

Opening Remarks for NEXSTEP workshop in Armenia

Inception Workshop on the Development of an SDG 7 Roadmap for Armenia

26 November 2022, Yerevan, Armenia

Distinguished delegates - Mr. Hakob Vardanyan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Territorial; Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia and Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin, Deputy Executive Secretary, of the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning.

On behalf of ESCAP, thank you for joining this Inception Workshop on the Development of an SDG 7 Roadmap for Armenia.

Energy is the key enabler for all development. Our shared ambition to transition the energy system to a sustainable, low carbon and efficient model is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals through SDG7. The current economic fallout we are experiencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic reinforces the importance of investing in new energy systems in order to revitalise economic growth and create jobs, while achieving global goals and targets.

Shifting the dial on sustainable energy is fundamental to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. However transitioning the energy sector presents a complex and difficult task for policymakers. The transition needs to ensure sustained economic growth and respond to increasing energy demand. It needs to reduce energy emissions and to capitalize on the interlinkages between SDG 7 and other SDGs.

This requires an integrated system approach by considering the synergies between its constituent elements – which are:

- Firstly increasing access to modern energy services,
- increasing the share of renewable energy,
- improving energy efficiency, and
- reducing emissions from the energy sector.

Each of these actions has an impact on the others. Therefore, a system optimisation process is needed to identify the best available pathway to build the energy system we need by 2030. Such an energy transition requires skills and expertise that may differ from the conventional energy planning approach.

Back in 2018, ESCAP undertook an in-depth assessment on the progress of SDG7 across the Asia-Pacific region. Based on this we have developed a framework to support member States in transitioning the energy sector to achieve SDG7 targets in conjunction with the NDCs.

At the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum held in 2018, member States requested ESCAP to support countries in developing national SDG 7 roadmaps.

We have responded to this call. ESCAP has developed an integrated energy planning tool (National Expert SDG Tool for Energy Planning – or NEXSTEP) that helps policymakers develop national roadmaps. Further details of NEXSTEP, will be shared by our colleagues Mr Oleg Dzioubinski, Mr. Anis Zaman, and Mr. Vitaly Bekker later in this workshop.

Now we have joined forces with the Economic Commission for Europe to expand the reach of this program, working with countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The approach we take recognizes that roadmap development should be a country-led process, where countries take full ownership of their roadmaps instead of being driven by external parties. The roadmap development process needs to involve all stakeholders. It should also be harmonized and coordinated with the existing national energy strategies and plans.

I am very pleased that Armenia has joined the NEXSTEP initiative. We are confident that with the support of the Government of Armenia, the SDG 7 roadmap will provide valuable and tangible recommendations for Armenia's future energy planning and sustainable development.

The ultimate success of this initiative would be to see its recommendations being incorporated into plans and policies in the

energy sector. Together ECE and ESCAP would be willing to discuss how to implement the recommendations once the SDG 7 roadmap is developed. As such, we look forward to continuing this collaboration to contribute to Armenia's sustainable energy transition.

I thank you all and wish you very fruitful discussions and a productive day.

Thank you.