



# VIENNA ENERGY FORUM 2013

One year after Rio+20:  
the energy future we want



## Background Document



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# One Year After Rio+20: The Energy Future We Want

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**Background Document**

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## 1. Introduction: One year after Rio+20 - Are we on the Path to a Sustainable Energy Future?

Access to clean, affordable energy is a cornerstone of green economy and sustainable development. The Rio+20 outcome document *The Future We Want* recognizes the critical role energy plays in sustainable development. Furthermore, the document emphasizes the need to address the challenge of access to sustainable modern energy services for all, in particular for the poor, who are unable to afford these services even if they are available, and the essential role of these services in social inclusion and gender equality.

Worldwide, about 1.4 billion have no access to electricity. Up to a billion more have access only to unreliable electricity networks. Almost 3 billion people rely on solid fuels (i.e. traditional biomass and coal) for cooking and heating. A well-performing energy system that improves efficient access to modern forms of energy would strengthen the opportunities for the poorest people on the planet to escape the worst impacts of poverty. Access to energy provides consumers with the means to generate income – and that in turn creates wealth and new markets. Yet, the International Energy Agency predicts that in 2030 nearly as many people will lack modern energy services as do today.

While much of the developing world strives to find the means to address this huge deficit in access to modern energy, the world as a whole is struggling to shift energy production and consumption towards cleaner and greener patterns to mitigate the effects of climate change and other environmental pressures. These twin forces will be shaping the post-2015 global sustainability agenda of the *Future We Want* and creating both, opportunities and challenges for all countries.

Perhaps the most critical challenge related to energy for sustainable development is how to increase and support ongoing access to affordable modern energy services, while also ensuring that these are provided in an efficient manner and do not cause adverse environmental and socio-economic impacts. This point was well captured in *the Secretary-General Vision Statement on Sustainable Energy For All*<sup>1</sup>, which highlighted the urgent and interconnected challenges related to energy services and called for a "transformation of the world's energy systems that will benefit people everywhere".

The United Nations General Assembly recently declared the years 2014 to 2024 to the *Decade for Sustainable Energy for All*. In adopting the resolution, the General Assembly reaffirmed its determination to make sustainable energy for all a reality. The text calls upon Member States to galvanize efforts to make universal access to sustainable modern energy services a priority, noting

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Energy for All: A Vision Statement by Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations. United Nations. November, 2011

that 1.3 billion people are without electricity and 2.6 billion people in developing countries rely on traditional biomass for cooking and heating. It expressed concern that even when energy services are available, millions of poor people are unable to pay for them.

The Vienna Energy Forum (VEF) has established itself as a leading forum for policy makers and energy practitioners on the issues of sustainable energy for development. The Forum is committed to advancing the global dialogue on sustainable energy by engaging governments, international organization, business and industry and civil society leaders to shape global, regional and industry agendas on sustainable energy for all.

One year ago at the Rio+20 Conference, the world leaders had agreed on the outcome document "The Future We Want"<sup>2</sup>, where commitments were made to "act and to make a sustainable energy for all a reality". Organized one year after the Rio+20 Summit, the 3rd Vienna Energy Forum (VEF 2013) is focused on the energy dimensions of the Rio+20 outcomes and is providing a high level platform for a discussion focused on the following key issues and themes:

- **Sustainable Energy for All Vision:** Are we on the right track to achieve sustainable energy for all by 2030?
- **Energy in post-2015 Agenda:** How can it be best integrated into the global development framework and linked to other development issues ( i.e. environment, poverty, health, education, gender equality, etc.)
- **Do we need a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for the energy sector?** Can the three targets of SE4All (*universal access to modern energy services, doubling the share of the global rate of energy efficiency and doubling the share of renewable energy in global energy mix*) support the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goal for Energy?
- **What are the drivers for new energy financing?** The global investment in renewable energy continues on the positive trend: whatever the drivers are, how this trend can be sustained and what is the latest status of technologies and innovations?
- **What can we do** to make sure that we move from vision to practical action, from commitments for kilowatt hours of clean, affordable energy on the ground in countries where it is needed most?
- **What policies and partnerships are needed** to bring us to a sustainable energy future?

