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## Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 19 (h)

**Sustainable development: ensuring access to affordable,  
reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2020

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/75/457/Add.8, para. 7)*]

### 75/221. Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling its resolutions 53/7 of 16 October 1998, 54/215 of 22 December 1999, 55/205 of 20 December 2000, 56/200 of 21 December 2001, 58/210 of 23 December 2003, 60/199 of 22 December 2005, 62/197 of 19 December 2007, 64/206 of 21 December 2009, 66/206 of 22 December 2011, 69/225 of 19 December 2014, 70/201 of 22 December 2015, 71/233 of 21 December 2016, 72/224 of 20 December 2017, 73/236 of 20 December 2018 and 74/225 of 19 December 2019, as well as its resolutions 65/151 of 20 December 2010 on the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All and 67/215 of 21 December 2012, in which it decided to declare 2014–2024 the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All,*

*Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,*

*Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with*



concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

*Reaffirming further* the Paris Agreement<sup>1</sup> and its early entry into force, and encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>2</sup> that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

*Welcoming* the 2019 Climate Action Summit convened by the Secretary-General on 23 September, and taking note of the multi-partner initiatives and commitments presented during the Summit,

*Highlighting* the synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement,

*Expressing concern* that, at current rates of progress, none of the global energy targets of the Sustainable Development Goals will be achieved by 2030,

*Recalling* its resolution [55/2](#) of 8 September 2000, by which it adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit Outcome<sup>3</sup> and the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals,<sup>4</sup>

*Reaffirming* the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development<sup>5</sup> and Agenda 21<sup>6</sup> and the principles set out therein, and recalling the recommendations and conclusions contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)<sup>7</sup> and the outcome documents of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”,<sup>8</sup> the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, entitled “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway”,<sup>9</sup> the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, entitled “Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024”,<sup>10</sup> and the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, entitled “Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020”,<sup>11</sup>

*Reaffirming also* the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016,<sup>12</sup> which underlines, *inter alia*, the importance of energy for cities,

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted under the UNFCCC in [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

<sup>3</sup> Resolution [60/1](#).

<sup>4</sup> Resolution [65/1](#).

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, annex II.

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution [66/288](#), annex.

<sup>9</sup> Resolution [69/15](#), annex.

<sup>10</sup> Resolution [69/137](#), annex II.

<sup>11</sup> *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011* ([A/CONF.219/7](#)), chap. II.

<sup>12</sup> Resolution [71/256](#), annex.

*Reaffirming further that each country must take primary responsibility for its own development and that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized in the achievement of sustainable development, and recognizing the need for the creation of an enabling environment at all levels and across all sectors for the achievement of sustainable development,*

*Reaffirming the sovereign rights of countries over their energy resources and their right to define appropriate policies for the production and use of energy, recognizing that the 2030 Agenda shall be implemented for the full benefit of all, for today's generation and for future generations,*

*Emphasizing that universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all is an integral part of poverty eradication and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and that the increased use and promotion of new and renewable energy, including in off-grid and decentralized systems, and energy efficiency could make a significant contribution in that regard,*

*Deeply concerned that nearly 3 billion people in developing countries, especially in rural areas, rely on traditional biomass, coal and kerosene for cooking and heating, with disproportionate health and workload impacts on women, children and people in vulnerable situations, including an estimated 4 million premature deaths annually, that, while the global population without access to electricity fell below 1 billion, close to 840 million people are still without access to electricity, that reliability and affordability remain challenges in many countries, even as the number of household connections increases, that Africa accounts for more than half of both access figures and that, even when energy services are available, millions of poor people are unable to pay for them,*

*Noting with concern that energy represents less than 1 per cent of overall United Nations expenditure on the Sustainable Development Goals, despite its critical importance also in achieving other goals,*

*Noting with great concern the threat to human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, and that the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by the pandemic, reaffirming the ambition to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by designing sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to help to reduce the risk of future shocks, and recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic requires a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation,*

*Emphasizing the critical socioeconomic benefits of affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy and the need to reframe the understanding of energy from a technical unit to a requirement for basic social services, including health care, economic development and poverty eradication,*

*Recognizing that affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services are essential for effectively responding to and achieving sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and their consequences, including for powering health-care facilities, supplying safe drinking water and water for sanitation, including hand-washing, as well as water for agriculture and food production, supporting sustainable food systems and providing communications services to connect people, share information and facilitate education, while noting that the unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic will have serious impacts on progress towards fulfilling the commitment on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by*

