

Key Highlights

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- With over 2,000 participants from over 146 countries, the Vienna Energy Forum 2021 closed with calls for increased action and commitment toward sustainable energy deployment to drive development.
- The forum re-emphasized the vital role of the international community in driving a sustainable and inclusive energy transition to combat climate change, calling for efficient mobilization of resources and improved policy coherence to accelerate the pace of the transition. Government representatives and experts underscored the role of women and youth in facilitating the transition and the special needs of SIDS and LDCs were acknowledged.
- The Forum identified key recommendations to: design inclusive policies aligned with climate and development goals; improve accessibility and affordability of technologies; deliver hands-on school and vocational curricula; promote data-driven approaches; and finance accessibility.
- Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, Li Yong, Director-General of UNIDO, and Heinz Habertheuer, Interim Managing Director of the Austrian Development Agency, offered closing statements.

The Vienna Energy Forum wrapped on 7 July 2021 with four Executive Dialogue sessions followed by a series of side events and closing messages. It paved the way for tangible partnerships and commitments ahead of the High-Level Dialogue on Energy in September and the 26th Session of the Conference of Parties in November.

Executive Dialogue – Reimagining our Energy Systems

The day began with an Executive Dialogue on structural shifts in the energy system that would enable a substantial increase in global renewable energies through access to capital, finance, and sustainable infrastructure, such as energy grids.

Frehiwot Woldehanna, State Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Ethiopia, delivered a Ministerial Statement announcing the launch of Ethiopia's National Electrification Program and their work toward increasing the country's national renewable energy generation capacity. Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment, Egypt, emphasized Egypt's regional role promoting renewable energy initiatives in Africa and the role of climate finance in reducing the impacts of climate change in developing countries. Also,

Arifin Tasrif, Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources of Indonesia, identified the country's support of several funding schemes, and fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to increase investment in renewable energy projects.

At the roundtable on "Renewable Capital", Paddy Padmanthan, President and CEO of ACWA Power, spoke of opportunities to deploy energy in remote areas along with a challenge to strengthen country-specific central energy capacity. Helen Clarkson, CEO of The Climate Group, urged companies to make actionable commitments and towards sustainable energy development.

Kevin Kariuki, Vice-President, Power, Energy, Climate and Green Growth, African Development Bank, highlighted finance, capacity building, and technology as fundamental facilitators for the energy sector, and called for an enabling environment including legal, fiscal, and regulatory frameworks.

The "Green Grids" roundtable discussed ambitions for regional smart grids and interconnected green infrastructure. Ajayi Mathur, Director General of International Solar Alliance,

underscored the importance of interconnections between countries with strong buy-ins from governments. He called for designing solutions tailored to country needs and encouraged government involvement.

Mika Ohbayashi, Director at the Renewable Energy Institute of Japan, shared the cases of major energy producers and consumers China, Japan, Mongolia and Republic of Korea, as examples of the possibility of energy grid interconnectedness to create significant economic opportunities.

Executive Dialogue – Consumers at the Forefront

Imad Hoballah, Minister of Industry, Lebanon, shared key future policy actions and ambitions for Lebanon including investment in solar energy manufacturing facilities, supporting the development of draft decrees to energy sector investments, and an ongoing collaboration with UNIDO on e-waste.

Nasrul Hamid, Minister of the Power, Energy and Renewable Resources, Bangladesh, shared the country's target of a 40% renewable energy share in the national energy mix by 2041 as well as celebrating the recent installation of 5.8 million home solar systems improve energy access in off-grid areas.

At the “Driving Change” roundtable, Harish Hande, CEO of SELCO Foundation, encouraged an end-user perspective on energy needs rather than centralized energy grids, with the former enabling a holistic outlook that values environmental and social sustainability. Rebecca Bregant, CMO and Co-Founder of Pineberry, urged the use of disaggregated data to monitor feedback from consumers and match demands with services.

Grace Fenton, Director of Business Development, Nithio, added there is a significant demand for products within the energy sector but a lack of financing and funding to scale hampers investments that can satisfy it. She also encouraged leveraging data to understand the needs of the consumers.

The roundtable on “New Services” delved into the opportunities for providers that employ the

Energy as a Service (EaaS) model. Michael Villa, Executive Director of smartEn emphasized the importance of building trust with consumers and stated that improving usability and establishing consumer remuneration would help drive innovation in EaaS models. He also recommended that innovators utilize existing assets in the energy sector and apply integrated planning when expanding the renewable energy sector.