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<sup>2</sup> Report of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, 20-22 June 2012, United Nations, A/Conf.216/16

## 2. Global Thematic Consultations: The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Energy Future We Want for All

Building on the commitments, expressed at the Rio+20 Conference "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," the recently-concluded Global Thematic Consultations on Energy held a truly transparent, multi-stakeholder, global dialogue on why and how energy should be addressed in the United Nations post-2015 Development Agenda<sup>3</sup>.

The consultations process had culminated with a *High Level Dialogue on Energy in the Post-2015*, hosted by the Government of Norway in Oslo last month. Co-convened by Tanzania, Norway and Mexico and supported by the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative, UNIDO, UN DESA and the World Bank, the Consultations were conducted through a web-based process and the face-to-face meetings held in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Latin America and the Arab Region.

The dialogue has demonstrated the universal support for the centrality of energy in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The post-2015 development agenda must therefore explicitly recognize the important role energy plays in achieving sustainable development.

Many participants recognized that achieving sustainable energy for all will involve the development of energy systems that support the optimal use of energy resources in an efficient, equitable and socially inclusive manner while minimizing environmental impacts:

- **Providing universal access** to modern energy, including clean cooking facilities, is essential for poverty reduction, equitable, inclusive growth. Achieving access should therefore be open to the sustainable development of all sources, depend on a mix of solutions, for example micro-grid, decentralized and centralized energy solutions, and prioritized according to countries' specific challenges, capacities and circumstances, with an emphasis on the interlinked issues of availability, affordability and quality.
- **Investing in energy efficiency** will enhance economic opportunities while creating local jobs. Resources used more effectively could contribute to a better environment, increased quality of life, economic growth, lower energy costs for consumers, redistribution of electricity that now is wasted or lost, and create more reliable electricity systems.
- **Increasing the share of energy from renewable sources** can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and local pollution, insulate countries from fuel price volatility, and improve their balance of payments, while creating local jobs and growth and improve energy security for countries that lack domestic fossil resources.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/energy2015>

### 3. Energy in the Post-2015 Policy Debate: Rio+20 Outcome Document and Roadmap to 2030

The issue of energy is central to all three strands of sustainable development: economic growth, expanded social equity, and preservation of our climate and environment. Without access to sustainable and modern energy, it is not possible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and realize sustainable development. The post-2015 development agenda must therefore explicitly recognize the important role of energy. Universal energy access, increasing the use of renewable energy, improved energy efficiency and the need to address the nexus between energy and other development factors are priority issues that must be addressed.

#### 3.1 Sustainable Energy for All: A New Action Agenda and High Impact Opportunities

Recognizing the importance and urgency of energy challenges, the Secretary-General, launched in 2011 the initiative *Sustainable Energy for All* (SE4All) that seeks to identify and mobilize action by all stakeholders in support of access to modern energy services. A *Global Action Agenda*<sup>4</sup> prepared by the High Level Group on SE4All, outlined a roadmap and a framework for action for high impact opportunities to drive the transformation process in support of the three specific objectives underpinning the sustainable energy for all by 2030 goal: (1) ensuring universal access to modern energy services; (2) doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix; and (3) doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency.

The Global Action Agenda identified a number of high-impact opportunities which will foster positive outcomes in extending and expanding energy access to promote the adoption of sustainable energy. While achieving the UN SE4All objectives is challenging, they are attainable and affordable if they are pursued in a concerted action across key sectors, such as industry, transport, buildings and power sectors. This Forum will explore sectoral perspectives and discuss the policies and strategies that are needed to realize opportunities and the vision of sustainable energy for all by 2030.

