

Twelfth session of the Assembly
Abu Dhabi, 15-16 January 2022

Background Note

High-Level Plenary Meeting on the outcomes of COP26 and the High-Level Dialogue on Energy

1. The year 2015 was a turning point in global history and a defining moment for multilateralism. The adoption of two crucial agreements - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change – changed the trajectory the world had taken, a path that was leading towards increased socio-economic imbalance and environmental degradation. These two crucial agreements, built on a consensus for urgent and inclusive action, provide the blueprint to build a world where poverty, inequality and climate change do not blight the lives and livelihoods of millions of people. And the achievement of both hinges upon the ability to transform the current energy system and make it accessible to all.
2. The year 2021 has been an important milestone in the global efforts on energy transition. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) convened COP26 in Glasgow, with the central focus on climate action, most notably the five-year check up on progress in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). By the end of COP26, 151 countries had submitted new or revised NDCs. According to the UNFCCC, these plans, would put the world on track for 2.5°C of warming by the end of the century, which is still far off from the goal of limiting global temperatures to 1.5°C by 2050.
3. In response, the Glasgow Climate Pact calls on countries to “revisit and strengthen” their 2030 targets by the end of 2022 to align them with the Paris Agreement’s temperature goals. In addition, the Pact asks nations to consider further actions to curb greenhouse gas emissions and emphasizes the need to “phase down unabated coal” and “phase-out fossil fuel subsidies.” This is also mirrored in the commitments made by countries, the private sector, and civil society to accelerate the energy transition, most notably by increasing investment in renewables and stopping the flow of investments to coal, while promoting just and inclusive policies, and broad partnerships.
4. Another energy milestone was the United Nations Secretary-General’s High-level Dialogue on Energy (HLDE) that took place in September 2021. The Dialogue represented the first global gathering on energy under the auspices of the General Assembly since the UN Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy held in Nairobi in 1981, thus underlining the urgency to act fast and act decisively to transform the global energy landscape. As of now, the Dialogue has yielded 157 Energy Compacts, which are voluntary commitments to action on SDG7. If implemented, they will lead to more than USD 2,100 billion in financing and investment.

5. The number of people lacking access to electricity and clean cooking fell from 1.2 billion globally to 759 million and from 3 billion to 2.6 billion in 2019, respectively. The gains achieved, however, are being reversed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with numbers set to increase.¹ At the same time, recent estimates² show that global carbon dioxide emissions are bouncing back to pre-COVID levels following a drop of 5.4 per cent in 2020. The urgency of transitioning to a resilient, cost-effective and inclusive renewables-based systems is evident, and the benefits of this new energy system are abundantly clear.
6. The positive momentum emerging from COP26 and HLDE must be sustained and built upon. IRENA had a key role in supporting both processes and is uniquely positioned to amplify the progress to date. In the lead up to COP26, IRENA worked with over 70 countries to enhance their NDCs. It also worked closely with the Presidency, UNFCCC and other partners on several streams of climate action. In the context of HLDE, IRENA, ESCAP and UNEP co-led the Energy Transition theme and prepared a thematic report on the issue, significantly drawing on the World Energy Transitions Outlook. The Agency substantively contributed to both outcomes of the Dialogue - the SDG7 Global Roadmap and the Energy Compacts.
7. Looking forward, it is paramount to move from commitments that emerged from the two meetings to action for an equitable, sustainable and 1.5C world. Therefore, achieving the milestones assigned at the SDG7 Global Roadmap and implementing Energy Compacts, while working to accelerate energy transitions is paramount. Many commitments have been made, now is the time to operationalize them and make the necessary progress by 2030.

Objectives of the session

8. The session's objective is to take stock of the energy related outcomes of COP26 and the High-level Dialogue on Energy and identify concrete actions that can accelerate the energy transitions, considering the 2030 timeline. It will also consider how to use IRENA's General Assembly and the High-Level Forum on Energy Transitions to best support these efforts, including the links to the upcoming COP27 in Egypt and COP28 in the UAE.

