2022, less than one third of the region's countries had access rates of 95 per cent or higher, and over one quarter had rates below 40 per cent. However, progress is being made with growing policy support; for example, electric cooking is expanding.

54. Falling renewable energy and storage costs, along with corporate demand for clean energy, are driving the deployment of renewables in the region. Cross-border power system connectivity and multilateral power trade are being pursued to enhance access to renewable resources. However, even with an emerging shift away from coal, renewable energy uptake is not keeping pace with fossil fuel expansion. Between 2021 and 2022, the share of renewables in total final energy consumption slightly decreased, from 16.45 to 16.41 per cent, with progress mainly concentrated in a few countries and in the power sector.

55. Asia and the Pacific, despite a decline in the use of traditional biomass, is being outpaced by other regions in modern renewable energy growth. Although there is significant progress with renewables in the electricity sector, the transition to renewables in the heat and transport sectors is slow. Investment risks, low technical capacity, unfavourable policy environments, and lagging investments in electricity networks hinder progress in many countries.

56. The region's energy intensity remains high compared with other global regions, and the rate of improvement needed to achieve the targets of Goal 7 continues to rise. Current policies and regulations are inadequate, with limited coverage and enforcement. For example, comprehensive minimum energy performance standards and building energy codes have only recently been introduced in many countries, and enforcement systems are still under development. However, the transition to electric vehicles is supporting improvements in the transport sector.

Latin America and the Caribbean

57. The Latin America and the Caribbean region has made significant progress in terms of access to electricity in recent years, reaching a 98.6 per cent access rate in 2022. There are, however, still significant inequalities accentuating energy poverty. The most vulnerable fifth of the population has about nine times less access to electricity than the richest. In recent years, energy efficiency has not increased, either, except for a slight improvement in the transportation sector, which consumes the largest proportion of fossil fuel energy.

58. In 2022, 98.6 per cent of the population in both urban and rural areas had access, while the proportion of the population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology was 88.8 per cent. Most of the 16.2 million people who are not connected to electricity in Latin America and the Caribbean live in rural and remote areas, where the costs of extending networks and infrastructure are high.

59. In the region, 75 million people do not have access to clean cooking fuels and technologies. Indicators prior to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic already showed that households across the region were allocating a high proportion of their spending to fuel. Indeed, this could reach up to 10 per cent of their total

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54 Something to Think About

What can be done to reinforce responsible extraction practices?

By 2040, lithium demand is expected to grow nearly eight times, driven by the expansion of electric vehicles and battery storage. While countries like Australia, China, and Indonesia are key mineral suppliers, many Asia-Pacific countries possess these resources.

In this context, unsustainable mining can cause environmental damage, social conflict, and at times corruption, especially in developing nations.

55 Did You Know That

It's important to note that about 50% of the global energy consumption comes from this region, and 85% of that energy comes from fossil fuels.

56 Something to Think About

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into efforts to expand energy access and drive innovation in renewables across the region, what environmental and ethical trade-offs might arise, especially considering AI's own resource and energy demands?

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57 Interesting Facts

Community-led energy projects are emerging across Latin America and the Caribbean as a bottom-up strategy to tackle energy poverty. These initiatives promote energy democracy, particularly in rural and underserved areas, by enabling local ownership and long-term participation in these systems.

57 Interesting Facts

If nearly 99% of the population has electricity access, why does energy poverty persist so strongly, especially among the poorest 20%? Could the quality, reliability, or affordability of electricity be more important indicators than access alone?

58 Something to Think About

Infrastructure development poses a significant barrier to energy access in poor communities. Rural areas face costly grid expansion due to distance from existing networks, while established grids suffer from aging infrastructure and poor maintenance, causing unreliable power. Despite declining costs of renewable energy, many communities still cannot afford the high initial investments.

59 Interesting Facts

The lack of access to clean cooking fuels disproportionately affects women and girls, who are typically responsible for household energy tasks. According to UN Women and the World Health Organisation, this burden reinforces gender inequality by limiting their time for education, income-generating activities, and civic participation, issues that must be addressed in energy policy planning.

expenditure. Electricity can account for up to 5 per cent of household spending, while in most countries the percentage can be up to four times higher for the most vulnerable quintiles.