2030, with the largest decline in energy investment on record in 2020, noting the announcement of Governments aiming to achieve net-zero emissions, and taking note of the Group of 20 ministerial meeting on energy, hosted by Saudi Arabia on 27 and 28 September 2020, and the relevant ongoing work of the Group of 20 in this regard,

*Highlighting* the importance of the empowerment of developing countries to achieve universal access through the rapid expansion of affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy worldwide,

*Highlighting also* the significant efforts made in developing countries that contributed to an increase in the global electrification rate to 89 per cent in 2017, and stressing the need to further close the electrification gap in many difficult-to-reach populations, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa,

*Recognizing* that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development and that this will include the mobilization of financial resources, as well as capacity-building and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on mutually agreed terms, including concessional and preferential terms,

*Welcoming* the increase in the share of renewable energy as a part of total final energy consumption in 2016 at the fastest rate since 2012 and the significant reductions in the cost of renewable energy, the sector's net positive job contributions and the rapid expansion of renewable energy capacity additions, which are now greater than those of other resources in the electricity sector, and noting that the levelized cost of solar and wind energy in many regions of the world is fully competitive with traditional energy resources,

*Noting with appreciation* the work of the International Renewable Energy Agency, which facilitates the widespread and increased adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy,

*Taking note* of the work of multi-stakeholder partnerships, including Sustainable Energy for All, which has given strong momentum to the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency, the initiatives of the Global Climate Action Agenda, the Small Island Developing States Lighthouses Initiative, SIDS DOCK, the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation and others that can contribute to reaching the objective of ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all,

*Noting with appreciation* that the transformation of the world's energy systems is being accelerated by advances in technology, rapid declines in the cost of renewable energy, the deployment of least-cost decentralized solutions, policy support, new business models and the sharing of best practices, welcoming the establishment of the International Solar Alliance as an international organization, and noting the continuing work of the International Renewable Energy Agency,

*Stressing* the need for a coherent, integrated approach to energy issues and the promotion of synergies across the global energy agenda, with a focus on eradicating poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

*Reiterating* the pledge that no one will be left behind, reaffirming the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, and the wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, and recommitting to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first,

*Noting* that, in the transition to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, and to achieve universal access by 2030, the substitution of inefficient fuels with liquid petroleum gas or other sustainable household fuels, while recognizing the need to increase the share of renewable energy, could be appropriate

in urban areas to significantly reduce negative health impacts if used as a cooking source, and contribute to decreased greenhouse gas emissions and to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;<sup>13</sup>

2. *Also takes note* of the role and activities of the International Renewable Energy Agency, encouraging the Agency to continue to support its members in the achievement of their renewable energy objectives, as well as the contributions of the International Solar Alliance, and encouraging its work to collectively address key common challenges to the scaling-up of solar energy, as well as the contributions of other international and regional organizations and forums to the global energy agenda;

3. *Welcomes* the significant progress recorded with regard to several targets of Sustainable Development Goal 7;<sup>14</sup>

4. *Strongly encourages* Governments and other relevant stakeholders to take actions to achieve universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, increase the global share of new and renewable energy, improve the inclusion of developing countries in energy sector cooperation, where relevant, and increase the rate of improvement in energy efficiency for a clean, low-emission, low-carbon climate-resilient, safe, efficient, modern, affordable and sustainable energy system, given the systemic sustainable development benefits, while taking into consideration the diversity of national situations, priorities, policies, specific needs and challenges and capacities of developing countries, including their energy mix and energy systems;

5. *Calls for* ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, as such services are an integral part of poverty eradication measures, human dignity, quality of life, economic opportunity, the combating of inequality, the promotion of health and the prevention of morbidity and mortality, access to education, safe drinking water and sanitation, food security, disaster risk reduction and resilience, climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental impact reduction, social inclusion and gender equality, including for persons affected by humanitarian emergencies;

6. *Underscores* the importance of access to cleaner and more efficient and sustainable cooking and heating methods, welcomes ongoing efforts, and in this regard calls for the promotion of an enabling environment at the national and international levels for the increased usage of sustainable, cleaner and more efficient cooking and heating methods in all countries, in particular developing countries;

7. *Encourages* Governments, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders to leverage the cost-competitiveness of renewable energy, especially in off-grid areas, in order to achieve universal energy access, such as by establishing policy frameworks for metering and payment systems, requiring cost comparisons between grid extension and off-grid solutions, facilitating investment by domestic and foreign banks and educating students, communities, investors and entrepreneurs on renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation, among other activities, where feasible and appropriate;

8. *Recognizes* the key role that natural gas currently plays in many countries and its potential to expand significantly over the coming decades to meet demand in some countries as well as in new sectors, such as the transportation sector, supporting transitions towards lower-emission energy systems, and calls upon Governments to

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<sup>13</sup> A/75/265.