Lorena Skilijan, Managing Partner for NobileGroup, expanded on the significant potential of a recent Austrian law that will enable energy communities and peer-to-peer provision of energy services. Filip Korprčina, Founder and CEO of Energy Shift, shared Croatia-specific issues concerning monopolies that are less incentivized to invest in energy grids. He called for greater cooperation with small energy companies, funds towards innovations, and tax regulations on renewable energy.

Executive Dialogue – Future Mobility

Tuan Ibrahim bin Tuan Man, Minister of Environment and Water, Malaysia, opened the Executive Dialogue with a Ministerial Statement. He presented Malaysia's efforts toward the energy transition including development of a carbon pricing policy, a low carbon mobility program, and a green recovery plan.

Hala Adel Zawati, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resource, Jordan, also shared the main priorities for her country's effort to promote electric public transportation, including countrywide coverage of electric charging stations and fleets of electric vehicles in government.

At the roundtable on “Green Transportation,” Sheila Watson, Deputy Director, FIA Foundation, pushed for a global and inclusive consideration of the market barriers to green transport in order to create a sustainable mobility system. Joanne Edgehill, Managing Director, Megapower, encouraged countries to take greater responsibility for the transition to sustainable transport.

Raja Gayam, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Gayam Motor Works, shared the situational context in India where providing

electric three-wheeled vehicles for taxis and last-mile deliveries is critical to meeting the nation's targets, and called for affordable and durable electric vehicles with increased convenience to charge.

At the roundtable on "Sustainable Mobility Solutions," Anders Well, Chief International Officer, GreenMobility A/V, stated the promotion of fast-charging infrastructure and continuous availability of charging stations in public domains are vital to promote the electrification of vehicles. Also, Alberto Piglia, Head of e-Mobility, ENEL X, called for working with administrations to accelerate the shift to green mobility. Jana Helder, Head of Operations at BABLE Smart Cities and Youth Representative, stressed early-stage involvement of all stakeholders to improve the possibility of project acceptance.

Executive Dialogue - The Climate Imperative: Spotlight on Small Island Developing States

Tareq Emtairah, Director, Department of Energy, UNIDO, set the tone for the Executive Dialogue and highlighted the specific vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which experienced collapses in revenue amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, Minister of European and International Affairs, Austria, stressed the benefits of electrification for SIDS including its positive contribution to GDP, reduced fuel import dependency, and decarbonization efforts. Also, he shared plans to facilitate access to innovative financing instruments and strengthen efforts in policy and regulation.

At the roundtable on "Resilient Networks," Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environmental Facility, stressed that an efficient mobilization of domestic financial resources and improved policy coherence is key to accelerating the sustainable energy transition of SIDS.

To encourage a shift away from fossil fuel dependency, Mark Hill, CEO of Barbados Investment and Development Cooperation, presented a reimagining of Barbados as a biotechnology island with marine opportunities for renewable energy investment. Also, Kerri Ann

Bovell, Entrepreneur and Founder of EcoMycö, pushed for a reduction in import duties on clean technology to help young entrepreneurs establish themselves.

Thilmeeza Hussain, Ambassador of the Maldives to the United States and Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the UN, spoke on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Chair and stressed the need for a more enabling environment for easier access to private and public financing.

The "Blue Economy" roundtable commenced with a Ministerial Statement from Miriam Dalli, Minister of Energy, Enterprise and Sustainable Energy, Malta, highlighting Malta's push for a "blue economy" including a shift to offshore wind and solar energy and sustainable maritime transport in line with the European Green Deal.

Raquel Moses, CEO of the Caribbean Climate-Smart Accelerator, recommended low interest financing options from development funding organizations, energy solutions with SIDS as the sole beneficiaries, and "untethered" development funding commitments. Gary Jackson, Executive Director, Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, called for a bottom-up approach and greater attention to capacity building, research and development partnerships, innovative projects, and targeted technological solutions. Then Solomone Fifita Manager, Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, highlighted opportunities in wave technologies and tidal power that translate into poverty alleviation and climate resilience.

Closing Statements

The closing statements of the Vienna Energy Forum 2021 featured Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, Li Yong, Director-General of UNIDO, and Heinz Habertheuer, Interim Managing Director of the Austrian Development Agency. Their call to actions ranged from ending the use of coal, action plans in particular industries, improving the availability of data, developing market-oriented policies, and more. the availability of data, developing market-oriented policies, and more.