Energy Access for promoting universal health coverage and for achieving multiple SDGs

Date & Time: *24th June 2021 11:30 – 12:45 EST*

Background

Energy is a catalyst and enabler of development, and societies cannot develop without reliable, adequate and affordable energy services. Decades of national and international efforts have yielded impressive gains in access to modern energy. Yet, estimates suggest that under a business-as-usual scenario around 660 million people will still not have access to electricity by 2030.

Electricity access is a key enabler to achieve several development goals. It can uplift socio-economic development and help meet critical needs. In particular, access to electricity is fundamental to providing essential healthcare services. Electricity is necessary for the operation of critically needed medical devices and appliances, and in several cases can make the difference between life and death. However, still today one billion people are estimated to be served by healthcare facilities without access to electricity.

Renewable energy solutions present a key opportunity to provide clean, reliable and cost-effective electricity to health centres, including in remote and rural areas, as also highlighted in the Strategic Roadmap on Health and Energy recently endorsed by the High-Level Coalition on Health and Energy, convened by the Director-General of the World Health Organization.

Furthermore, renewable energy offers a solution to energise sectors like food production and conservation, water supply, education, to bring process improvements and advance socio-economic development.

Harnessing the opportunity offered by renewables, particularly decentralised solutions, can unlock a host of socioeconomic benefits, from improved health and education services to improved profitability in food and agriculture and enhanced livelihood opportunities, especially in countries lacking access to electricity and in the last-mile communities.

On the margins of the 2021 High-level Dialogue on Energy, Ministerial Thematic Forums, IRENA and the World Health Organization co-organise the event *Energy Access for promoting Universal Health Coverage and for Achieving multiple SDGs*. The meeting will bring together stakeholders from the energy, health and other sectors to reflect on the key role that renewable energy plays in the achievement of universal healthcare and in the attainment of various SDGs.

The event will provide participants the opportunity to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices, and to explore modalities to enhance multisectoral cooperation.

Objective

This virtual event is aimed at:

- Understanding the role of renewable energy in promoting universal healthcare coverage, and in fulfilling multiple Sustainable Development Goals;
- Discussing pathways for increased multisectoral cooperation and maximise socioeconomic benefits by improving energy access for key social services.

Proposed agenda and format

7 minutes	Opening remarks by **Gauri Singh, Deputy Director-General, IRENA**
7 minutes	Presentation by **Dr Maria Neira, Director, Environment, Climate Change and Health, WHO**
45 minutes	Panel Discussion: Scene-setting presentation and moderation by **Mr. Gurbuz Gonul, Director, Country Engagement and Partnerships, IRENA** Panelists: • Mr. Madhusudhan Adhikari, Executive Director, Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC), Nepal • Eng. Isaac Kiva, Secretary Renewable Energy, Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, Kenya • Kudakwashe Ndhlukula, Executive Director, SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency • Dr Maria Neira, Director, Environment, Climate Change and Health, WHO • Huda Jaffer, Director, SELCO Foundation
10 minutes	**Q&A**
5 minutes	**Closing remarks**