UN-Energy Plan of Action 2019 – 2020:
Collective Energy Action

Stepping Up Collective Energy Action

Given its re-emergence in 2018 as the primary multilateral mechanism for inter-agency collaboration in the field of energy, the intention for 2019-2020 is to grow confidence in UN-Energy as a coordination mechanism, while also growing its ambition toward collective energy action. To do so UN-Energy will build on its members existing work and areas of excellence and focus collaboration on six proposed themes and actions.

Working group leads will be assigned to each theme with the intention of establishing realistic timeframes while work proceeds on each call to action as soon as possible. In terms of priorities, we propose:

(i) universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy;
(ii) immediate focus and scale-up of energy efficiency and renewable measures;
(iii) focus on helping countries to create the required enabling conditions to leverage public and private investment in low/zero carbon energy infrastructure.

In taking this work forward, UN-Energy will focus on approaches that will be inclusive and aimed at reducing the inequality gap, to ensure that the costs of the transition will be distributed fairly across society. In addition, the network will increasingly focus on country-level coordination.

Actions

1. Supporting the Secretary-General’s 2019 Climate Summit

UN-Energy should drive action towards the UNSG’s Climate Summit in 2019 as an early priority, particularly given SG’s ambition to focus on the energy transition and to mobilise climate action and finance.

- Early in 2019, UN-Energy members will examine how they can better support the Climate Summit by coordinating their activities, with the aim of achieving a number of joint outcomes at the Summit.
- Consideration should be given to ideas with genuine value add for the UN-Energy members and partners, including in the energy track, and moves on large and ambitious ideas such as fossil fuel subsidies and carbon pricing and other items relating to the needed energy transition.
- In-line with the goals of the Secretary-General there should be an emphasis on ambition. Also, in view of the recent IPCC 1.5°C report, there needs to be a focus on actions that lead to immediate emissions reductions (to ensure a peak in 2020), like for example energy efficiency, and a deliberate focus on the highest emitting
countries (G20); UN-Energy could, for example, also consider a focus on the equity gap and how to close it, to ensure a just transition supported at the societal level.

- UN-Energy members will also seek to better coordinate the work to be undertaken, and key outcomes sought, from the preparatory consultation meetings and events leading up to the Summit, including support for the 2019 HLPF review process.

2. Moving the dial on SDG7: High Impact Targeted Interventions (HITI) to improve in-country coordination

In-line with the reforms of the Secretary-General and, given that SDG7 is critical to enabling delivery of other SDGs, UN-Energy members will support actions, in line with the renewed UNDAF, for improved UN coordination toward the energy transition.

- Starting in the first half of 2019 UN-Energy will consider UN system country team support toward SDG7 within high impact countries\(^1\), where the need is greatest, to ensure the assistance provided is targeted, impactful, effective and coordinated to best support those Member States to achieve SDG7.
- To do this, Principals commit to meet twice yearly to consider in-country efforts to support Member State achievement of SDG7 within 2-3 countries, and what UN-Energy members can do to better support these efforts in line with the country’s UNDAF. Early consideration will be given to which countries to focus on initially, including by considering countries’ NDCs, but with an overall focus on achieving high impact.
- UN-Energy will meet virtually with selected countries’ Resident Coordinators (RCs). Ahead of this meeting the RC and their country team will review existing UN actions on energy, including under the UNDAF. The RC will then provide a two-page background briefing on each HITI, outlining the challenges and opportunities for UN support to HIC countries achieving SDG7 and provide a ‘wish-list’ of what more UN-Energy members can do to assist this work in-line with the framework of the UNDAF. The RC will then remotely brief the UN-Energy principals meeting and then participate in a ‘Q and A’ session. Additional context on the energy sector within a selected country may also be sought from, or volunteered by, specific UN-Energy members, particularly those outside of the UN Sustainable Development Group (for example the World Bank).
- The principals will then decide a list of 3-4 concrete actions (High Impact Targeted Interventions (HITI)) to be taken by UN-Energy members focused on the greatest need for movement on energy within the country to meet SDG7, and in line with the UNDAF determine what further coordination could be undertaken and what practical assistance can be provided to the RC on energy issues. Owners and co-owners of each HITI will then be determined to move this action forward.
- To drive and incentivise coordination and cooperation toward this end, funding mechanisms will be secured to support the actions (HITI) to be taken under the UNDAF, including by examining the appropriateness of using existing cross-cutting fund to match contributions from UN-Energy members, including the SDG Fund.

