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ECOSOC 1: High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

**Research Report**

Topic 1: Stressing the need for access to clean and affordable energy in accordance with SDG 7.



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# Introduction

The SDG 7 is made of 3 clauses and 2 sub clauses all leading towards a better access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. Progress towards this goal has been notable: from 2015 to 2023, global electricity access went from 87 to 92 per cent, access to clean cooking fuels increased by 16 percent and renewable electricity continued to grow. In order to achieve this goal, we will need a significant boost in investment in emerging and developing economies to expand access to electricity, clean cooking and renewable energy. This research report will also be stressing those countries to improve energy efficiency and strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Clean energy** - energy sources that do not emit greenhouse gases or other pollutants during their production.

**Affordable energy** – in the context of sustainability, refers to energy sources and systems that are both economically accessible to all segments of society and environmentally responsible

**Available energy** - the portion of the energy that can be converted to useful work or the potential to create or change.

**Accessibility** - having access to clean, reliable and affordable energy.

**SDG 7** – Sustainable Development Goal 7. Their goal is to ensure access to clean and affordable energy. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

**Sustainable energy** – Sustainability refers to the concept that all people can meet their basic needs infinitely, without compromising future generations

**Renewable energy** - it uses resources from the earth that can naturally be replenished, such as crops and biomatter, the difference between renewable energy and sustainable energy is that sustainable energy aims to preserve the environment and in the long term, create a healthy planet while renewable energy aims to replenish the resources.

**Modern energy** - energy that is based on petroleum, electricity or any other energy forms that have commercialized market channels, a higher heating or energy content value than traditional biomass.

**Clean cooking** - all the methods (low-to-zero emissions) by which people cook their food. Green house gases like carbon dioxide and methane. These gases trap heat in the atmosphere for a long amount of time.

**Fossil Fuels:** Fossil fuels are energy resources that are formed by the buried remains which transform into energy over millions of years. Coal, oil and natural gas are the main fossil fuels. Fossil fuels negatively impact the environment due to the fact that they are not renewable, release greenhouse gases and overall damages the environment with air pollution as well.

## Background information

Due to human activity, the earth has grown 1.5 hotter since the Industrial Revolution which is mostly due to greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide), which has triggered immense global warming.

In everyday life, our well-being and the working of the economy depends on reliable, affordable and sustainable energy services, such as electricity supply, heating, cooling, and transport services. Sustainability refers to the concept that all people can meet their basic needs infinitely, without compromising future generations. Each year the stakes grow higher in the fight to save the environment and combat global warming. Fossil fuels are not only harmful to the planet when burned daily for energy, but they're also unsustainable as finite resources. Moreover, according to the World Health Organization, air pollution causes millions of deaths each year, a problem that clean energy can help mitigate by significantly lowering health risks and saving lives.

Fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas, and coal have dominated the global energy landscape. This predominance has led to a significant increase in greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to global warming and environmental degradation. According to the United Nations, fossil fuels account for more than 75% of global emissions and nearly 90% of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. One of the most tangible advantages of the energy transition is the improvement in air quality.

The UN and more particularly the ECOSOC committees aim to reduce dependence on fossil fuels by promoting the development and adoption of renewable energies such as solar, wind, hydroelectricity, and biomass.

The decrease in the use of fossil fuels are essential to meet the climate goals set by the **Paris Agreement**, which seeks to limit global warming to 1.5°C by the end of the century.

However, the **energy transition** goes beyond simply replacing energy sources. It involves a complete overhaul of energy production, distribution, and consumption systems. This requires **massive investments** in infrastructure, research and development, as well as ambitious public policies to encourage innovation and the adoption of clean technologies.

Although humans have done irreversible damage to the environment, there is still hope in how we maintain and mitigate repercussions for future generations.



# Major Countries and Organisation Involved



Sources: International Energy Agency: Renewables 2025; Energy Institute: 2025 Statistical Review of World Energy; Open Electricity

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In total, around 90 countries now make more than 35% of their power with renewables.

## Relevant UN Resolution

1. General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/157 – ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

- **Calls upon** all Member States to accelerate efforts to achieve universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services, particularly in developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs);
- **Encourages** increased investment in renewable energy infrastructure, including solar, wind, hydro, and other clean energy technologies, as a means to reduce energy poverty and greenhouse gas emissions;

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<sup>1</sup> \*Australia refers to Australia's main grid, the National Electricity Market (NEM). The NEM includes all states and territories except the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

- **Urges** developed countries and international financial institutions to provide technical assistance, capacity-building, and concessional financing to support clean energy transitions in developing States;
- **Emphasizes** the importance of energy efficiency measures across industrial, residential, and transportation sectors to reduce energy consumption and improve sustainability;
- **Calls for** strengthened international cooperation and public-private partnerships to promote innovation, technology transfer, and knowledge sharing in the clean energy sector;
- **Encourages** the integration of clean and affordable energy strategies into national development plans, climate action frameworks, and poverty eradication policies.

## 2. General Assembly Resolution – Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- **Reaffirms** the commitment of all Member States to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7, which aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030;
- **Recognizes** access to clean and affordable energy as a key driver of sustainable development, poverty eradication, economic growth, education, healthcare, and gender equality;
- **Encourages** Member States to expand electrification efforts in rural and underserved communities through sustainable and decentralized energy solutions;
- **Supports** the diversification of national energy mixes to increase the share of renewable energy sources, in accordance with national capacities and circumstances;
- **Calls upon** relevant UN agencies, funds, and programs to support Member States in monitoring progress toward SDG 7 and implementing energy-related development initiatives;
- **Emphasizes** the importance of inclusive energy policies that prioritize vulnerable populations, including women, children, and marginalized communities.

## Previous Attempt to Solve the Issue

What needs to be addressed however, are what the UN had already been doing in order to avoid the growth of climate change. A few of these measures to solve this are as follows:

- **The invention of COP:** The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements.
- **The Paris Agreement:** a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 195 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on 12 December 2015. Its overarching goal is to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and pursue efforts “to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.”
- **The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change:** is the UN process for negotiating an agreement to limit dangerous climate change. It is an international treaty among countries to combat "dangerous human interference with the climate system". The main way to do this is limiting the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. It was signed in 1992 by 154 states at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)

## Possible Solutions:

Throughout the debate, it's important for delegates to create alternative ways that align with SDG 7. The main topic debated should be the size of the opportunity cost of achieving this goal and deciding on how the member states will be encouraged to participate in these solutions.



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