Guiding questions

- Which are the main opportunities and challenges in implementing and following up on the outcomes of the High-level Dialogue and COP26?
- What tools and processes can help countries accelerate the implementation of development and climate goals? What are the necessary next steps?
- How can we leverage IRENA's expertise, convening power and global reach to operationalize the outcomes of 2021 and provide an effective platform for international cooperation?

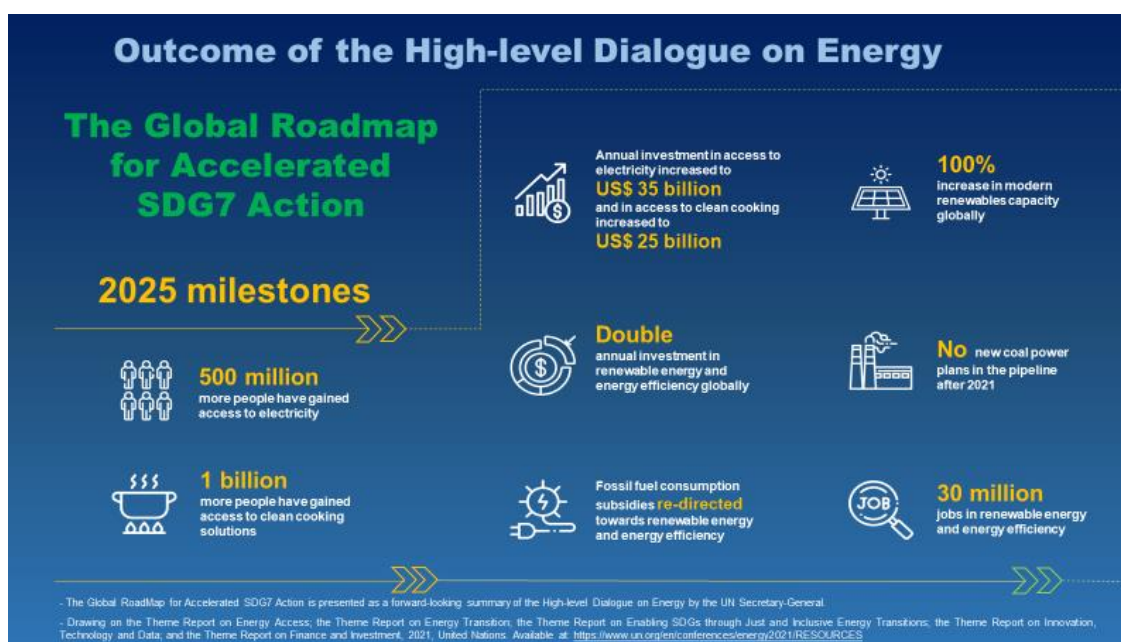
¹ [Tracking SDG 7 – The Energy Progress Report, 2021](#)

² [UNEP, Emissions Gap Report, 2021](#)

Annex I: High-level Dialogue on Energy Outcomes

A. Global Roadmap³

A global roadmap setting out milestones needed to achieve a radical transformation of energy access and transition by 2030, while also contributing to net zero emissions by 2050, is an outcome of the High-level Dialogue. A report⁴ of the Dialogue was also issued, giving more detail on the roadmap's recommendations as well as statements and commitments made at the Dialogue.