60. In 2022, renewable electricity generation within the energy mix increased to an average of 63.4 per cent. During 2022, wind and solar continued to expand. A total of 41.34 gigawatts of new capacity in electricity generation was installed around the region that year. Of that total, non-renewable thermal power plants accounted for 21.6 gigawatts, wind power plants 4 gigawatts, solar photovoltaic power plants 13.7 gigawatts, hydroelectric power plants 0.9 gigawatts and the rest was composed of renewable, biogas and biomass thermal power plants. This meant that only 48 per cent of the total used renewable sources.

61. The low relative energy intensity of the region compared with other regions does not necessarily reflect an actual efficiency in the use of energy in Latin America and the Caribbean, but rather low access to modern energy services and low use of more efficient technologies by the population, especially by the most vulnerable deciles. In 2022, the energy intensity level of primary energy, using constant 2017 GDP at purchasing power parity, was 3.3 megajoules per dollar. Transport, which uses 39 per cent of the energy in the region, was the only productive sector that experienced a slight increase in efficiency over the above period.

Member States of the Economic Commission for Europe

62. Amid recent challenges, efforts of member States of the Economic Commission for Europe towards achieving Goal 7 faced strong headwinds. Although positive, progress has been slow to meet the 2030 targets, and the recent assessment indicates that the region is off track.

63. Access to electricity and the use of clean fuels for cooking, heating and lighting is widespread. The use of renewable energy increased in more than three quarters of member States, and energy efficiency improved in nearly all. The rate of progress, however, has not been high enough to make the targets of Goal 7 achievable by 2030.

64. As is the case in other regions, the Economic Commission for Europe region experiences many challenges that continue to hinder progress on a just energy transition, including surging inflation, affordability of clean fuels and technologies, shortage of skilled and qualified workforce on clean energy and digital technologies, and persistent behavioural barriers, which often hamper optimal organizational potential.

65. In 2021, the Economic Commission for Europe region averaged 23.9 per cent of renewable energy share in total final energy consumption. In turn, 19 Economic Commission for Europe member States had a share above the global average of 18.7 per cent, while in 12 countries the share was more than double. In general, the region has seen unprecedented growth in renewable electricity production.

66. In 2021, energy intensity in the region averaged 3.96 megajoules per dollar (constant 2017 purchasing power parity), well below the world's 4.59 megajoules per dollar. Despite a positive dynamic of the indicator (i.e. a reduction from the average of 6.99 in 2000), in 2021 it varied from 1.09 to as high as 12.33 megajoules per dollar, which suggests the potential for significant improvement in certain geographies.

67. In 2022, international financial flows to developing countries from the Economic Commission for Europe region in support of clean energy research and development and renewable energy production, including in hybrid systems, reached $6.2 billion (constant 2021), which is less than 10 per cent of the global figure of $67.9 billion. Hydropower represented 51.9 per cent of installed renewable electricity-generating capacity per capita in 2022, a remarkable decrease from 2015

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60 Did You Know That

The most current data on the matter reports that 65% of Latin America and Caribbean's energy derived from clean sources, above the global average of 41%.

60 Something to Think About

What barriers (technical, financial, or political) might still be favoring fossil fuel projects across the region?

65 Did You Know That

It's important to note that the war in Ukraine exposed the risks of energy dependence on external suppliers, which prompted the EU to accelerate its clean energy transition by investing a record €110 billion in renewables in 2023 to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels.

67 Something to Think About

What benefits could the Economic Commission for Europe countries gain by increasing financial support to clean energy projects in developing countries?

(67.4 per cent) due to significant additions in solar- and wind-based generation capacities, largely following the global trend. Besides finance, as in other regions, the availability of critical raw materials for the energy transition and the digital revolution, as well as the capacity of the electricity network to accommodate increasing shares of intermittent sources and growing distributed energy networks, are crucial in terms of the pace of transformation in the region.

Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

68. Closing the energy access gap and transitioning to decarbonized energy systems remain a major challenge for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Without urgent and scaled-up efforts in those countries, the world will fall short of its Goal 7 target of universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services by 2030. Moreover, high dependency on costly fossil fuel imports makes small island developing States and landlocked developing countries extremely vulnerable to oil price shocks.