\(^1\) “High Impact” refers to countries that represent the highest potential (the top 20-25 countries that collectively represent at least 80% of the global goal)
3. **Engaging the Energy Health Nexus**

Given the growing awareness of the impact of the nexus between Health and Energy UN-Energy will advance work to ensure the multilateral system adequately responds to the urgent need for action in the area.

- UN-Energy will resolve and adopt the inclusive health/energy platform at a principals meeting within the first half of 2019. Prior to the principal’s meeting, informal consultations and discussions will be held, organized by WHO and UNDP, with different UN Energy and SDG 7 partners to ensure the inputs of other stakeholders are adequately reflected in the proposed activities under the Platform.
- Members of UN-Energy agree to work in partnership to advance issues at the nexus of energy and health, initially beginning in two major areas (see below). It is anticipated that this Platform’s focus areas will expand to cover other health and energy issues moving forward (e.g. transport).
  - **Clean Cooking:** A new platform, informed by experience from existing and prior efforts (like the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves), could serve as a mechanism to support an inter-agency initiative to accelerate progress in clean cooking to create sustained momentum on the issue and mobilise necessary support to make rapid progress. This initiative should lay out concrete and clear responsibilities for each agency.
  - **Sustainable Energy for Healthcare Facilities:** A number of organizations within UN-Energy are actively working to accelerate action on sustainable energy in healthcare facilities, given the critical role it plays in achieving SDG3 – universal health coverage. A ‘Clean Energy for Healthcare: Africa’ conference will be held in Q2 2019, which provides an opportunity to convene key stakeholders (UN-Energy members, governments, civil society, private sector).

4. **Working on Displaced Peoples and Energy**

There is an increasing awareness of a need for innovative responses and coordination to ensure access to sustainable energy for people affected by conflict or natural disaster. UN-Energy should consider a focus on concrete actions, including prioritising energy for displaced people and information, knowledge sharing, networking and data going forward. This action item has its own work plan and time-table, led by the GPA. It is mentioned here and proposed to be adopted under the umbrella of UN-Energy, with involvement from participating members/partners of UN-Energy as appropriate.

a. Proposals for coordination and cooperation in this area will be considered in early 2019 building on the Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement (GPA). GPA is a non-binding framework and entails concrete recommendations for accelerated progress towards the vision of safe access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy services for all displaced people by 2030.
b. The GPA is an initiative where UNHCR, IOM, FAO, WFP and others identify ways to increase energy efficiency within operations and adopt more sustainable energy solutions in their programming and operations in situations of displacement. With support and collaboration from UN-Energy there is an increased potential for greater impact across all operational activities of these UN Agencies. Furthermore, the lessons that are learnt through this process could also be transferred to other UN entities that are not working in displacement settings.

5. **Greening the UN System**

To ensure the UN is a credible voice on taking sustainable approaches, and leading the energy transition, UN-Energy will take urgent steps towards ensuring UN facilities and premises and procurement are aligned to UN activities and commitments to tackle climate change and the UN’s role as a global leader. This action can be initiated in 2019, if volunteers step forward to take the lead, but the actual greening will take time and can be done over a number of years. This initiative will build on the efforts and achievements to date of “Greening the Blue”/Sustainable UN. A suitable target date would need to be agreed upon.

a. UN-Energy should consider a focus on powering UN facilities and premises with sustainable energy. This should include reviewing existing actions, including on off-grid premises (displacement camps, staff compounds, PKOs etc), including hanging/replacing the existing fossil fuel powered infrastructure. Consideration will also be given to aligning procurement with these commitments.

b. In light of call for action 1, UN-Energy will examine what commitments can be made in support of the Secretary-General’s Climate Summit in 2019.

6. **Information sharing, data and public presence**

To ensure moves to support and centralise energy cooperation is well directed UN-Energy will seek to coordinate and share information and data, will growing the public presence and profile of UN-Energy at selected opportunities. This action item is of an ongoing nature, without clear deliverables in 2019, except for a revamping of the website (sub-item d) below.

a. UN-Energy members commit to sharing information regarding their programming and work on sustainable energy, but also to better exchanging data related to progress to SDG7 and provide any necessary support to Member States.

b. To facilitate information exchange the UN-Energy Secretariat will investigate how to more effectively allow UN-Energy members to exchange information and whether there could be a more effective common structure for this exchange.

c. Given the diffuse and diverse nature of UN resources committed to sustainable energy UN-Energy members commit to stock-take and exchange information on financial and personnel resources committed globally in this area.

d. The secretariat will also review the current UN-Energy website and suggest ways for improvement to ensure a more accurate and high-profile presence for the body.

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