



I. Closing the Energy Gap for All People

Compounding crises of recent years, namely the accelerating climate change, the recent COVID-19 pandemic, and the fuel, food, and finance triple crisis provoked by the war in Ukraine, have accentuated the global economic cost of energy systems, currently highly dependent on fossil fuels.¹ Against this backdrop, the desperate need for an accelerated global and just energy transition becomes distinctly apparent, with UN Secretary-General António Guterres calling to “[...] maximize this moment to push for the transformational change our world needs”.²

The General Assembly Resolution 75/221 (2020) on “*Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all*” stressed the importance of a coherent, integrated approach to energy issues and urged for the fostering of multi-stakeholder partnerships for sharing of knowledge, technological and financial resources.³ The promotion of synergies across global energy agendas on both regional and international levels was seen as critical to increasing investments and actions to support Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 as set in General Assembly Resolution 70/1 (2015).⁴

To address this, the Secretary-General issued the first ever Global Roadmap for accelerated SDG7 action for universal energy access and energy transition at the UN High-level Dialogue on Energy in September 2021, in attendance of more than 130 global leaders.⁵ To accelerate achieving universal energy access and energy transition by 2030 and expedite progress on the *Paris Agreement* (2015) on Climate Change, ambitious targets to achieve access to affordable and clean energy services for all by 2030 and expedite energy transition towards net zero emission by 2050, were set.⁶ These included closing the energy access gap to allow 500 million more people to gain access to electricity and 1 billion to clean cooking solutions by 2025 and to provide universal access to both healthcare facilities and schools worldwide by 2030.⁷ Central was the call for an inclusive, just, and equitable global energy transition, with frameworks being guided by a focus on vulnerable communities, gender-equality and with a focus on African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states.⁸ Moreover, a rapid transition to decarbonized energy systems, the creation of 30 million jobs in renewable energy and energy efficiency as well as a 100% increase in modern renewable capacities on a global scale was called for.⁹ Further emphasized, was the need for the tripling of global investment, both public and private, into renewable energy and energy efficiency, beyond the US\$400 billion secured at the summit as well as harnessing Energy Compacts for concerted concrete action.¹⁰

¹ IRENA. *World Energy Transitions Outlook 2022*. 2022. p.14.

² Department of Economic and Social Affairs. UN. *UN organizations launch plan to catalyze action by 2025 on energy commitments*. 2021; UN. Meeting Coverage and Press Releases. *Press Conference by Secretary-General António Guterres at United Nations Headquarters*. 2022.

³ UN General Assembly. *Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all (A/RES/75/221)*. 2020.

⁴ UN General Assembly. *Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all (A/RES/75/221)*. 2020; UN General Assembly. *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

⁵ UN. *High Level Dialogue on Energy New York, September 2021*. 2021.

⁶ UN. *Global Roadmap for Accelerated SDG7 Action in Support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change*. 2021. p.1-4; UN. *Paris Agreement*. 2015.

⁷ UN. *Global Roadmap for Accelerated SDG7 Action in Support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change*. 2021. p.1-4.

⁸ Ibid. p.1-4.

⁹ Ibid. p.1-4.

¹⁰ Ibid. p.1-4.



With the support of UN-Energy, the Energy Compact Action Network (ECAN) (2022), provides a global platform, interlinking public and private stakeholders to voluntary concert actions of direct investment and resource sharing.¹¹ The *Energy Compacts Annual Progress Report 2022* reported an investment of US\$46 billion to enable SDG7, provided enhanced access to electricity for 6 million people and improved access to clean cooking to 14 million people.¹² Novel coalitions supporting energy access and transition in Nigeria and the City of Santiago, Chile, strengthening women's role in leading and benefiting from energy transition, as well as an expansion of green hydrogen coalitions, were announced.¹³

In 2022, UN-Energy strengthened the momentum to operationalize the global energy transitions and support Energy Compacts by setting two paramount agendas: (a) *UN-Energy Plan of Action to 2025* - guiding UN Energies' actions in seven key working areas and (b) *UN-Energy Pledge to 2025* - committing to scaling up action according to the Global Roadmap.¹⁴ At the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) 27, countries recommitted to the decarbonization of five major sectors under *The Breakthrough Agenda* of COP 26 (2021), through 25 novel collaborative sector-specific "Priority Actions".¹⁵ Overseen by the Mission Innovation and Clean Energy Ministerial, 23 national governments and the European Commission announced US\$94 billion investment into 221 demonstrations to demonstrate clean energy technologies by 2026.¹⁶ The *Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan* underlined the global energy crisis and stressed the urgency for rapid energy system transformations, highlighting a global need for US\$4 trillion annual investment into renewable energy up to 2030 to enable net zero emissions by 2050.¹⁷