69. Lack of access to electricity is increasingly concentrated in least developed countries. In 2022, 17 of the 20 countries identified as having the largest number of people living without electricity were least developed countries. In 2022, electrification rates in the least developed countries reached 57 per cent, showing only modest growth from 2021. Electrification rates in landlocked developing countries and small island developing States remained stagnant in 2022, at 60 per cent and 77 per cent, respectively. Also, there are still large disparities in access between urban and rural areas, which calls for more targeted efforts and solutions that reach underserved communities in rural areas.

70. Advances in clean cooking in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States remain modest. The proportion of the population with access to clean cooking solutions in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in 2022 were 20 per cent, 28 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively. By comparison, the worldwide average was 74 per cent. The access to clean cooking in rural areas in the least developed countries is alarmingly low and increased from 9.5 per cent in 2021 to 10.3 per cent in 2022.

71. An urgent scale-up is needed in installed renewable power generation capacity in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. In the least developed countries, the renewable watts installed per capita grew from 37 in 2021 to 39 in 2022; in landlocked developing countries the increase was from 98 in 2021 to 102 in 2022; and in small island developing States, the increase was from 93 in 2021 to 101 in 2022. When we compare the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to developing countries (which had 293 renewable watts per capita installed in 2022) or developed countries (where that figure was 1,073 watts per capita), it is evident that the renewable energy revolution has not reached the most vulnerable countries, where populations are not reaping the benefits of the green energy transition, including by developing a new economic sustainable development model that curbs emissions, reduces air pollution, creates new jobs and enhances resilience.

72. The current level of international public financial flows to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States for clean energy is insufficient to spur larger volumes of investments from the private sector, a flow that is critical in order to expedite progress on Goal 7. After a declining five-year trend of the financial flows to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, all three groups saw an

67 Interesting Facts

As an example, the European Critical Raw Materials Act, in force since May 2024, aims to secure a sustainable supply of critical raw materials by boosting local and circular supply chains, reducing import reliance, and strengthening the entire value chain.

68 Definition

Landlocked developing countries are nations without direct access to the sea, facing higher trade and transport costs due to reliance on transit countries, which limits their economic growth and global market access.

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71 Something to Think About

Could the push for rapid decarbonization in developed countries unintentionally make it harder for vulnerable countries to build and grow their own energy systems? Could it cause a global competition for materials, funding, or technology?

72 Something to Think About

To what extent should countries with the largest historical emissions be held responsible for reparations? Should this include increased support for the most vulnerable populations who have contributed the least to climate change?

upward trend in 2022. The least developed countries attracted $2.3 billion in international public finance to support renewable energy compared with $2.1 billion in 2021, whereas landlocked developing countries attracted $2.7 billion in 2022, a vast increase from $1.3 billion in 2021. Small island developing States also witnessed an increase from $210 million in 2021 to $325 million in 2022.

73. All of the new programmes of action for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States underline the importance of access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, including the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States and the new programme of action for landlocked developing countries.

IV. Global stocktaking marking the completion of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All to further accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7

74. Following General Assembly resolutions 77/170 and 78/157, the President of the General Assembly convened on 19 April 2024 a global stocktaking marking the completion of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, which built on the follow-up to the high-level dialogue on energy, to further accelerate the implementation of Goal 7.

75. The global stocktaking brought together high-level representatives from Member States and other leaders from all regions to discuss: (a) closing the energy access gap and transitioning to decarbonized energy systems; and (b) addressing energy interlinkages and strengthening the means of implementation and partnerships.

76. In preparation of the global stocktaking, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in cooperation with UN-Energy, organized regional and thematic consultations that included virtual meetings at the technical level with over 100 experts from Governments and other multi-stakeholders from all world regions, a call for written inputs from Member States, as well as a call for multi-stakeholder inputs.5 The regional and thematic consultations also drew on existing resources, such as the multi-stakeholder Sustainable Development Goal 7 Technical Advisory Group convened by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and other relevant international organizations and stakeholders. The consultations produced a set of key messages that were published on the website of the global stocktaking.