<sup>14</sup> See resolution 70/1.

enhance energy security through the sharing of best practices and knowledge for the security of gas supply and demand;

9. *Supports* energy access in accordance with the national needs of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, to tackle their energy access challenges by identifying the specific needs of each country by mobilizing technical and financial assistance and tools to deploy affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy solutions to tackle the energy access deficit;

10. *Calls upon* Governments to expand the use of renewable energy beyond the power sector, taking into account national priorities and constraints, to industry, heating and cooling, construction and infrastructure and, in particular, the transport sector, including through sustainable sector coupling and sustainable and modern bioenergy, in the context of sustainable development, including climate change, and calls for supportive policy initiatives and investments at the national and international levels;

11. *Recognizes* that current global progress in improving energy efficiency falls well below the pace necessary to double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030, and encourages, in accordance with national laws and regulations, the promotion of widespread energy efficiency initiatives in all economic sectors, the adoption and updating of building performance codes and standards, energy efficiency labelling, the promotion of energy management systems, the retrofitting of existing buildings and public procurement policies on energy, among other modalities, as appropriate, as well as the prioritization of smart grid systems, district energy systems and community energy plans to improve synergies among clean and effective use of traditional resources, renewable energy and energy efficiency, which aim to promote the interconnectivity of clean and renewable energy infrastructure and improve energy efficiency;

12. *Calls for* strengthened cooperation at the regional level to promote innovation and facilitate financing, support regional cross-border power grid connectivity, as appropriate, to advance economic integration and sustainable development and share best practices that are responsive to regional needs with regard to Sustainable Development Goal 7 and its interlinkages with the other Sustainable Development Goals, and in this regard encourages Governments to reinforce their energy interconnections, connecting regional energy markets and increasing energy security at the global level;

13. *Calls upon* Governments, as well as relevant international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to combine, as appropriate, the increased use of new and renewable energy resources, more efficient use of energy, greater reliance on advanced energy technologies, including cleaner fossil fuel technologies, and the sustainable use of traditional energy resources;

14. *Encourages* Governments, relevant international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to promote investments in developing sustainable, reliable, modern, inclusive and equitable energy systems, including, *inter alia*, by strengthening energy systems through cross-border grid connections, as appropriate, and to consider incorporating decentralized renewable energy solutions in energy planning, as appropriate, and recognizes that energy transition will take different paths in different parts of the world;

15. *Encourages* Governments and all relevant stakeholders to increase investment and actions to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7, and to integrate affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy solutions to enhance responses to and recovery from COVID-19, in line with resilient, inclusive and sustainable development pathways, and to ensure energy security, and urges

developed countries, relevant international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to support the efforts of developing countries, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, taking into consideration the different national circumstances and in line with the national development priorities of developing countries, including through multi-stakeholder partnerships, in order to fulfil the commitment on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030, recognizing that increased investments in affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy solutions and accelerated action beyond a business-as-usual recovery will aid countries in responding to the pandemic and economic crisis, in building back better, including, *inter alia*, by reducing emissions, creating jobs and promoting resource efficiency, and in advancing long-term resilience and the Sustainable Development Goals, which are integrated and interrelated;

16. *Encourages* Governments, relevant international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to use and promote an integrated resource planning and management approach in their energy strategies that considers energy choices in the context of linked sectors, *inter alia*, water, waste, air quality and food, taking into account national circumstances;

17. *Recognizes* that sustainable energy access and its deployment can be both improved and accelerated by gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and calls upon Governments, the United Nations development system and other stakeholders to increase educational and capacity-building programmes for women in the sector, further advance equal pay and leadership and other opportunities for women in the energy sector, promote women's full, equal and effective participation and leadership in the design and implementation of energy policies and programmes, mainstream a gender perspective in such policies and programmes and ensure women's full and equal access to and use of sustainable energy to enhance their economic and social empowerment, including employment and other income-generating opportunities;

18. *Encourages* Governments, with the support of relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to accelerate the transition towards sustainable economies, according to national policies and plans, through mitigation and adaptation strategies that improve energy efficiency and create more and better employment opportunities for all, including young people, in wage and self-employment;

19. *Emphasizes* the potential of sustainable energy use to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, recognizes that increasing the deployment of renewable energy and enhancing energy efficiency are components of many countries' nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and urges effective and timely support for the full implementation of all those contributions, as applicable;