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) further aligned its *UNDP- Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (2021)* to the Global Roadmap by defining, in its 3x6x3 framework, the increasing energy access for those furthest behind and the acceleration of the transition to renewable energy as one of six signature solutions to reach the SDGs effectively and efficiently.¹⁸ Furthermore, the UNDP supported a country-led technical assistance program for mini-grids in 18 African countries that was launched with the aim of supporting clean energy access by mobilizing private sector investment, increasing financial viability, and supporting innovative business models.¹⁹

Finally, further national efforts are being made to support the sustainable energy transition in displacement settings. One example is the Decarbonizing Humanitarian Energy (DHE) Programme launched by the German Federal Foreign Office in December 2021.²⁰ With an initial investment of 21 million euros, the DHE Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), coordinated by the GPA Coordination Unit at the UNITAR, NORCAP, and UNDP, will serve to support the scale-up of sustainable energy and reduction of cost and greenhouse gas emissions in five countries of the Sahel Region.²¹

In conclusion, the Global Roadmap for accelerated SDG7 of 2021 catalyzed the momentum towards expediting just global energy transition and providing a strong guiding framework for subsequent implementation plans and concrete agendas. The UNDP's visionary strategy and efforts will drive an inclusive transition to renewable and sustainable energy systems, continuing to act as a key player in

¹¹ UN Energy. *Energy Compact Action Network*. 2022.

¹² UN Energy. *Energy Compacts – Annual Progress Report 2022*. 2022. p.2

¹³ UN Climate Change. *UN Organizations Launch Clean Energy Plan*. 2022.

¹⁴ UN Energy. *Energy Compacts – Annual Progress Report 2022*. 2022. p.7.

¹⁵ Climate Champions. *The Breakthrough Agenda: a master plan to accelerate decarbonization of five major sectors*. 2022.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UNFCC. *Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan*. 2022.

¹⁸ UNDP. *UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021. p.9.

¹⁹ Global Environment Faculty Secretariat. *The Africa Minigrids Program*. 2021. p.1-4.

²⁰ GPA. UNITAR. *Germany Commits to Sustainable Energy Transition in Displacement Settings*. 2022.

²¹ Ibid.



global networks and energy compacts. Closing the energy gap sustainably for all people remains vital to follow the 1.5 degree celsius pathway and achieve significant improvement in global welfare.

Further Research

When researching this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: Which novel challenges have arisen in providing energy access to all people? What are some of the major challenges of forming synergies across global energy agendas and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships to provide energy access to all people? Why is an inclusive and just energy transition so crucial to achieving SDG7?

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II. Building Climate Change Resilience Through Adaptation Strategies

Climate change affects people worldwide, with 91 percent of geophysical changes directly related to climate change.²² The Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021, in effect since 2019 came to an end. The worldwide progress and method of operation were impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic beginning in 2020. Up to 3.6 million people live in conditions that are at risk of being affected by climate change.²³ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025*, therefore, tries to learn from these experiences and tries to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030 even if this had gotten more complicated.

Since 2019 changes in the Role of the International System occurred. UNDPs *Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025* is not just built on the experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic but also on the lessons which had been learned through the Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021.²⁴ Since 2020 the achievement of the SDGs seems farther away than ever before.²⁵ The UNDP offers three main directions of change for the member states, which are structural transformation (including green, inclusive, and digital transition), leaving no one behind, and building resilience.²⁶ To maximize the development impact, strategic innovation and digitalization as well as a change in financing is the goal within the next years.²⁷