77. In concluding the global stocktaking, the President of the General Assembly issued a call to action for further acceleration of the implementation of Goal 7 towards 2030 and beyond.6 Through the call to action, the President of the General Assembly urged the following actions to further accelerate the implementation of Goal 7:

> (a) Urgently prioritize and implement measures to achieve universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services by 2030, by extending access to electricity for over 600 million people who are currently without electricity and providing clean cooking solutions to over 2 billion people still relying on harmful fuels;

[5] See www.un.org/en/global-stocktaking.
[6] See www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/108/2024/04/Call-to-Action-Flyer-Final.pdf.

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73 Definition

This programme consists of six key focus areas:
1. Invest in people to end poverty and leave no one behind.
2. Harness science and innovation to tackle vulnerabilities and reach the SDGs.
3. Promote structural transformation for prosperity.
4. Boost trade and regional integration.
5. Combat climate change, environmental harm, and build resilience post-pandemic.
6. Strengthen global partnerships and use innovative tools for sustainable development.

75 Definition

A global stocktake is a comprehensive, UN-led process that assesses collective progress toward major international goals. It identifies successes and gaps, promotes accountability, and helps guide coordinated actions to achieve shared objectives.

77 Something to Think About

Why has progress on clean cooking progressed more slowly than electrification, and what targeted solutions could help close this gap?

(b) Rapidly accelerate global energy transitions and actions towards net-zero emission energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, including through tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030;

(c) Dramatically scale up finance and investment for developing countries, especially by tripling global investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency towards 2030, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable countries, including the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States;

(d) Ensuring in a compelling manner that no one is left behind, by enhancing public-private partnerships, technology transfer and capacity-building for developing countries, creating an enabling environment for energy transitions and emphasizing the interlinkages with other Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Urgently call upon Member States and other stakeholders, including the United Nations system, civil society, the private sector, women, young people and academia, in supporting this call to action, to follow up on the efforts of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All; to sustain and strengthen international dialogue and cooperation on energy at the United Nations, including through a potential United Nations conference on energy; and to further accelerate actions and partnerships for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Paris Agreement, in order to ensure sustainability for people and the planet.

78. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs will continue to support the Secretary-General in coordinating the relevant activities in support of follow-up to the high-level dialogue on energy, the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All and the global stocktaking, in close collaboration with UN-Energy and other relevant stakeholders.

V. Ensuring a global framework for follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All towards 2030

79. In December 2012, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/215, unanimously declared 2014 to 2024 as the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, underscoring the importance of energy in sustainable development. This landmark decision aimed to raise awareness of the global energy challenge, convene stakeholders and foster action towards a sustainable energy future.

80. The Decade, as a unique energy platform of the General Assembly, propelled crucial discussions, decisions and partnerships. Notably, over the course of 10 years, it served as an effective political stepping stone for facilitating key energy-related resolutions and decisions, including on Goal 7 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a plan of action for the Decade, the High-level Dialogue on Energy, and the global stocktaking on Goal 7. Efforts under the Decade also informed an in-depth review of Goal 7 in 2018 and 2023 at the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Key highlights include:

(a) Goal. Following the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All in 2012, the Decade promoted inclusive discussions and shared viewpoints that informed the processes leading up to the establishment of Goal 7, the first-ever universally agreed energy goal;

77 Something to Think About

How can multilateral development banks and private investors be incentivized to increase clean energy investments in countries that currently pose higher perceived financial risks?

77 Definition

Technology transfer involves not just sharing equipment but also know-how, training, and local adaptation, which are critical to empowering developing countries to sustain their energy transitions independently. For example, the UNFCCC's Technology Mechanism supports developing countries in accessing and applying climate technologies, including clean energy solutions. Specifically, it provides technical support, shares best practices, and connects countries with networks and resources, enabling faster adoption and helping them transition to low-carbon economies while meeting their climate goals.

77 Interesting Facts

Women and young people are vital to the energy transition. Women's full participation in designing and delivering energy solutions, supported by gender-sensitive policies, advances clean energy access and reduces energy poverty. Similarly, empowering youth as equal partners through initiatives like green talent pools fosters innovation, capacity building, and prepares them for future energy-sector roles.

