



Economic and Social Council

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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum

Bangkok and online, 19 and 20 October 2023

Ministerial Declaration on Building a Secure, Sustainable and Interconnected Energy Future for Asia and the Pacific

1. We, the Ministers of energy and other high-level representatives of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, have convened at the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, organized by the Commission and held in Bangkok and online on 19 and 20 October 2023.
2. We recall General Assembly resolutions relevant to energy, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹ and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.²
3. We take note of the contribution on energy made by the high-level political forum on sustainable development to furthering the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7.
4. We recall General Assembly resolution 77/170 of 14 December 2022 on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, in which the Assembly recognized that ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the implementation of other relevant intergovernmentally agreed frameworks in the economic, social and environmental fields and that reaching Goal 7 by the end of the decade requires an urgent and steep rise in investment in and financing of affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy and energy efficiency.³

¹ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

² General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

³ See also General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, as well as the *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum).

5. We also recall Commission resolution 73/8 of 19 May 2017 on strengthening regional cooperation for sustainable energy development in Asia and the Pacific, in which the Commission reaffirmed the role of the Committee on Energy as an intergovernmental forum for discussing emerging trends and development issues relevant to supporting access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all in Asia and the Pacific, in line with the 2030 Agenda, and identifying modalities for regional energy cooperation. In that same resolution, the Commission decided to create two expert working groups, on energy connectivity and on universal access to modern energy services, renewable energy, energy efficiency and cleaner use of fossil fuels.

6. We note the progress that has been made in implementing the outcomes of the First and Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forums, namely, the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Enhanced Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific: Shaping the Future of Sustainable Energy in Asia and the Pacific⁴ and the Plan of Action on Regional Cooperation for Enhanced Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific, 2014–2018,⁵ both of which were adopted in 2013, and the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Energy Transition towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia and the Pacific, which was adopted in 2018.⁶

7. We reiterate that energy is a key driver for sustainable development, and that the lack of access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all poses serious development challenges to all countries in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. We reaffirm our commitment to promoting multilateralism and international cooperation and strengthening partnerships, working in the spirit of global solidarity, in particular with the poorest and most vulnerable, to facilitate access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

8. We reaffirm 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 is to be implemented for the full benefit of all, for today's generation and for future generations.

9. We note the progress that has been made by the secretariat of the Commission in assisting countries, upon request, in developing national road maps for the implementation of Goal 7. We encourage member States to continue to work towards mainstreaming, as appropriate, the global energy-related targets into national policies and plans.

10. We acknowledge the potential of promoting the use of clean and renewable energy resources and research on clean energy technologies, as well as the development, deployment, commercialization, availability, accessibility and affordability of such technologies, and enhancing international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency, hydrogen and its derivatives such as ammonia, energy storage, carbon capture, utilization and storage, civil nuclear technologies, bioenergy with carbon capture and storage, and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technologies, including technologies that avoid, abate and remove greenhouse gas emissions, and improved infrastructures for

⁴ Commission resolution 70/9, annex I.

⁵ Ibid., annex II.

⁶ ESCAP/74/27/Add.1.

supplying affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all and advanced energy efficiency systems as part of the region's energy transition. We recognize the importance of accelerating and scaling up the development, deployment, dissemination and diffusion of clean and renewable energy technologies, including the transfer of such technologies on a voluntary basis and on mutually agreed terms.

11. We recognize the synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.⁷ We also recognize that clean, sustainable, affordable, reliable, just, inclusive, equitable and secure transitions to renewable and clean energy use, as well as conservation, in line with national circumstances, will be instrumental in addressing climate change and ensuring energy security.⁸ We welcome the ongoing efforts on climate action related to energy at the global level, as well as across the Asia-Pacific region. We acknowledge the announcements made by certain Governments in Asia and the Pacific about their intention to achieve carbon neutrality by or around mid-century. We call for urgent action to be taken on energy in a manner consistent with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement and in line with General Assembly resolution 77/165 of 14 December 2022 on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind.

12. We recognize the role of national Governments in creating their respective energy policies in support of energy transitions and the achievement of national sustainable development objectives.

13. We reiterate the pledge to leave no one behind and put people at the centre of all our efforts while making sustainable development in all its dimensions a priority in the Asia-Pacific region, in line with the 2030 Agenda. We are determined to address energy poverty and reduce energy inequality in Asia and the Pacific, acknowledge the progress made in the region in closing the electricity access gap, recognize that the reliability and affordability of the electricity supply remain a challenge, in particular in remote and underserved areas, and encourage investment in off-grid and mini-grid solutions that utilize clean and renewable energy sources to address last-mile access challenges.

14. We are deeply concerned by the fact that approximately 1.2 billion people in Asia and the Pacific rely mainly on traditional biomass for cooking and heating, which has harmful health and environmental effects. We commit ourselves to scaling up access to clean cooking by strengthening regional and international cooperation.

15. We encourage the promotion of widespread energy efficiency initiatives in all economic sectors and aim to accelerate the implementation of energy efficiency and energy-saving policies and measures in line with national circumstances. We call for stronger regional cooperation to promote innovation, facilitate financing and encourage responsible consumption in order to accelerate progress towards achieving relevant Sustainable Development Goal targets.

