



Concept Note

Symposium

Progress on SDG 7 and its Interlinkages with other SDGs

in support of

First Review of SDG7 during the 2018 High-Level Political Forum

Bangkok, Thailand

28-30 June 2017

BACKGROUND

Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all is fundamental to human development and is also a necessary investment in our collective future. Energy is inextricably linked to most of the global challenges now and in the future, including poverty, food security, clean water, public health, education, economic growth, youth's and women's empowerment, and climate change.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has set out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, which jointly constitute a comprehensive plan of action to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development. SDG7 is a first-ever universal goal on energy, with five targets on access, efficiency, renewables and means of implementation.

Member States will undertake periodic in-depth reviews, including through the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), to assess progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs through the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), with SDG7 in focus in 2018. This will serve as a first critical milestone towards 2030, and, coupled with the VNRs, as an important opportunity to take stock of progress to-date including energy's linkages with other Sustainable Development Goals, and reflect on the way forward to accelerate SDG7 implementation.

With the overarching objective of contributing to the first global review of SDG 7 in the 2018 HLPF, the UN system will organise a series of *Symposiums and Meetings* in 2017 and 2018 to be conducted in Asia, Europe, Latin America and Africa.

These proposed events will provide a platform to discuss major issues related to progress on SDG7 and its interlinkages with other SDGs, such as health, education, gender, food, water, humanitarian response and climate change. Each symposium is expected to highlight a few of these interlinkages to allow in-depth discussions. Taken together, they will provide an opportunity for knowledge exchange among Member States and the UN system for advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including through supporting the preparations of the Voluntary National Reviews, especially towards HLPF 2018.

A synthesis from the discussions from these events this year will be prepared to provide inputs to a *Preparatory Meeting in support of the global review of SDG7*, to be held on 7-8 December 2017 at the UN HQs in New York.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Symposium is to provide a platform to discuss major issues related to global progress on SDG7 and its interlinkages with other development issues and processes at the global and national levels, including the global review of SDG7 at the High-Level Political Forum in 2018. More specific objectives include:

- *Assess progress on SDG7* including on energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- *Identify challenges, gaps and opportunities in addressing the interlinkages of SDG7 with other SDGs* (e.g. health, education and gender);
- *Discuss the needs for capacity building* to identify a set of guiding principles that can form the basis for a generic framework for capacity building to strengthen the interlinkages between SDG7 and other SDGs;
- *Brainstorm on a potential in-depth global assessment on energy* with focus on energy's interlinkages with other SDGs and a range of critical issues for a global agenda to provide a foundation for evidence-based policy dialogues to advance SDG7 and its interlinkages with other SDGs;
- *Develop a roadmap leading up to the global review of SDG7 at the High-Level Political Forum in 2018 and beyond* in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

This symposium is expected to result in:

- Enhanced knowledge on the gaps and opportunities to advance SDG7 and its interlinkages, based on lessons and experiences on the ground;
- Initial concept of a generic guiding framework for capacity building to advance the interlinkages between SDG7 and other SDGs;
- Initial concept of a global assessment on energy with a focus on the interlinkages between SDG7 and other SDGs;
- A summary report highlighting the outcomes of the discussions during the symposium.

VENUE

The Symposium will be held in Bangkok, Thailand and jointly organised by the Division for Sustainable Development of UN DESA, its UN Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), scheduled to take place 28-30 June 2017. The meeting will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre, Meeting Room F.

TIMING AND DURATION

The event is tentatively scheduled for 28-30 June 2017. It will consist of a total of five plenary sessions. This will include three morning sessions and two afternoon sessions. The tentative plenary sessions include:

Session 1: Progress on SDG7

Review progress on SDG7 and its targets on energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency and means of implementation, at country, regional and global levels.

Session 2: SDG7 Interlinkages

Discuss the challenges, gaps and opportunities in advancing the interlinkages and integration between SDG7 and other SDGs, based on lessons and experiences from around the world.

Session 3: Capacity Building

Discuss how to develop capacity at all levels to address the major gaps identified in the previous session. The aim is to distil key guiding principles that can be the basis for developing a generic guiding framework for capacity building to advance the interlinkages and integration between SDG7 and other SDGs.

Session 4: Global Assessment

Brainstorm on the scope of a potential in-depth global energy analysis (Energy for SDGs report), with a special attention to the interlinkages between SDG7 and other SDGs. The aim is to present evidence-based policy analysis and recommendations for decision-makers at all levels. It will be designed to inform the HLPF 2018 and a summit-level HLPF to be held under the auspices of the UN General Assembly in 2019, including through the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) to be published in 2019.

Session 5: Way forward:

Discuss a plan of engagements at various levels toward the first global review of SDG7 at HLPF 2018 and beyond.

MATERIALS

Supporting materials on the interlinkages, capacity building and global analysis will be developed and shared in advance to facilitate discussions during the Symposium.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants expected for this Symposium include: representatives of Member States, including developing countries, energy experts and UN-Energy member organizations as well as experts in other fields linked to energy and its interlinkages with SDGs.

Officials from the United Nations system as well as researchers and experts from private and public sectors will support the event. About 40-60 participants are expected.