Special attention must be paid to the area of Funding Climate Resilience and Adaptation. Without the possibility of personal negotiations climate financing needed to be accomplished virtually and with high flexibility.²⁸ The Adaptation Fund was raised significant in 2020 and opened a new funding window.²⁹ New pledges were funded with US\$ 116 million and the annual resource mobilization target has been raised to US\$ 120 million.³⁰ In 2021 the support of the least developed countries on adaptation turned 20 years.³¹ The number of National Adaptation Plans (NAP) from developing countries, which are available on NAP Central, rose from 20 to 31 plans in one year.³² Which ends up in a total of 40 NAP's by the end of 2022.³³ The Standing Committee on Finance reported to COP26 in 2021.³⁴ The High-level summary emphasized a higher investment from the public and private sectors for nature-based solutions to save approximately 10 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year.³⁵ These solutions will be financed with US\$ 4.1 trillion till 2050.³⁶ These higher investments are also a goal in the environmental offers of the UNDP *Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025*.³⁷

Furthermore, The Role of Technology in Capacity-building for Adaptation Strategies had undergone some updates. UNDP's *Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025* stresses the need to invest in digitalization to increase the effectiveness of finance flow.³⁸ New innovations should not just stand on the shoulders of the SDGs but also accelerate their progress.³⁹ In 2020 the Technology Executive Committee

²² UNDP. *What are the Sustainable Development Goals?*. 2022.

²³ UN. *Global Issues: Climate Change*. 2023.

²⁴ UNDP. *Strategic Plan, 2022 – 2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2017. p. 1

²⁵ Ibid. p. 3

²⁶ Ibid. p. 7

²⁷ Ibid. p. 13

²⁸ UNFCCC. *UN Climate Change Annual Report 2020*. 2021. p. 30

²⁹ Ibid. p. 30f

³⁰ Ibid. p. 31

³¹ UNFCCC. *UN Climate Change Annual Report 2021*. 2022.

³² Ibid.

³³ UNFCCC. *National Adaptation Plans*. 2022.

³⁴ UNFCCC. *The SCF Forum on Finance for Nature-based Solutions (Part 1)*. 2022.

³⁵ UNFCCC. *Report of the Standing Committee on Finance (FCCC/CP/2021/10/Add.4-FCCC/PA/CMA/2021/7/Add.4)*. 2021. p. 2

³⁶ Ibid. p. 2

³⁷ UNDP. *Strategic Plan, 2022 – 2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2017. p. 10

³⁸ Ibid. p. 16

³⁹ Ibid. p. 16



facilitated the *Global technology need assessment project (GTNAP)*.⁴⁰ Within this project, falling under the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN does not just fund the development of countries' plans but also assesses the spread of the ideas.⁴¹

In the Community-based Approaches to Climate Resilience the following conclusions are important. Community resilience is one of the Directions of Change in the UNDP *Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025*.⁴² In the prevention of different crises that could occur teamwork of the member states is crucial.⁴³ Therefore, the UNDP doesn't focus on the scientific and political opportunities but also the private sector.⁴⁴

In summary, the goals of the UNDP have undergone some changes but the direction stayed the same since 2019. While the main goals are unchanged, the Covid-19 pandemic diminished progress which had happened in the past. The gaps in capacity and financial manners between highly developed and developing countries increased.

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⁴⁰ UNFCCC. *UN Climate Change Annual Report 2020*. 2021. p. 33

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 33

⁴² UNDP. *Strategic Plan, 2022 – 2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2017. p. 10

⁴³ Ibid. p. 10

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 10



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<https://unfccc.int/annualreport#responding-to-the-challenges-of-the-pandemic>



III. Sustainable Cities and Transportation: A Bridge to Development

Sustainable cities as well as transportation are increasingly being thought of as important intertwined components and not as an end in itself but as an essential means to achieve the SDGs and the objectives of the *Paris Agreement (2015)*. This is also reflected in the United Nations' recent work on the topic.

The *Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference (GSTC2)* which took place from 14 to 16 October 2021 in a hybrid format in Beijing, China marks the largest high-level effort on the topic of Sustainable Cities and Transportation since 2018.⁴⁵ The conference was held in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/212 (2017).⁴⁶