(b) Political commitment. Instrumental in boosting ambition, the High-level Dialogue on Energy, in 2021, convened in support of the Decade, marked a historic moment, bringing together over 130 heads of State and senior representatives, for the first time in 40 years under the auspices of the General Assembly, to galvanize political commitment towards Goal 7;

(c) Road map. The global road map for accelerated Sustainable Development Goal 7 action, presented by the Secretary-General as a result of the High-level Dialogue on Energy in support of the Decade, delineated clear pathways and milestones towards achieving Goal 7 and just, inclusive and equitable energy transitions to meet the Paris Agreement;

(d) Partnership. The Decade provided a platform for catalysing multi-stakeholder partnerships, exemplified by the energy compacts showcasing commitments that, since 2021, have directed over $1.4 trillion towards achieving Goal 7 and net-zero emissions;

(e) Coordination. The Decade fostered coordination among United Nations agencies, as evidenced by the UN-Energy plan of action towards 2025, promoting collective action across 30 entities towards achieving Goal 7 and net-zero emissions;

(f) Connecting the dots. The Decade has provided a vehicle to connect the dots between Goal 7 and various issues and processes, including the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development and the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

(g) Leaving no one behind. The Decade has shed light on the situation and needs of vulnerable countries, in particular African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

81. The United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All has been pivotal in advancing the global energy agenda, informing Goal 7, bolstering political commitment and fostering partnerships, coordination and interlinkages. With the Decade coming to an end this year, leaving an institutional void post-Decade would risk derailing the progress achieved while international cooperation and dialogue are now more critical than ever to advance energy action aligned with the 2030 Agenda and just, inclusive, equitable and secure energy transitions towards net-zero emissions.

82. Building on the success of the Decade, Member States could consider establishing institutional follow-up arrangements. One option could be a successor decade that would support accelerating energy action towards 2030 and beyond. Another option could be to extend the current Decade for a further six years up to 2030 so as to strengthen efforts for a final push to achieve Goal 7.

83. Ensuring institutional follow-up arrangements to the Decade would serve to strengthen political commitments, mobilize action, create and enhance partnerships and increase the means of implementation that are required to decisively enhance the current trajectory and achieve Goal 7.

84. To that end, as part of the follow-up arrangements to the Decade, a United Nations conference on energy in line with the call to action by the President of the General Assembly, funded from extrabudgetary resources and aimed at taking stock of progress and charting a pathway forward with strengthened political commitment, could be considered in order to share experiences, lessons and practical solutions and catalyse partnerships, investments and action. The conference could take place in 2027 to build on the review of Goal 7 at the high-level political forum in 2026 and inform deliberations towards the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2027.

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80 Interesting Facts

This commitment is often formalized through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which countries began submitting in 2015 under the Paris Agreement. NDCs outline how nations plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate impacts, and they are updated every five years to increase ambition and ensure alignment with global climate and energy goals.

85. In order for the proposed conference on energy to succeed, a preparatory process could include:

(a) Regional and thematic consultations, including Member States and other stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society and academia;

(b) Elaboration of technical inputs, including lessons learned, policy options and recommendations on the basis of expert analysis;

(c) Mobilization of all stakeholders towards Goal 7 and net-zero emissions by 2050 to spur further action and partnerships, including through energy compacts, just energy transition partnerships and other country platforms, as well as other partnership arrangements.

86. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs stands ready to support the Secretary-General in coordinating activities in support of potential follow-up arrangements to the Decade in close collaboration with UN-Energy and other relevant stakeholders, including the preparation and organization of the conference.

VI. Scaling up action and implementing energy compacts

87. An extended United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All would make it possible to galvanize a final push to achieve Goal 7, including scaled-up efforts and transformative action by all stakeholders. The energy compacts can make a crucial difference by mobilizing voluntary commitments from all stakeholders, including the private sector, young people and civil society, in addition to Member States, and by providing an effective tool for driving holistic and inclusive action.