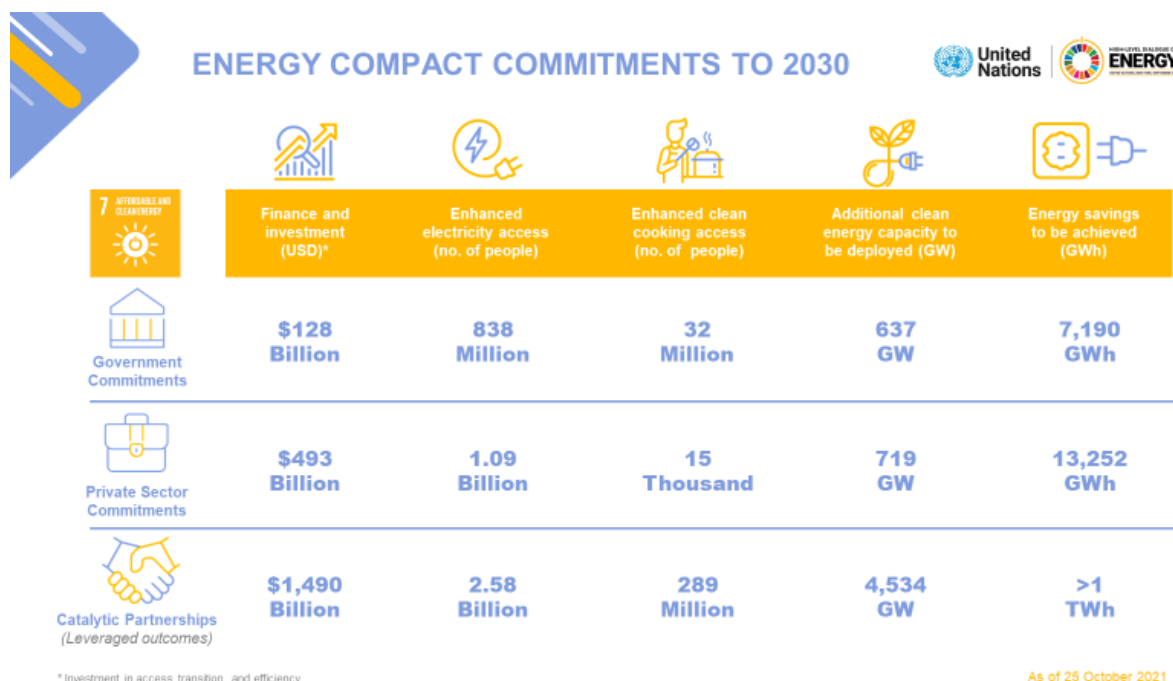
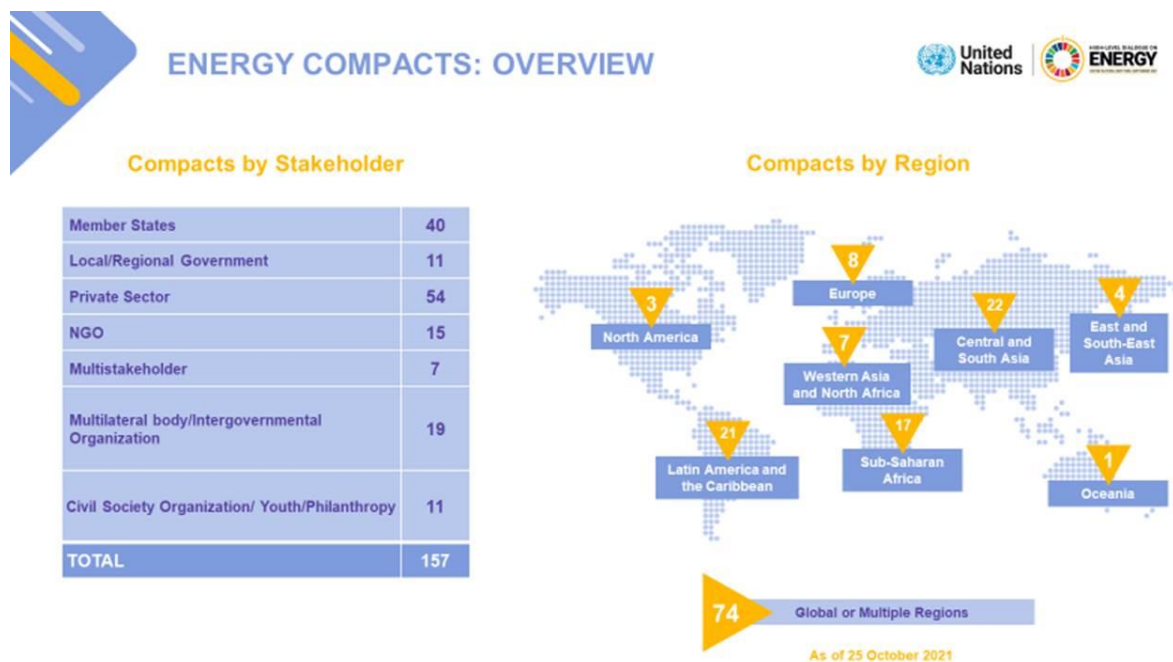


³ Available [here](#).