Realizing the objectives of SE4All will require a decisive shift away from the “business as usual” mode in the energy sector. The Vienna Energy Forum 2013 will discuss the SE4All Action Agenda as captured by the Secretary-General Initiative’s Global Action Agenda document, which identifies opportunities for stakeholders to engage in concrete areas of action, ranging from appliance efficiency to innovative finance. The Action Agenda highlights the implementation

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<sup>4</sup> Sustainable Energy For All. A Global Action Agenda: Pathways for Concerted Action Towards Sustainable Energy for All. High-Level Group on Sustainable Energy for All. United Nations, April, 2012.



roadmap and a set of concrete targets and objectives (energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy) that support the goal of universal energy access by 2030. As such, it creates a platform for beneficial synergies between developed and developing nations as well as institutions.

### 3.2. Energy and Green Growth

Productive use of materials, water and other resources in society is an important lever to a low carbon and low energy future. Its economic opportunity has been estimated at nearly 3 trillion US Dollar annually in 2030<sup>5</sup>. Resource efficiency has become the engine of green growth. A number of techniques have widespread applicability in multiple sectors and deserve greater recognition and support as platform technologies, including for example green chemistry. The Vienna Energy Forum will debate some of these cross-sectoral opportunities. Moreover, complementary policy frameworks and multi stakeholder initiatives will be discussed with a view to mobilize green growth opportunities for the realization of the Energy for All policy goals.

### 3.3. Planning for Sustainable Cities

At the Rio+20 Conference, Member States recognized that integrated planning and management approaches to planning and development of cities can " promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies". In this regard, the Rio+20 Outcome Document calls for a " holistic approach to urban development and human settlements" that provides for affordable housing and infrastructure, while also promoting conservation and national and cultural heritage. Leaders committed to work together to promote among other things, the integrated approach to city planning, sustainable transport and energy and air quality.

Cities have the potential to play a leadership role in promoting new solutions and driving global action on green growth. Many challenges exist for cities to maintain a way of continuously creating jobs and prosperity without straining land and resources. Cities around the world are taking action to address climate change and to enhance energy and resource efficiency to create a sustainable environment for their citizens. This forum will provide a platform for a dialogue on planning for sustainable cities and an opportunity to share knowledge, experience and future action plans.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.mckinsey.com/features/resource\\_revolution](http://www.mckinsey.com/features/resource_revolution) Dobbs, R., Oppenheim, J. et al., Resource Revolution: Meeting the World's Energy, Materials, Food and Water Needs, McKinsey Global Institute, London, 2011

The Vienna Energy Forum 2013 engages business, governments, international organizations and civil society leaders in a broad dialogue on sustainable cities and how new energy models could be used to advance urban sustainability objectives.

### 3.4. Gender and Energy in the Post-2015 Agenda

Policy research clearly demonstrates that energy poverty is felt most acutely by women and girls who, as an example often in more rural areas, bear the responsibility to collect wood, coal, animal or crop waste as energy sources. Exposure to smoke from hazardous methods of cooking, heating, and lighting kills nearly two million people annually, mostly women and children, and millions more suffer from exposure-related diseases<sup>6</sup>. Gender therefore should be considered as one of the key variable in energy policy that can support the transformation to the sustainable future we want. Without access to modern forms of energy, sustainable development cannot be achieved and gender plays a critical role in explaining these linkages. Greater efforts are needed to re-thinking the gender and energy paradigm and develop new approaches to gender and energy policies in the post-2015 development framework.

The debate on energy and gender has so far primarily focused on women's domestic roles addressing household needs such as increased access to energy efficient stoves or alternative cooking fuels. There is a need to take the discussion beyond the 'household door' recognizing women as key economic actors and promoting their empowerment to ensure they are active participants and leaders in the energy sector. Involving women in the various steps of the energy value chain has the potential of promoting women's economic empowerment by generating employment opportunities, promoting entrepreneurship and increasing their chance of escaping multiple forms of poverty.

Under the theme "Women's Leadership on Energy Justice in the Productive Sectors", the 3rd Vienna Energy Forum will provide an important platform to share experiences and explore options on how to more effectively promote and enhance the role of women as active participants in energy policy-making, as well as their leadership role as sustainable energy managers and producers. It will also discuss the mutually reinforcing goals of gender equality and universal energy access.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.who.int/indoorair/info/briefing2.pdf>

## 4. Catalyzing Global Commitment: Setting Smart Goals to Ensure Success

The Rio+20 outcome launched an inclusive intergovernmental process to formulate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Do we need a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) exclusively on Energy and should energy targets be embedded in other Sustainable Development Goals? Do we need an SDG for the energy sector as part of the post-2015 development framework?

