

Energy Access in the New Development Agenda:

Why it needs to be a priority and what needs to be measured

As is now widely recognised, energy is a crucial enabler of human development and an essential component of sustainable development. Energy must have a prominent place in the new development agenda. In particular, universal energy access must be made a key priority in order to meet the needs of the world's poorest people.

Energy Enables: access makes a huge difference to the lives of the poor

Energy is an enabler. It drives human, social and economic development. Access to modern energy provides the means for lighting, cooking, water and space heating, cooling, information and communications. It allows people to make a better living, can increase job opportunities and is essential for the provision of clean water, sanitation, basic levels of healthcare, education, and other community services. It can be in the form of electricity, fuels and stoves for cooking, or mechanical power.

Issues of gender are vital in energy access across the full range of energy supplies and services. Women and men have different roles in the energy system with women bearing much of the burden and negative impacts of a lack of access.

Despite the availability of technical solutions, in 2010, two in every five people (2.8 billion or 41%) still relied on wood, charcoal or animal waste to cook their food and one in every five (1.2 billion or 17%) lived without electricity. Four million people die from household smoke pollution each year, more than die from HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria combined. An estimated one billion people in the world are served by health facilities that are completely without electricity. This situation dramatically limits poverty reduction efforts and is a global technology injustice.

Energy access is recognised as key to sustainable development

Energy access has been widely recognised as the 'missing MDG'. The outcome document of Rio +20 recognized "the critical role that energy plays in the development process, as access to sustainable modern energy services contributes to poverty eradication, saves lives, improves health and helps provide basic human needs". Similarly, the High Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda's report identified 'secure sustainable energy' as one of its illustrative goals. The UN's Sustainable Energy for All initiative has led the way in setting global targets and mobilising for national actions. This high level recognition of energy access must be reflected in the new agenda's framework.

How energy access needs to be prioritised in the new framework

Energy is not a standalone issue. Within the debates on energy, a range of important issues are discussed and indicators proposed around not only access but also renewables, efficiency and more recently 'nexus' issues of, health, women, agriculture and water. We welcome initiatives to broaden the scope and exploit the interconnections between energy and other issues.



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However in recognising the interrelated nature of energy, **we strongly believe that universal energy access should be a lead priority target in the new development framework.** This is because:

- *Energy access is a prerequisite first step towards achieving many other development goals and other important 'nexus' issues around agriculture, health, women, climate change adaptation and water. Only by addressing this access component will other essential human development objectives be achieved.*
- *Increasing access can support the delivery of other targets around renewable energy and energy efficiency. A large amount of the new energy supply that will be needed will be most appropriately and affordably delivered by renewable sources. In fact, investments in access may well help to develop the renewables industry as well as supporting economic development in an increasingly low-carbon economy.*
- *Achieving energy access will require a significant step change from 'business as usual' approaches, which will still leave the number of people without access to electricity close to 1 billion by 2030, and 2.6 billion people still cooking using traditional fuels. Driving this change will require sufficient focus to mobilise and prioritise investment flows and create supportive policy outcomes to scale up access.*

We also recognize that this access to energy needs to go beyond the household level. People need energy services across the spheres of household, productive uses and community services in achieving crucial human development objects.

The need for improved global energy access indicators

Current indicators for measuring and tracking energy access and ensuring it delivers for the poorest people are insufficient. As such the Open Working Group, and other leaders, should call on the multilateral development banks and stakeholders to strengthen and harmonise their existing energy indicators sets.

Indicators must be strengthened to effectively measure:

- *If people have at least a basic level of universal energy access which can be truly enabling, as well as monitoring a growing proportion of people enjoying more advanced levels of access. This should focus on poor people satisfying their energy needs, rather than just on energy supplies. The potential of Sustainable Energy for All's Global Tracking Framework's tier 3 energy access indicators should be explored as the potential basis for developing these basic access indicators.*
- *'Total Energy Access': A range of energy uses from household electricity, household cooking, productive uses and community services (especially health and education).*

The potential of other supportive energy related indicators that should be explored are:

- *The proportion of energy supplied from decentralised and renewable sources*
- *Reduced exposure to, and premature deaths from, household air pollution*

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