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Introduction of the Secretary-General’s report on the “United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All”

Statement by Dr. Kandeh Yumkella,
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All

[Delivered by Dr. Minoru Takada, Director and New York representative, Sustainable Energy for All initiative, Executive Office of the Secretary-General]

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[Thank you for giving me the floor, Chair,

I am pleased to deliver this presentation on behalf of Dr. Kandeh Yumkella, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All. Dr. Yumkella deeply regrets his absence today. He is – as we speak – launching the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All for the Latin American and the Caribbean region in Chile together with President Bachelet.]

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the pleasure of introducing to you and the Committee the report of the Secretary-General on agenda item 19 (a and i), on the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, lasting from 2014 to 2024. The relevant report is contained in document A/69/395. As you will know, the Decade was declared by the General Assembly in 2012, through resolution A/67/215.

The report lays out broad pillars as a global plan of action for the Decade. The report also suggests how to help realize sustainable energy for all in support of the post-2015 development agenda.
Energy is the golden thread that connects economic growth, increased social equity, and an environment that allows the world to thrive. Yet, 1.3 billion people—nearly one in five globally—lack electricity. Forty per cent of the world’s population—2.6 billion people—still rely on solid fuels to cook their food and heat their homes—breathing in toxic smoke that causes lung disease and kills over four million people a year, most of them women and children.

Where modern energy services are plentiful, the challenge is different, with emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from fossil fuels contributing to changes in the Earth’s climate.

The world needs to ensure that the benefits of modern energy are available to all and that energy is provided as cleanly and efficiently as possible.

The General Assembly has recognized the centrality of energy on numerous occasions. Leaders gathered at the Rio+20 Conference declared that “we are all determined to act to make sustainable energy for all a reality and, through this, help to eradicate poverty and lead to sustainable development and global prosperity”.

Most recently, the Open-Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals recommended the establishment of a Sustainable Development Goal on energy, with a focus on energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy. Such a goal must be a crucial part of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Secretary-General, at the request of the General Assembly, has taken the lead in coordinating the activities of the Decade. He has appointed me as his Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All to lead this effort on a daily basis and to serve as the focal point in the United Nations system on issues related to energy, while also serving as the Chair of UN-Energy and as Chief Executive for the Sustainable Energy for All initiative.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Significant activities are underway in support of sustainable energy for all, catalysed by the call for action by the Decade.

Governments, businesses and civil society have stepped up to take bold actions, as have UN agencies and international organisations.

Today, in Santiago, Chile, the Decade is being launched for the Latin American and the Caribbean region.
We had the first annual Sustainable Energy for All Forum in June this year, to launch the Decade globally, bringing together more than 1,000 leaders from governments, private sector, civil society and international organizations. It will continue to be a unique platform to mobilise actions to grow movement in support of the post-2015 development agenda in the future.

Numerous other regional and thematic launches have already been organised, including for Africa, Asia, Europe, SIDS, LDCs, and North America.

The Sustainable Energy for All Initiative is progressing beyond our expectations.

On finance, for instance, the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank have set up a finance committee of multilateral development banks, private commercial banks and institutional investors. A report on how to concretely mobilise an additional US$120 billion per year is currently being finalized.

On energy access, the European Commission has pledged, in support of Sustainable Energy for All, the provision of modern energy services to 500 million poor people by 2030, with initial funding of 3 billion Euros to leverage 13 billion Euros. US Power Africa aims to connect about 300 million people to electricity, with public-private financing of 20 billion dollars.

In 30 countries, our partners are developing action agendas and investment prospectuses. The African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank are serving as regional hubs for the initiative to support this effort.

The International Renewable Energy Agency, serving as the renewable energy hub for the initiative, showed, through its REmap 2030, that it is possible to double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030. IRENA has also launched the African Clean Energy Corridor and the SIDS Lighthouse initiative.

At the Climate Summit, the Global Energy Efficiency Accelerators platform was launched. Supported by the Copenhagen Energy Efficiency Hub, hosted by UNEP, it aims to reduce tens of gigatons of carbons, while saving hundreds of billions of dollars. Japan recently announced the establishment of an energy efficiency facilitating hub in support of this.

Civil society is also stepping up. The Practitioners Network facilitated by the UN Foundation brings together over 1800 civil society and entrepreneurs to address the energy poverty challenge.

Last, but not least, the Sustainable Energy for All Global Tracking Framework, led by the World Bank, the International Energy Agency, UN-Energy and more than 15
organizations, has established a comprehensive mechanism and indicators to track progress on energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy. The 2nd version of this framework is due in mid-2015, in time to support the post-2015 development agenda deliberations.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We have seen ambitions, commitments and action across all stakeholders and beyond our expectations. This is the time to consolidate our initial gains and establish solid, long-term arrangements to continue to grow this momentum.

In closing, please allow me to thank all Member States for their leadership and contributions. Together, we can achieve sustainable energy for all.

I thank you for your attention.