

# Stakeholder Forum

FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Vurehout 373 • 1507 EC Zaandam • NL & 2 The Links • Herne Bay • Kent • CT6 7GQ • UK  
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## Concept Note for A Webinar on SDG 7 on Energy and SDG 8 on Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment, and Decent Work for All

This webinar - in the countdown to the 2023 SDG Summit - is the fourth in SF's series of webinars that will review 2 SDGs each month to see where we are in their implementation, examining interdependencies across goals, and what that means for accelerating implementation. The series, which is supported by UNDESA, UNEP, and the EU, is bringing together a wide range of experts, policymakers, and practitioners with knowledge of the SDGs' interlinkages and insights on integrated approaches that can help to develop recommendations on transformative actions for the SDGs.

This webinar will focus on SDG 7 on access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all and SDG 8 on sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and synergies and tradeoffs with other goals.

The series will continue to explore different ways to enable integrated approaches to SDG implementation. A key aim of the series will be to identify ways to exploit positive interactions and mitigate trade-offs, including by forging multistakeholder coalitions behind programmes of accelerated action. Good practices will be identified for empowering communities, sectoral actors, and cross-sectoral alliances at multiple levels. The intention is to promote the establishment of communities of practice that will continue to collaborate in the lead-up to the SDG Summit and beyond.

Despite progress, there are still over 700 million people globally without access to electricity and 2.4 billion cooking with harmful and polluting fuels. While with electrification,<sup>1</sup> the use of renewable energy, and energy efficiency have improved, progress is not fast enough to achieve SDG 7. The extent to which countries can fast-track the switch to green energy is a key question for 2023. High global oil, gas, and coal prices offer an incentive for households and businesses to install solar panels and heat pumps to lower their energy bills, but policymakers need to fast-track permits for installing renewables and simplify regulations around retrofitting buildings to be more energy efficient. Meanwhile, the high costs of capital in many developing countries continue to retard renewable energy investment. According to the International Energy Agency in 2021, developing and emerging economies received a mere 8% of all clean-energy investment – most of the remainder went to industrialized countries and China. There are implications for economic development. Without clean electricity in abundance, many low- and middle-income nations will find it harder to catch up and industrialize. More money needs to be made available to them. So far, national pledges to the Green Climate Fund have come up short. What is needed are more initiatives such as the Global Climate Alliance, proposed at the COP27 climate conference in Egypt in November 2022. These commit rich countries to contribute to a climate financing pool

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<sup>1</sup> See latest IEA data on electrification trends: <https://www.iea.org/reports/sdg7-data-and-projections/access-to-electricity>



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using funds generated through carbon tax programmes and other methods. The pool is then distributed between low- and middle-income countries, depending on their climate commitments. Ultimately, the nature of the decarbonization transition is a political choice. The question is if the world will tackle the transition as a global commons challenge – requiring joint efforts from development banks, financial institutions, and clubs of governments from the G7 to the G20. Or will it be a green race – accepting winners and losers and the consequences, including poorer prospects for countries that fail to attract adequate capital?

Although the global economy started to rebound in 2021, waves of spreading COVID-19 infections together with rising inflation, major supply chain disruptions, policy uncertainties, and unsustainable debt of developing countries compounded by geopolitical tensions caused the global economy to slow down. Against this backdrop, the world's gross product growth is currently projected to decelerate from 2022 to 2023, before moderately picking up in 2024. With recent increases in global interest rates, least developed and many other developing countries are facing heavy debt servicing burdens which are slowing investment and growth.

As it relates to SDG 8, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in unprecedented, volatile developments in labor productivity levels. Globally, output per worker grew at an average annual rate of 1.6 percent between 2015 and 2019. In 2020, the output per worker dropped by 0.6 percent, the first such decline since 2009. Global labor productivity rebounded in 2021, rising by 3.2 percent. A disproportionate impact of COVID on informal workers was reflected in a decline in the informal employment rate in some countries at the height of the crisis; this has left informal workers and their families in a highly precarious position.

Equal treatment in employment is part and parcel of decent work. Globally, women continue to be paid 19 percent less than men according to International Labour Organization (ILO). ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook projects that there will be only a 1 percent growth of employment in 2023, while global unemployment is slated to rise slightly in 2023, by around 3 million, to 208 million (corresponding to a global unemployment rate of 5.8 percent). In addition to unemployment, job quality remains a key concern as decent work is fundamental to social justice. A decade of progress in poverty reduction faltered during the COVID-19 crisis. Despite a nascent recovery during 2021, the continuing shortage of better job opportunities is likely to worsen, which means that many workers will have to accept lower-quality jobs, often at very low pay, sometimes with insufficient hours. The proportion of the world's youth not in education, employment, or training is now at its highest level since 2005 and reached 273 million in 2021. Additionally, according to UNICEF, roughly 160 million children were subjected to child labor at the beginning of 2020.

This fourth webinar will take place on 22 February 2023 at 8 am EST / 2 pm CET and will last for up to 90 minutes. The recording of the webinar and an audio podcast will be available soon after



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on the Stakeholder Forum website. A summary will also be produced and will serve as a contribution to the 2023 SDG Summit.

### The following agenda is being proposed:

**8:00 - 8:05** - Welcome and introduction: Charles Nouhan, Chair of the Board, Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future

**8:05 - 8:15** - The interlinked challenge of the SDGs: Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, Senior Adviser, Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future

**8:15 - 8:35** - Setting the scene

- UNDESA speaker (TBC)
- Professor Raymond Saner, University of Basel and Centre for Socio-Economic Development, Switzerland

**8:35 - 9:05** Discussion on SDGs 7 and 8 with experts and Q&A

**Moderator:** David O'Connor, Permanent Representative of IUCN to the United Nations and a Fellow at Stakeholder Forum

- Dr. Minoru Takada, Sustainable Energy Team Leader, & Head, UN-Energy Secretariat, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, Department of Economic and Social Affairs United Nations - focus on SDG 7 and interlinkages
- Professor David L. McCollum, Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) (TBC)
- Mr. Kari Tapiola, Former Deputy-Director General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) - focuses on SDG 8 and interlinkages
- Mr. Ivan Idrovo, CEO, SDCASIA; External Consultant at International Labour Organization (ILO) - focus on SDG 8 and interlinkages

**9:05 - 9:10** - Summary remarks by Irena Zubcevic, Director, Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future

**9:10 - 9:15** Closing and thanks by Charles Nouhan, SF



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