Early analysis and options, - including those expressed in the context of the recently-concluded global thematic consultations on energy<sup>7</sup> - show broad support for establishing a global goal on energy to achieve real traction as part of the post-2015 framework.

The experience with the Millennium Development Goals clearly demonstrated that a development framework based on clearly-articulated goals and targets helps to mobilize political will and commitments and drive action towards long-term priorities and objectives.

This global energy goal and related target(s) should encompass all three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental development. The Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative, with its three objectives on access, efficiency and renewables, can provide a useful framework to this end.

The Vienna Energy Forum 2013 will provide a platform for debating this question. The views and conclusions of the Forum will be captured in its outcome document, which will serve as an input to the global debate on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the energy goal among them.

### 4.1 Energy Access

Nearly one in five people around the world do not have access to modern energy services. Modern economies are driven by energy; a lack thereof is detrimental to progress and stunts the growth of a nation. Lack of access to energy in rural areas is one of the major barriers to eradicating poverty. In the backdrop of the Sustainable Energy for All goals, providing universal energy access is challenging but it is feasible. One of the major challenges is faced in providing access to energy to rural communities living in off-grid areas. Renewable energy technologies such as micro hydro, smart mini grids and solar cells are proven technologies that have provided access to energy in several off-grid rural areas. A stable policy framework backed by strong political will and resources is necessary to catalyze action towards achieving energy access for all. Mainstreaming the energy access agenda into national policy, regional policy and the long term national objectives is critical for sustainable

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/energy2015>

economic growth. This forum will discuss key challenges in meeting the needs of those who lack access to electricity and clean fuels to light their homes, cook their food and run their businesses.

#### **4.2. Energy Efficiency**

Energy efficiency is widely recognized as the most fundamental short-run imperative for rapid, ambitious and cost-effective climate change mitigation and global transition to green growth. Despite decades of laudable efforts the uptake of energy efficiency in many parts of the world is not occurring on the scale and at the speed necessary to meet energy security, energy access and climate change goals. As there remains significant room for improvement in terms of efficiency worldwide, all countries should contribute to this effort. The challenge is to build momentum towards a self-sustaining, accelerated progress in energy efficiency. VEF 2013 will discuss ways forward to prioritize global action on energy efficiency and explore options for addressing energy efficiency as part of the new global development framework, covering a wide array of economic sectors, including industrial, residential, commercial and transport.

#### **4.3. Renewable Energies**

Renewable energy in current economic times can spur growth opportunities and increase productivity of human capital for green growth and green jobs. Latest estimates indicate that about 5 million people worldwide work either directly or indirectly in the renewable energy industries. This makes renewable energy not only a critical element of the global solution to climate change but also a key instrument to achieve sustainable development through new green jobs, the development of the local economy, the increased competitiveness of local industries and the reduction of environmental impacts. Recent studies show that renewable energy is often the cheapest solution for off-grid solutions in many developing countries and when linked to productive activities can act as an engine for local development. Therefore, this forum will explore the notion that in emerging and developing countries successful energy policies need to emphasize the importance of small-scale (i.e. under 10 MW) and decentralized energy systems to maximize the sustainable development dividends.

#### 4.4 Energy targets embedded in other Sustainable Development Goals?

As Thematic Consultations on Energy and the Post-2015 Development Agenda demonstrated, for many, the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative (SE4ALL) illustrates what a Sustainable Development Goal for the energy sector would look like. Meanwhile, should energy be embedded in other future SDGs as access to energy serves as a precondition to achieve many development goals that extend far beyond the energy sector—eradicating poverty, increasing food production, providing clean water, improving public health, enhancing education, creating economic opportunity, and empowering women? Emissions of greenhouse gases from fossil fuels are contributing to changing the Earth’s climate to the detriment of all. At the same time, the transition to sustainable energy systems presents one of the greatest investment opportunities of the 21st century. Development is not possible without energy, and sustainable development is not possible without sustainable energy.