⁴ Available [here](#).

B. Energy Compacts⁵

To accelerate SDG7 action on a trajectory in line with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on climate change, Energy Compacts are being mobilized throughout the current Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Energy Compacts are voluntary commitments from Member States and all other stakeholders, with the specific actions they will take to advance progress on SDG7 and net-zero emissions, designed to be fully in line with SDG Acceleration Actions and Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.



⁵ Available [here](#).

UN-Energy Pledge

UN-Energy, working with all UN system partners and UN Country Teams, commits to helping Member States and their partners to attain these milestones to be achieved by 2025 towards SDG 7 and net zero emissions, as they build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic:

Access

- 500 million more people with electricity access
- 1 billion more people with access to clean cooking solutions across the world

Transition

- 100% increase in modern renewables capacity globally and 100% renewable-based power targets established in 100 countries
- 3% annual efficiency improvement in at least 50 countries across the world

Resilience

- 30 million jobs in renewable energy and energy efficiency
- Re-direct fossil fuel subsidies towards clean energy and end financing for new coal power plants
- Annual global GHG emissions to be reduced at least by one third in 2025

Finance

- Double annual clean energy investment globally (relative to the current level)
- Raise energy access investment to US\$40 billion per year, of which 50 per cent should be directed to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

Annex II: COP26 Outcomes

COP26 Energy Outcomes

Accelerating the Energy Transition:

- The UK launched **Glasgow Breakthroughs**, an international plan to deliver clean and affordable technology everywhere by 2030. Over 40 countries⁶, representing more than 70% of the world's economy and every region, backed and signed the Breakthrough Agenda. Modelled on the UK's landmark Net Zero Strategy, the Breakthrough Agenda will see countries and businesses coordinate and strengthen their climate action each year to dramatically scale and speed up the development and deployment of clean technologies and drive down costs this decade. The first five goals cover more than 50% of global emissions. Delivery of these goals is set to create 20 million new jobs globally and over USD 15 trillion across both emerging and advanced economies.
 - Power: Clean power is the most affordable and reliable option for all countries to meet their power needs efficiently by 2030.
 - Road Transport: Zero emission vehicles are the new normal and accessible, affordable, and sustainable in all regions by 2030.
 - Steel: Near-zero emission steel is the preferred choice in global markets, with efficient use and near-zero emission steel production established and growing in every region by 2030.
 - Hydrogen: Affordable renewable and low carbon hydrogen is globally available by 2030.
 - Agriculture: Climate-resilient, sustainable agriculture is the most attractive and widely adopted option for farmers everywhere by 2030.
- The **Net Zero World Initiative** was launched by the US, along with founding countries,⁷ and aims to address technology and financial challenges hindering the decarbonisation of grid networks. The US Department of Energy will work with its national laboratories, philanthropies, and governments to help countries to develop energy transition roadmaps, which will help speed up the deployment of renewables and grid modernisation.
- Launched by the UK Presidency, countries,⁸ sub-nationals, automotive manufacturers, fleet owners and operators or shared mobility platforms, investors and financial institutions, among others, signed the '**Accelerating the Transition to 100% Zero Emission Cars and Vans**' declaration, committing to rapidly accelerating the transition to zero emission vehicles to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. Countries agree to work towards all sales of new cars and vans being zero emission globally by 2040 and no later than 2035 in leading markets.
- Countries⁹ signed the **Declaration on Zero Emission Shipping by 2050**, which is led by Denmark. By signing the declaration, countries committed to strengthen global efforts to achieve zero emissions from international shipping by 2050, including at International

⁶ Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Guinea Bissau, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Norway, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States of America

⁷ Argentina, Chile, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Ukraine

⁸ Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Cambodia, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, Ghana, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Rwanda, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Uruguay

⁹ Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Marshall Islands, Norway, Panama, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States of America.