In preparation for the conference, a multitude of UN agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme, contributed to a report edited by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).⁴⁷ The *Sustainable transport, sustainable development: Interagency report for second Global Sustainable Transport Conference (2021)* gives an overview of current challenges and opportunities. There are multiple additional and more detailed aspects in comparison to prior publications. The critical impact of Covid-19 on public transport, but also its role as an accelerator for increased sustainable transportation developments are highlighted for example.⁴⁸ Smart Cities and intelligent transport systems (ITS) are becoming increasingly important.⁴⁹ Gender-specific solutions and women's safety are more extensively discussed as well.⁵⁰ Also compare the report on *Transport Innovation for Sustainable Development: A Gender Perspective (2021)* by the International Transport Forum (ITF) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) from the year 2021 on this aspect.⁵¹ The UN report also specifically connects urban planning and transportation through vulnerable groups being most affected by bad planning and urban sprawl. Due to these factors, they are disproportionately being forced to use unsafe ways of transportation.⁵² Additionally, the annex provides a list of important international transport-related conventions, regulations, and agreements up to the year 2021.⁵³ It also includes an overview of existing transport and climate-related commitments.⁵⁴

In comparison to previous conferences and resolutions, GSTC2 did not have to focus on establishing a linkage between the achievability of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sustainable Transportation, as that had already been achieved in the previous conference, but could focus on more specific topics.⁵⁵ Thematic session six focused on Sustainable transport and sustainable cities. The discussion focused on cities as change agents, public transport, non-motorized transport, new technologies, spatial planning as well as safety issues.⁵⁶ Road safety was and is of specific importance to low- and middle-income countries, as most road deaths and injuries occur there.⁵⁷ The prevalence of this topic is also reflected in General Assembly resolution 74/299 (2020) on improving

⁴⁵ UN DESA. *Report of the Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference*. 2021. p. 1.

⁴⁶ UN GA. *Strengthening the links between all modes of transport to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. (A/RES/72/212)*. 2017. p. 5.

⁴⁷ UN DESA. *Sustainable transport, sustainable development. Interagency report for second Global Sustainable Transport Conference*. 2021. p. preface.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 22.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 52.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 37.

⁵¹ ITF OECD. *Transport Innovation for Sustainable Development: A Gender Perspective*. 2021.

⁵² UN DESA. *Sustainable transport, sustainable development. Interagency report for second Global Sustainable Transport Conference*. 2021. p. 24.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 77.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 83.

⁵⁵ UN DESA. *Report of the Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference*. 2021. p. 1.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 25.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 26.



global road safety. Being one of the only General Assembly resolutions specifically focusing on transportation in recent years.⁵⁸ The Decade of Action for Road Safety established with this resolution which includes the target of preventing at least 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030 has been implemented in various forms already. For example, through the extensive report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on *A Foundational Safety System concept to make roads safer in the Decade 2021-2030* in 2020.⁵⁹ The sixth session proposed seven recommendations for action to all involved stakeholders.⁶⁰ Other key outcomes and calls for action can be found in the “Beijing Statement”.⁶¹

There are also multiple current public-private partnerships on the topic. One example is the SOLUTIONSPLus project supported by the European Commission bringing together UN agencies and committed stakeholders from various backgrounds.⁶² The goal is to integrate electric mobility solutions in an urban setting in the context of the Paris Agreement, the SDGs, and the New Urban Agenda.⁶³

UN bodies also developed very specific methodologies to measure the sustainability of transportation. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) developed and published the Sustainable Urban Transport Index (SUTI) in late 2018 as part of a larger effort to foster sustainable transport in the region.⁶⁴ This Excel-based tool is capable to assess and compare the performance and sustainability of different urban transport systems and visually displays the state of all indicators.⁶⁵

With the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2023 being only months from publication, it remains without question, that Sustainable Cities and Transportation and the actions that have to be taken in their name will be a decisive factor in the achievability of those high goals.

In your further research especially keep in mind the specific abilities and capabilities that UNDP could provide in the context of this topic. Up to this date more concrete action has only been taken on relatively specific topics. You could use them, expand upon a subtopic mentioned in the paragraphs above or delve deeper into an other direction which has not experienced the attention it deserves to this day in your opinion.

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⁵⁸ UN GA. *Improving global road safety (A/RES/74/299)*. 2020.

⁵⁹ UNECE. *A Foundational Safety System concept to make roads safer in the Decade 2021-2030*. 2020.

⁶⁰ UN DESA. *Report of the Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference*. 2021. p. 26.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 40.

⁶² SOLUTIONSPLus. *Project Brochure*. 2020. p. 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 1.

⁶⁴ UN ESCAP. *Sustainable Urban Transport Index Brochure*. 2019.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 2.



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UN GA. *Improving global road safety* (A/RES/74/299). 2020. Retrieved 22 December 2022 from <http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/299>

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