20. *Notes* that the impacts of climate change can also threaten access to and the supply of energy, and also notes the importance of increasing the resilience of the energy sector to climate change, which can be facilitated by the expansion of renewable energy;

21. *Emphasizes*, while noting progress, that the large-scale deployment of technologies has been insufficient and uneven and that support is required to realize their potential, along with appropriate policy initiatives and investments at the national and international levels, with Governments working in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector;

22. *Also emphasizes* the value of regional and interregional approaches, which can, among other advantages, enhance the deployment of renewable and sustainable energy by facilitating the sharing of experiences, reduce transaction costs, leverage

economies of scale, enable greater cross-border interconnectivity to promote energy system reliability and resilience and augment domestic capacity-building, and recognizes the work of organizations and initiatives in that regard;

23. *Invites* all relevant funding institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as regional funding institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, to continue ongoing efforts and take further action to provide financial resources, as appropriate, to support efforts aimed at ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including low-emission, low-carbon and climate-resilient new and renewable resources of energy of demonstrated viability, especially focused on energy access and economic development in both urban and rural areas, while noting the potential catalytic effect of concessional and other finance and taking fully into account the development structure of energy-based economies of developing countries;

24. *Encourages* the development, dissemination, diffusion and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on mutually agreed terms, including concessional and preferential terms, and highlights the importance of integrating sustainable energy in the Technology Facilitation Mechanism;

25. *Stresses* the importance of strategies and contributions by Governments and relevant stakeholders to multi-stakeholder partnerships in ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, and encourages coordination and collaboration between the United Nations and relevant multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as Sustainable Energy for All;

26. *Recognizes* the catalytic effect of the sharing of knowledge and experience, capacity-building and technical assistance on sustainable energy deployment, and encourages existing and new efforts to enable Governments of developing countries and relevant stakeholders to plan, finance, implement and monitor sustainable energy projects to further strengthen their national institutions and capacities;

27. *Encourages* the development of viable market-oriented strategies that could result in further rapid reductions in the cost of new and renewable resources of energy and could further increase the competitiveness of those technologies, including through the adoption, as appropriate, of public policies for research, development and market deployment, including rationalizing inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances;

28. *Emphasizes* the value of education, academia, technology and entrepreneurship in developing solutions to face energy challenges and achieve energy sustainability, as well as the importance of investing in research and development in sustainable energy technologies, and also emphasizes in this context the urgent need to enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technologies, and improved infrastructures for supplying affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;

29. *Calls for* national efforts to promote access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all and strengthened local engagement to complement current approaches, and reaffirms the commitment to supporting subnational and local efforts, taking advantage of their direct control, where applicable, of local infrastructure and codes to foster uptake in end-use sectors, such as residential, commercial and industrial buildings, industry, agriculture, transport, waste and sanitation;

30. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue efforts to promote the provision of stable, adequate and predictable financial resources and technical assistance for sustainable energy and to enhance the effectiveness, coordination and full utilization of appropriate international funds for the effective implementation of national and regional high-priority projects for ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, and welcomes the convening of the high-level dialogue on the midpoint review of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014–2024), held on 23 and 24 May 2019;

31. *Recalls its invitation* to the Secretary-General, with the support of the relevant United Nations system entities, to convene a high-level dialogue in 2021, financed through voluntary contributions, to promote the implementation of the energy-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in support of the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, including the global plan of action for the Decade, as described in the report of the Secretary-General, and the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

32. *Encourages* UN-Energy to support coherence and coordination among the energy-related activities of the entities of the United Nations development system, within their respective mandates, in line with the implementation of resolutions [71/243](#) of 21 December 2016, [72/279](#) of 31 May 2018, [74/297](#) of 11 August 2020 and Economic and Social Council resolution [2019/15](#) of 8 July 2019, in order to assist countries, in particular at the country level, upon request by their Governments, by explicitly leveraging partnerships with other international organizations, donors and relevant stakeholders, including in their efforts to achieve universal access to sustainable energy and to accelerate its deployment;

33. *Reaffirms* the commitment at the very heart of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and commit to taking more tangible steps to support people in vulnerable situations and the most vulnerable countries and to reach the furthest behind first;

34. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency and related sustainable practices in all United Nations facilities and operations around the world, where appropriate and economically viable;

35. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including activities carried out to mark the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-sixth session, under the item entitled “Sustainable development”, the sub-item entitled “Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”.

48th plenary meeting  
21 December 2020