Maritime Organization (IMO) and pledged to work with IMO to adopt goals for 2030 and 2040 that place the sector on a pathway to full decarbonisation by 2050, and to adopt the measures to help achieve these goals.

- IRENA and the World Economic Forum launched the **Green Hydrogen Toolbox**, a series of “Enabling Measures Roadmaps for Green Hydrogen.” The new toolbox aims to empower policymakers to prioritise policies for green hydrogen and accelerate its deployment at the international level in pursuit of a net zero energy system aligned with a climate-safe 1.5°C scenario.
- The plan of establishing a **Global Offshore Wind Alliance** in 2022 was announced. Countries and the private sector are joining forces to increase offshore wind ambitions and implementation towards 2030 and beyond.
- The **Race to Zero’s power producers** committed to reach 750GW of installed renewable energy capacity by 2030.

Phasing out Fossil Fuels:

- At least 23 countries¹⁰ made new **commitments to phase out coal power**, including five of the world’s top 20 coal power-using countries.¹¹
- Twenty-eight new members signed up to the world’s largest alliance on phasing out call, the **Powering Past Coal Alliance**, joining more than 160 countries, sub-nationals, and businesses.
- In September 2021, countries¹² launched the “No New Coal Compact” due to economics of new coal, attractive prices of renewables, and the end of international public coal finance. Building off of this, at COP26, 20 countries¹³ **committed to building no new coal plants**.
- In a new ‘**Global Coal to Clean Power Transition Statement**’, countries¹⁴ committed to scaling up clean power and ensuring a just transition away from coal.
- Co-chaired by Costa Rica and Denmark, the **Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance**¹⁵ was launched, an international coalition of governments and stakeholders working together to facilitate the managed phase-out of oil and gas production.

Financing the Energy Transition:

- Major international banks¹⁶ commit to **effectively end all international public financing of new unabated coal power by the end of 2021**. This follows recent announcements from countries¹⁷ to end overseas coal financing which now means all significant public international financing for coal power has effectively ended.
- At least 25 countries¹⁸ and public finance institutions commit to **ending international public support for the unabated fossil fuel energy sector by the end of 2022** and instead

¹⁰ Including Chile, Egypt, Nepal, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Ukraine, Vietnam.

¹¹ Indonesia, Poland, South Korea, Ukraine, and Vietnam

¹² Chile, Montenegro, Sri Lanka, and European partners

¹³ Including Morocco, Poland, and Vietnam

¹⁴ Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Botswana, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Cote d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, EU, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia (excl. clause 3), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Maldives, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Philippines (partially clauses 2 and 4, excl. clause 3), Poland, Portugal, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Somalia, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, Vietnam, Zambia

¹⁵ Members include: Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Greenland, Ireland, Quebec, Sweden and Wales as core members; California, New Zealand and Portugal as associate members. Italy joined as a “friend” of BOGA.

¹⁶ Including Ethos, Fidelity International and HSBC.

¹⁷ China, Japan and South Korea

¹⁸ Including Canada, Denmark, Italy and United States of America, as well as Ethiopia, Fiji, and Marshall Islands

prioritising support for the clean energy transition. Collectively, this could shift an estimated USD 17.8 billion a year in public support out of fossil fuels and into the clean energy transition. Developing countries also offered their support, signaling growing unity. This is an inclusive agenda that must recognise the development and energy needs of all economies.

