



ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Virtual, September-November 2021

Energy for Sustainable Development

Meeting the commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement require all member States and other stakeholders to accelerate the attainment of their commitments and objectives on sustainable energy and to transform pathways to sustainable development.

We must maintain global momentum to accelerate a shift towards decarbonised, climate resilient energy systems and universal energy access. The world has been undergoing a transformation of energy systems at an unprecedented scale, accelerated by innovations, rapid cost declines for clean technologies, and related policy shifts. New off-grid solutions and business models have been expanding electricity access, while also creating jobs, empowering women and making communities more resilient.

To decide on specific courses of action on sustainable energy to pursue, countries should reflect on their strategic approach to energy. Regional challenges and objectives need to be addressed with products and activities that deliver measurable, concrete results in the near term but with enduring impact.

The Eleventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (the Eleventh Forum, IFESD-11) is an opportunity to reflect on the implications of accelerating and re-directing actions.

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the global economy and upended the lives of billions of people in an unprecedented way. While the pandemic is the most urgent threat facing humanity today, climate change remains a greater threat over the long term, and we must not lose sight of that overwhelming challenge in our current responses to this pandemic.

Even before this situation, the world was not on track to achieve most of the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement must remain at the

centre of our efforts to recover and move forward in a better way, while also leaving no one behind.

Governments should integrate their responses to post-COVID-19 recovery with their SDG targets and long-range efforts to combat climate change and thus create more resilient societies with stronger health systems, fewer people living in extreme poverty, more gender equality, and a healthier natural environment. Sustainable energy has a central role to play in these efforts.

However, the COVID-19 crisis has already had serious effects on SDG 7 progress. Although the world has made important gains towards SDG 7, even before the pandemic overall progress was not on track to reach its targets by 2030. Close to 800 million people still lack access to electricity globally, while 2.8 billion people remain without clean cooking solutions. Renewables are lagging in important end-use sectors, such as transport, industry, heating and cooling, and global energy efficiency improvements need to increase significantly.

Objective

The objective of the Eleventh Forum is to explore how to help member States improve access to affordable and clean energy for all and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector. The Forum will look into ways for countries to reconcile the reality of fossil fuels' share of the energy mix with the need to address climate change, achieve sustainable development, enhance integration of the energy markets, and facilitate the transition to a sustainable energy system.

Forum arrangements

The International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development is a platform that provides context and enables clear-sighted action. The Eleventh Forum is organized jointly by the United Nations Regional Commissions in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Development Programme, and other international organizations.

Due to the continuing situation with COVID-19 pandemic, IFESD-11 will be organized as a series of workshops on sustainable energy and the role of energy in achieving sustainable development that will be conducted in a hybrid format (limited in-person participation and online) between September and November 2021.

IFESD-11 will provide an opportunity for collaboration among the organizations of the United Nations system, governments, civil society, financial institutions, the private sector, and academia needed to integrate the responses to COVID-19 crisis with meeting the objectives on sustainable energy. Partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaboration at scale at all levels are essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

The Eleventh Forum will attract international energy experts, government officials, and representatives from the business community, financial sector, academia, and civil society to share their perspectives and views.

Ambitions

The COVID-19 crisis can either widen the existing sustainable energy access gaps or accelerate the path towards achieving SDG 7. The outcome depends on the priorities of national economic stimulus packages and global responses to support pathways to sustainable development.

The strong political commitments by governments and multilateral cooperation will be more crucial than ever in maintaining the momentum for SDG 7. Multi-stakeholder initiatives play a central role in accelerating action. All stakeholders should step up and strengthen their efforts to support the implementation of the SDGs.

Recognizing the importance of accelerating the commitment of stakeholders for such support and taking into account the different ways to approach this, the Eleventh Forum provides an opportunity to build upon the achievements of previous fora and develop a roadmap for future strategic orientations.

The following topics/directions are proposed to be included as strategic orientations:

Energy access: accelerated actions towards universal access to electricity and clean cooking, as well as heating/cooling and other energy services.

Energy transition: energy sector decarbonisation strategies to dramatically increase the application of renewable energy and energy efficiency, including in end use sectors like transport (e.g. renewable powered electric vehicles), while ensuring a just transition, including strategies on coal phase-out.

Enabling SDGs through inclusive, just energy transitions: maximizing the positive impacts of an inclusive and just energy transitions on the achievement of the SDGs, including gender equality, job creation, youth empowerment, agriculture and food systems, health, education, water, and sustainable production and consumption, through coordinated multi-sectoral interventions.

Innovation, technology and data: advancing energy access, energy transitions as well as enabling the SDGs through the development and application of data; technology, innovation, research and capacity building measures, as well as through integrated policy making and regulation that are necessary to achieve the Energy Compact commitments, and SDG7.

Finance and investment: mobilization and leverage of public and private finance to achieve the SDG7 and carbon neutrality, taking also into consideration enabling mechanisms such as the fiscal response to COVID-19, fossil fuel subsidy reform; green investment regulation; risk management and insurance.