### 5. Energy Sector transformation towards Sustainable Energy for All

Energy stands at the centre of global efforts towards a worldwide transition to green economies, poverty eradication and ultimately sustainable development. The last five years have seen a promising interest in energy as a result of the initiative of the Secretary-General on *Sustainable Energy for All* and the declaration by the UN General Assembly of 2012 as the *International Year of Sustainable Energy for All*. Recognizing the importance and urgency of energy challenges, decision makers at the national and international level are creating global awareness of the importance of energy for sustainable development and have placed the energy issue at the top of their agendas. More recently the UN General Assembly declared 2014-2024 as the *Decade of Sustainable Energy for All*. The 2012 Rio+20 World Conference fully acknowledged and reaffirmed the significance of energy in addressing all the major challenges of the 21st Century. In this regard, sustainable energy led by the Sustainable Energy For All Initiative was unquestionably at the top of the list of the Rio+20 success stories.

Sustainable Development on a global scale will require radical technological changes in both developed and developing countries. Spurring innovation, as well as accelerating the deployment, diffusion and transfer of best-practice technologies is key to shifting towards a green economy. Green technologies are central to resource management, and touch upon virtually all economic sectors, including agriculture, transport and industry. This forum will address special challenges of transferring environmentally sound technologies to address global energy and resource challenges in the context of sustainable development.

### 5.1. Financing the Energy Future We Want

Annually billions of dollars are needed to finance a sustainable energy future and meet the goals of SE4ALL by 2030. This forum will discuss key issues and challenges in developing financial solutions for sustainable energy investments. The magnitude of necessary resources makes it evident that the solution requires innovative policies such as feed-in-tariffs and new mechanisms. Financing a sustainable energy future calls for high upfront investment costs that are offset in the long run by multiple benefits. The role of global financial mechanisms such as GEF and GCF will become critical in years to come as they can facilitate in catalyzing public and private financing for programs on *Sustainable Energy For All*.

### 5.2. Green Mini-Grids

What is the role of mini-grids in increasing access to clean energy solutions? The IEA has estimated that in order to achieve universal electricity access, mini-grids will have to provide around 40% of new capacity by 2030<sup>8</sup>, with the largest percentage needed in sub-Saharan Africa. While green mini-grid options exist they have struggled to expand beyond pilot projects and are off-track to make a meaningful contribution to Sustainable Energy for All targets. However, as new smart grid technologies and renewable energy cost reductions make systems more viable - and as demand increases from anchor customers like expanding mobile telecoms firms concerned about rising diesel prices - there is increasing public and private interest in renewable and hybrid mini-grid systems. A substantial African green mini-grids sector could complement grid expansion and household energy delivery, and help countries leapfrog to more resilient and sustainable energy systems. The VEF 2013 seeks to bring together donors, governments, private developers, community organizations and international organizations in order to narrow in on a co-ordinate SE4ALL approach to green mini-grid sector transformation in Africa.

### 5.3 Nexus Issues in the Post-2015 Policy Portfolio: Water, Food and Energy

There are increasing calls globally to include water and food in the energy debate as nations around the world develop new energy policies and evaluate the options they want to follow in response to the UN Secretary-General's Initiative on Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All). The inclusion of water and food in the energy debate is relevant as energy decisions have a broad range of impacts on water and food production. For example, novel water and energy policies in

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<sup>8</sup> Energy For All-*Financing access for the poor*, OECD/IEA, 2011

agriculture could enhance food production and security. However, abstracting water for irrigation may affect reservoir levels and reduce hydropower capacity, with negative consequences for energy security.

The water-energy-food nexus presents opportunities for policy-makers, business leaders, investors, non-governmental organizations and the public at large to manage dwindling resources that are important for addressing important global development challenges. A side event of the VEF 2013 will provide a platform to discuss recent international undertakings and progress on the water-energy-food nexus and to seek contributions and insights from institutions and individual experts that will inspire international action on this very important subject.