- The UK announced £100 million in new funding for the **Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance**, which is co-chaired by Fiji and the UK. The taskforce launched a partnership with five ‘pioneer countries’¹⁹ to support them and their local communities to get the finance they need for their climate plans.
- Over USD 130 trillion of private finance is now committed to science-based net zero targets and near-term milestones through the **Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ)**. These commitments, from over 450 firms across 45 countries, can deliver the estimated USD 100 trillion of finance needed for net zero over the next three decades. GFANZ also announced Michael Bloomberg and Mary Shapiro will join as Co-Chair and Vice Chair, along current leaders Mark Charney and Nigel Topping.
- Led by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) pledged, in the **MDB joint climate Statement**, to mainstream nature across their policies and to significantly boost nature finance for member countries. The banks' joint statement commits support for countries to define and enact sustainable strategies. The commitment focuses on five pillars: leadership; fostering ‘nature positive’ investments; fostering national and regional level synergies; valuing nature to guide decision making; and reporting.
- The European Union, United Kingdom, and United States announced that they would pool their efforts to **mobilise finance towards green infrastructure** around the world.

Just Transition:

- Launched by IndustriALL Global and IndustriALL Europe, the **Just Transition Declaration** was signed by countries²⁰ and recognises the need to ensure that no one is left behind in the transition to net zero economies – particularly those working in sectors, cities and regions reliant on carbon-intensive industries and production. The International Labour Organization (ILO) will support the implementation of the Declaration through the promotion and application of International Labour Standards.
- A USD 8.5 billion commitment by European Union, United Kingdom, and United States was announced to support South Africa’s just transition to clean energy. The **South Africa Just Energy Transition Partnership** could prevent 1-1.5Gt of emissions over the next 20 years in South Africa, equal to three times annual UK emissions. This partnership could set new precedents for supported transitions in other high-emitting coal-using countries²¹.

Partnerships:

- A strategic partnership between the **Energy Transition Council and the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP)** was announced with USD 10 billion funding from philanthropies and development banks.²² The partnership aims to deliver clean, renewable energy to one billion people in developing and emerging economies and create

¹⁹ Bangladesh, Fiji, Jamaica, Rwanda and Uganda

²⁰ UK, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and US, as well as the European Commission.

²¹ Including Indonesia and India

²² Including the South Africa Just Transition Partnership and Climate Investment Funds Accelerating Coal Transition Facility

150 million green jobs by 2030. The partnership will include up to £25 million from GEAPP to support the Energy Transition Council's Rapid Response Facility.

- Fourteen countries²³ as well as over 20 non-profit energy and civil society groups committed to the largest ever increase in product efficiency by signing up to a **global goal of doubling the efficiency of lighting, cooling, motors and refrigeration by 2030** with support from the Climate Group's EP100 initiative of 129 businesses.
- The **Africa and Latin America Green Hydrogen Alliances** were launched with membership from six African countries and five Latin American countries, respectively. They aim to kickstart development of millions of metric tons of production of reliably near-zero-carbon green hydrogen to be used in domestic and international industries worldwide.
- Major emerging economies took significant steps to move from coal to clean power: Countries²⁴ announced partnerships with the Climate Investment Funds to **accelerate their transitions away from coal power**, backed by a dedicated USD 2 billion facility and some countries²⁵ announced pioneering partnerships with the Asian Development Bank to **support the early retirement of coal plants**.
- India and the UK launched the **Green Grids Initiative—One Sun One World One Grid** (GGI-OSOWOG), the first international network of global interconnected solar power grids. The GGI-OSOWOG will bring together a global coalition of governments, international financial and technical organisations, legislators, power system operators and knowledge leaders to accelerate the construction of the new infrastructure needed for a world powered by clean energy.
- The **Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet**, which is mobilising at least USD 10 billion for the rollout of renewable electricity for a billion people by 2030, issued a call for transformational country programmes to unleash a robust pipeline of projects. This will offer financial and technical assistance to countries with the vision, commitment, and highest level of leadership to advance major national programs in fossil fuel transitioning, grid-based renewables and distributed renewable energy.

²³ Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Nigeria, Sweden, UK.

²⁴ Indonesia, the Philippines, and South Africa

²⁵ Indonesia and the Philippines