⁷ See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

⁸ Commission resolution 79/1.

16. We highlight the importance of empowering developing countries to achieve universal access through the rapid expansion of affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy. We support 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 according to 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.

17. We note with appreciation the progress that has been made during the past decade in increasing the share of clean and renewable energy as a part of total final energy consumption in Asia and the Pacific and the significant reductions in the cost of renewable energy, and call for furthering the achievement of target 7.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (by 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix).

18. We recognize the role that natural gas, where applicable, can play in supporting transitions towards lower-emission energy systems, in line with national policies and circumstances, and call upon Governments to enhance and collaborate on energy security, including through the sharing of best practices and knowledge for the security of gas supply and demand, in the broader context of the transition towards lower-emission energy systems, as appropriate.

19. We stress the importance of measures to enhance energy security and affordability in the region, including by promoting free, open, transparent, stable and competitive energy markets, regional cooperation, the diversification of energy sources, the establishment of regional supply chains, the expansion of supply routes and the development of resilient infrastructure, including the modernization and expansion of grid transmission.

20. We invite member States and other relevant stakeholders to consider the possibility of taking appropriate measures to ensure the application of the United Nations Resource Management System Principles and Requirements.⁹

21. We acknowledge that certain minerals, materials and technologies are critical for energy transitions and that there is a need to maintain reliable, responsible and sustainable supply chains of such minerals and materials, as well as semiconductors and related technologies, in compliance with the principles of market economy, in line with national circumstances, and with international trade rules while respecting the sovereign rights of countries. In this regard, we support voluntary and mutually agreed technology diffusion, skill development, beneficiation at source and increased financial flows to address the lack of capital, human or technical resources, as well as efforts to produce them sustainably and with a view to enhancing local value creation through beneficiation. We also support research and development for increasing efficiencies, increasing the scale of beneficiation at source, promoting circularity and enabling sustainable alternatives to maintain supply chain balances of such minerals and materials. We reiterate the need to reduce the potential negative impacts on people and the environment and intend to leverage multilateral cooperation, as well as cooperation in Asia and the Pacific.

⁹ Economic and Social Council resolution 2023/19, annex.

22. We reaffirm the importance of energy connectivity and the potential contribution of cross-border energy trade in Asia and the Pacific to attaining Goal 7 where applicable. We acknowledge the efforts made by the Commission to support the implementation of the Regional Road Map on Power System Connectivity: Promoting Cross-border Electricity Connectivity for Sustainable Development,¹⁰ as well as the milestones set under each of its strategies. We invite member States to promote further regional power system connectivity and trading to implement the strategies contained in the Regional Road Map where applicable. We welcome regional efforts to strengthen regional interconnectivity.

23. We also reaffirm the importance of involving young people and youth-led and youth-focused organizations in the work of the United Nations at the national, regional and international levels, including in the implementation of the present Ministerial Declaration, as well as of regional and national road maps for the implementation of Goal 7.

24. We acknowledge the role of regional energy organizations and initiatives in promoting energy cooperation and pursuing efforts to facilitate the exchange of best practices and promote knowledge-sharing and dialogue among member States. We call upon member States to strengthen existing regional frameworks that facilitate the holding of policy dialogues on best practices and the coordination of efforts aimed at promoting sustainable energy practices and addressing common challenges related to achieving Goal 7 in Asia and the Pacific.

25. We appreciate the efforts of regional and subregional organizations to enhance regional energy cooperation and invite them, in the light of the profound and complex energy security challenges prevailing in Asia and the Pacific, to work collectively, as appropriate, to meet those challenges in order to promote sustainable development and economic prosperity for all countries in the region.

26. We emphasize the importance of establishing public-private partnerships and engagement with major groups and other stakeholders, as appropriate, in energy planning, policy formulation and implementation processes.

27. We request the Executive Secretary to support member States in the implementation of the present Ministerial Declaration by:

(a) Conducting analytical studies on key energy trends and emerging issues in Asia and the Pacific and compiling and disseminating relevant energy information and data, including through the Asia-Pacific Energy Portal, to facilitate informed intergovernmental discussions;

(b) Working closely with member States, intergovernmental organizations, UN-Energy and other relevant international, regional and multilateral organizations, in accordance with the mandate of the Commission, and continuing to promote cooperation among member States in the region towards the effective implementation of Goal 7 and other Goals related to energy, including through partnerships, as appropriate, with multilateral development banks, funds and programmes, private sector entities, major groups and other stakeholders;

¹⁰ ESCAP/CE/2021/4, annex.

(c) Continuing to support the work of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity and the Expert Working Group on Universal Access to Modern Energy Services, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Use of Fossil Fuels;

(d) Continuing, upon the request of member States, to develop national road maps for the implementation of Goal 7 and to assist them in formulating and implementing their long-term strategies for just, sustainable, affordable, inclusive, equitable and secure energy transitions.

28. We also request the Executive Secretary to convene the fourth Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, at the ministerial level, in 2027.