88. Since their inception in 2021, the energy compacts have been instrumental in efforts to deliver concrete results on the ground. As reported in 2023, a cumulative $69 billion was invested towards energy compact commitments. 7 Enhanced electricity access was provided to 129 million people, and improved access to clean cooking was provided to 22 million people. Furthermore, 181 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity has been installed and nearly 15,000 gigawatt-hours of energy have been saved through energy efficiency. UN-Energy will continue to facilitate the mobilization of energy compacts and monitoring of progress, including through the Energy Compact Action Network.8

89. As one of the 12 high-impact initiatives of the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the energy compacts have continued to mobilize financial commitments now totalling over $1.4 trillion and will continue to inspire increased action towards achieving Goal 7 and the energy transition in alignment with the Secretary-General's climate action acceleration agenda and climate solidarity pact.

VII. Strengthening coherence and coordination through UN-Energy

90. The General Assembly, in its resolution 78/157, encouraged UN-Energy to support coherence and coordination across the energy-related activities of the entities of the United Nations development system, within their respective mandates. Under the leadership of UN-Energy Co-Chairs, the Administrator for the United Nations Development Programme, Achim Steiner, and the Special Representative of the

[7] UN-Energy, "Energy compacts: annual progress report 2023", September 2023. Coordinated by UN-Energy supported by SEforALL.

[8] UN-Energy, "Energy compact action network", May 2022.

87 Something to Think About

Given that energy compacts are voluntary, what incentives or mechanisms might encourage wider participation and bolder commitments from countries and private actors?

88 Definition

Energy Compact Action Network, also known as ECAN, is a platform launched in 2022 to match support and commitments across all areas of the energy transition. It connects governments, companies, and civil society actors to co-develop solutions, mobilize finance, and share expertise, helping turn Energy Compact commitments into real-world progress. In short, it fosters partnerships, tracks impact, and accelerates action by serving as a trusted global matchmaking and coordination hub.

90 Definition

UN-Energy is the United Nations' main coordination platform for energy-related issues, established in 2004 to promote collaboration among UN agencies. It works to align policies, avoid duplication, and strengthen joint action across the UN system to accelerate sustainable energy transitions.

Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, Damilola Ogunbiyi, UN-Energy is working on bringing the United Nations system together for more integrated and coherent delivery of policy and normative support. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs provides the secretariat for UN-Energy.

91. As mandated by Assembly resolution 78/157, UN-Energy supported the preparations for the global stocktaking marking the completion of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All to further accelerate the implementation of Goal 7, including the regional and thematic consultations facilitating intergovernmental dialogues on energy and spurring further action and partnerships.

92. In support of the global road map for accelerated action on Goal 7, UN-Energy is continuing to implement its plan of action towards 2025, including by:

(a) Accelerating action through the development of joint initiatives on electricity access and clean cooking, including in support of the empowerment of women and young people;

(b) Catalysing multi-stakeholder partnerships, including through existing and new energy compacts;

(c) Increasing momentum, for example, by convening the second edition of the EnergyNow Sustainable Development Goal 7 Action Forum on 13 to 22 September 2023;

(d) Informing the global agenda by providing policy analysis, including through UN-Energy policy briefs, such as "Achieving Universal Access by 2030 and Net-Zero Emissions by 2050: A Global Roadmap for Just and Inclusive Clean Cooking Transition"; "Advancing Power System Connectivity in support of SDG 7";

(e) Tracking and sharing results by reporting, through a revamped digital platform and a series of outreach activities, including UN-Energy webinars.

93. UN-Energy members will continue to collaborate towards the annual overview of progress towards Goal 7, entitled "Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report", which is prepared jointly by the International Energy Agency, the International Renewable Energy Agency, the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Bank Group and the World Health Organization, and contribute to the series of policy briefs compiled by the Sustainable Development Goal 7 Technical Advisory Group. UN-Energy will also draw on the important work of the Council of Engineers for the Energy Transition, which contributes significantly to capacity-building and knowledge-sharing.

94. UN-Energy will continue to strengthen capacity-building and the sharing of lessons learned, including on the specific interlinkages of Goal 7. Ongoing efforts include activities through the Health and Energy Platform of Action operated jointly by the World Health Organization, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank; the Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions partnership created by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Itaipu Binacional; and the global conference on climate and Sustainable Development Goal synergies, jointly organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

95. The UN-Energy secretariat at the Department for Economic and Social Affairs will continue to be strengthened to support the implementation of its plan of action in close cooperation with UN-Energy members and partners, as well as the Development Coordination Office, as needed.

