Overcoming Challenges and Exploring Opportunities for Sustainable Energy Transition through South-South Cooperation

GLOBAL SOUTH-SOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXPO 2022

UNECE-UNESCAP-UNESCWA Side Event

UNCC Bangkok, Thailand

13 September 2022, 11:50-13:05 (Bangkok time)

Draft Concept Note

I. Context

The Covid-19 pandemic has created new development challenges for the global South. The war in Ukraine has added a new dimension to these challenges. Developing countries and countries with economies in transition (lower and upper middle-income countries) have been hit hard by these compounded crises. In addition to the food and finance sectors, the issue of energy pricing and security is among the most serious challenges in the current context. There are several threats emerging from the protracted COVID-19 crisis and continuing geopolitical crisis. Disruptions in energy supplies are hitting hard the most vulnerable populations in the global South. The issue of energy security has come to the fore of energy policies in many countries. Reduced energy demand at the times of COVID-19 pandemic led to reduced investments in the energy sector, which are proving difficult to bring back to pre-COVID levels. Many governments see increasing share of fossil fuels as an immediate response to the energy crisis, which jeopardizes the overarching long-term objectives of mitigating climate change and achieving the targets of SDG7 – affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030.

However, following the COVID-19 pandemic many developing countries and countries with economies in transition are facing common challenges to problems created by the pandemic. They need to restart economic growth while ensuring that progress towards sustainability and climate goals remain on track. Their experience in confronting these challenges can be valuable for many countries in the South and can serve as good examples of South-South Cooperation.

For example, many countries and sub-national jurisdictions have developed SDG 7 Road Maps, with the support of UNESCAP. This work is now being expanded and replicated in other countries across South-East Asia, the Caucasus and Central Asia through a joint project undertaken by UNESCAP and UNECE. It is critical that these Road Maps can include strategies to manage the current crises unfolding.

Among other solutions being developed are efforts to strengthen the capacity and resilience of micro-, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in developing countries and economies in transition to mitigate the economic and social impact of the global COVID-19 crisis. The work that started needs to continue to alleviate current problems to bring Sustainable Development Agenda back on track. Sustainable energy transition is critical for this. Countries of the global South need assistance in strengthening their energy policies build back better from COVID-19 and may benefit from exchange of existing experience in other countries.

They may also benefit from exchange of experiences in overcoming consequences of rising energy and fuel prices, problems with access to energy sources, pathways to achieving SDG 7 and in finding lasting and sustainable solutions for energy transition.

II. Objective and Questions

The main objective of the side event/ thematic solutions forum is to provide an opportunity for governments, international organizations, and academia to review existing experience of countries in the global South in the post-COVID-19 recovery in the energy sector and the role that South-South economic cooperation can play in the sustainable energy transition.

The key questions for discussion will focus on some of the critical issues which may include:

- Covid-19 crisis and recovery. What are the challenges encountered, and practical solutions identified during the Covid-19 pandemic that can be used widely in countries of the South with respect to improving energy efficiency and increasing the share of renewable energy? How have countries managed to align the economic recovery process with sustainable development, particularly by tapping into the economic growth and job creation potential of sustainable energy? What role for South-South cooperation exists, given the potential to build on available expertise within the subregion/subregions to overcome these challenges and exchange experience in solutions that can be utilized and scaled up?

- What are the short- and medium-term steps that are needed to ensure better and greener post-COVID-19 recovery of the energy sector? How can countries of the South work together to overcome the consequences and impacts of the war in Ukraine on energy access, security, and affordability? Further, what is the role of international organizations, in particular of the UN System in fostering such cooperation?

- The Forum will offer an opportunity to discuss and propose solutions covering the short-, medium-, and long-term that can be valuable for countries of the global South, including through South-South cooperation.

III. Provisional programme

1. **Opening Statements**
- Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, UNESCAP Deputy Executive Secretary
- Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin, UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary
- Mr. Mounir Tabet, UNESCWA Deputy Executive Secretary

2. Panel discussion on Challenges for Sustainable Energy Transition and Opportunities through South-South Cooperation

Moderator: Mr. Oleg Dzioubinski, Regional Adviser, Sustainable Energy Division, UNECE

- Ms. Margalita Arabidze, Head of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Policy and Sustainable Development Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia
- Ms. Shada El-Sharif, Investment Priority Lead, Prime Minister's Delivery Unit, Jordan
- Mr. Hussein Mogaibel, Global Lead Energy Specialist, Economic and Social Infrastructure Department, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
- Ms. Tatiana Vedeneva, President, Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Development (CREEED), Kyrgyzstan
- Mr. Vitaly Bekker, Senior Energy Expert, UNECE and UNESCAP

3. **Conclusion and Wrap-Up**

- Mr. Hongpeng Liu, Director, Energy Division, UNESCAP