#### 5.4. Public Private Partnerships (PPPs )

Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs) is a *policy instrument of choice* to develop and implement development projects and initiatives that neither private nor public sector could undertake on their own. This is particularly true in the energy and infrastructure sector, where PPPs are critical for providing service in an efficient way and developing best practices and frameworks that promote investment.

In his *Vision Statement on SE4All*, the Secretary-General called upon all sectors of society to act and to join the initiative with concrete commitments to actions and practical solutions. To achieve a bright future of SE4All - business, finance, government, and civil society – all need to embrace the need for energy transformation and get engaged.

The Rio+20 Outcome Document - *The Future We Want*- repeatedly highlights the importance of PPPs as a policy tool for engagement of business and industry to advance sustainable development priorities and for mobilizing financing. It also commends the existing PPPs and calls for new and innovative PPPs among industry, academia, governments and non-governmental stakeholders. As such, PPPs will remain an important tool in the post-2015 policy portfolio.

The Vienna Energy Forum 2013 supports initiatives and PPPs to advance renewable energy, energy efficiency and universal access to sustainable energy by 2030.

## 6. Managing the transformation process: The Global Tracking Framework Report

As the Millennium Development Goals process demonstrates, measurable goals that enjoy widespread consensus can mobilize commitments to action, strategic partnerships and widespread support from key stakeholders and whole societies. For many, the Sustainable Energy for All

initiative (SE4ALL) illustrates what a Sustainable Development Goal for the energy sector would look like. But setting goals is not enough. Measuring and reporting on progress is critical to achieving them.

The SE4ALL Global Tracking Framework Report serves this purpose. Prepared by a team of energy experts from 15 agencies under the leadership of the World Bank and the International Energy Agency, the report provides a comprehensive snapshot of over 170 countries' status with respect to action on energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as energy consumption. The report's framework for data collection and analysis enables us to identify "high-impact" countries with the most potential to achieve rapid progress towards the SE4ALL objectives, and also to monitor that progress from now to 2030.

The launch of the Tracking Framework Report will take place as a Special Event of the Vienna Energy Forum. A panel of distinguished participants representing multi-agency team that prepared the Report will present and discuss the Report methodology, findings and related issues, including how the Report will help to measure and report progress on achieving the Sustainable Energy for All goals by 2030.

## **7. What should the Forum achieve? Key expectations for the outcome**

With less than three years remaining until the 2015 deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is clear that the debate on post-2015 needs to shift to the discussion of concrete instruments and goals to improve efficiency and address the right fields for action. In this regard, global attention is now focused on a new round of goals, i.e. the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Rio+20 Summit produced an outcome document - 'The Future We Want' - where the issues that should guide the SDG process were outlined. While some of the SDGs are expected to build on the existing MDGs, such as poverty reduction, gender, education and developing a global partnership, it is clear that some additional goals will have to be proposed to address the growing urgency of sustainable development and some of its new challenges, such as energy and climate change.

Seen more like the emerging challenges in the 90s and 2000s, when the MDGs were implemented, energy and climate are now recognized as the major, defining issues of our time. Therefore, the post-2015 framework should put in place a clearly-articulated global long-term goal on energy, such as for example, the universal energy access goal supported by short-term targets and a robust monitoring and reporting system.

Building on the outcomes and recommendations of the Global Thematic Consultations on Energy, the Vienna Energy Forum 2013 will provide a platform for a discussion on an inspirational goal on





energy that will help to focus attention, drive action and financing towards the global transition to sustainable energy for all.

It is expected that the Outcome Document will serve as a message from the Forum to reinforce the growing political momentum that already endorsed sustainable energy for all as a development priority for the post-2015 supported by a emphasize the necessity of establishing a “sustainable energy for all” as a global goal on energy.

It is expected that the Outcome Document will be developed as a result of the Forum proceedings and will not be a negotiated document, but rather a joint statement or a set of messages that will reflect the conclusions and recommendations expresses by the participants of the thematic sessions and side events.

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