92 Definition

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are collaborations between governments, businesses, NGOs, and others working together to achieve shared goals and tackle complex problems more effectively by combining their resources, expertise, and perspectives.

94 Something to Think About

Does UN-Energy — in its coordinating role among partnerships — face advantages or obstacles when working across multiple sectors like health, water, food, and energy, simultaneously?

VIII. International Day of Clean Energy

96. On 26 January 2024, the United Nations celebrated its first International Day of Clean Energy, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/327. The day was established to raise awareness and mobilize action for a just and inclusive transition to clean energy for the benefit of people and the planet. Clean energy plays a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping communities gain access to reliable power sources, making it integral to the fight against climate change.

97. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the Department of Global Communications and in partnership with UN-Energy, is working with Member States, international organizations, the private sector and civil society to promote the use of the International Day of Clean Energy as a global platform to raise awareness, promote action and foster international cooperation towards achieving more sustainable and efficient energy systems. This includes the development and dissemination of information materials, organization of events and launch of media campaigns to enhance public understanding and engagement on clean energy issues.

IX. Conclusion

98. As major global crises, including the climate crisis, conflicts and a constrained global economic outlook, have also affected energy issues, progress on Goal 7 has slowed. The international community must urgently step up and double down regarding action on Goal 7 in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. Accelerating just and equitable energy transitions is needed more than ever, as the current trajectory will result in failure. All stakeholders must urgently increase their efforts in support of Goal 7. For the first time in a decade, access to electricity has decreased while progress on the other targets continues to remain insufficient.

99. The United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All has been pivotal in advancing the global energy agenda, informing Goal 7, bolstering political commitment and fostering partnerships, coordination and interlinkages. The global stocktaking marking the completion of the Decade to further accelerate the implementation of Goal 7 has demonstrated that the momentum created over the past 10 years needs to be built upon to spur further progress in line with the global road map for accelerated action on Goal 7. The call to action issued by the President of the General Assembly sent a clear signal in this regard.

100. With the Decade coming to an end this year, it is critical to establish robust arrangements not to leave an institutional void post-Decade. One option for Member States to consider could be a successor decade that would support accelerating energy action towards 2030 and beyond. Another option could be to extend the current Decade for a further six years up to 2030, so as to strengthen efforts for a final push to achieve Goal 7.

101. Ensuring institutional follow-up arrangements to the Decade would serve to strengthen political commitments, mobilize action, create and enhance partnerships and increase the means of implementation that are required to enhance decisively the current trajectory and achieve Goal 7.

103. UN-Energy will continue to strengthen coherence within the United Nations system on energy and step up support to Member States and other partners in line with its plan of action and in support of not only the follow-up on the high-level

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96 Interesting Facts

International days help educate the general public on current issues, by mobilizing resources and political commitment and resources, whilst also celebrating achievements on the matter.

'The International Day of Clean Energy' reflects growing international consensus on the need for cooperation, innovation, and equity in clean energy transitions, especially for communities most at risk of being left behind.

98 Something to Think About

One last thing to think about…

In today's context, is energy perceived as a fundamental human right or as a commodity? What are the consequences of this perspective?

dialogue on energy, but also the implementation of the Decade, the global stocktaking and other major global engagements.

104. It is important to note that the United Nations Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals issued its report outlining seven guiding principles and five actionable recommendations to embed equity and justice in the race to net-zero emissions. The voluntary principles aim to build trust between Governments, local communities and industry by addressing issues relating to equity, transparency, investment, sustainability and human rights. The principles build on existing standards and initiatives, in particular of the Working Group on Transforming the Extractive Industries for Sustainable Development and its flagship initiative on harnessing critical energy transition minerals for sustainable development, to strengthen and consolidate existing efforts.

105. It is only through resolute action and international cooperation that sustainable and resilient societies can be built successfully, ensuring that no one is left behind, while bringing the objectives of both the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement within reach.