Energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity the world faces today. Be it for jobs, security, climate change, food production or increasing incomes, access to energy for all is essential. Working towards this goal is especially important as it interlinks with other Sustainable Development Goals. Focusing on universal access to energy, increased energy efficiency and the increased use of renewable energy through new economic and job opportunities is crucial to creating more sustainable and inclusive communities and resilience to environmental issues like climate change.

At the current time, there are approximately 3 billion people who lack access to clean-cooking solutions and are exposed to dangerous levels of air pollution. Additionally, slightly less than 1 billion people are functioning without electricity and 50% of them are found in Sub-Saharan Africa alone. Fortunately, progress has been made in the past decade regarding the use of renewable electricity from water, solar and wind power and the ratio of energy used per unit of GDP is also declining.

However, the challenge is far from being solved and there needs to be more access to clean fuel and technology and more progress needs to be made regarding integrating renewable energy into end-use applications in buildings, transport and industry. Public and private investments in energy also need to be increased and there needs to be more focus on regulatory frameworks and innovative business models to transform the world’s energy systems.

13% of the global population still lacks access to modern electricity.

3 billion people rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating

Energy is the dominant contributor to climate change, accounting for around 60 per cent of total global greenhouse gas emissions.

Indoor air pollution from using combustible fuels for household energy caused 4.3 million deaths in 2012, with women and girls accounting for 6 out of every 10 of these.

The share of renewable energy in final energy consumption has reached 17.5% in 2015

By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services

By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology

By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support

Access to electricity in the poorest countries has begun to accelerate, energy efficiency continues to improve and renewable energy is making gains in electricity sector. Despite this progress, some 800 million people remain without electricity while access to clean cooking fuels and technologies needs dedicated attention. In addition, if Sustainable Development Goals 7, 13 and related Goals are to be met, much higher levels of ambition are required with regard to renewable energy, including transportation and heating.

The global electrification rate rose from 83 per cent in 2010 to 87 per cent in 2015, with the increase accelerating to reach 89 per cent in 2017. However, some 840 million people around the world are still without access to electricity.

The global share of the population with access to clean cooking fuels and technologies reached 61 per cent in 2017, up from 57 per cent in 2010. Despite this progress, close to 3 billion people still rely primarily on inefficient and polluting cooking systems.

The renewable energy share of total final energy consumption gradually increased from 16.6 per cent in 2010 to 17.5 per cent in 2016, though much faster change is required to meet climate goals. Even though the absolute level of renewable energy consumption has grown by more than 18 per cent since 2010, only since 2012 has the growth of renewables outpaced the growth of total energy consumption. E/2019/68 14/39 19-07404

Global primary energy intensity (ratio of energy used per unit of GDP) improved from 5.9 in 2010 to 5.1 in 2016, a rate of improvement of 2.3 per cent, which is still short of the 2.7 per cent annual rate needed to reach target 3 of Sustainable Development Goal 7.

International financial flows to developing countries in support of clean and renewable energy reached $18.6 billion in 2016, almost doubling from $9.9 billion in 2010.