

Eighteenth meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 5-6 November 2019

Background Note

Renewables and NDC Implementation Partnership

1. The Parties to the Paris Agreement committed to setting the world on a course towards sustainable development, aiming at limiting global warming to 1.5°C to 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are at the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of its long-term goals. NDCs embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. However, the implementation of current plans and policies, including the actions laid out in NDCs, would fall short of the emission reductions required to meet the long-term goals. Increasing the ambition of climate action and accelerating its implementation is therefore imperative.
2. The Paris Agreement recognises that the long-term goals will be achieved through time and, therefore, builds on a gradual ratcheting up of aggregate and individual ambitions. All Parties to the Paris Agreement are requested to submit the next round of NDCs - new or updated - by 2020. As the energy sector accounts for a substantial share of emissions, action in this sector is of the essence for the achievement of long-term targets on climate change. Renewable energy is widely recognised as an impactful mitigation strategy and, together with energy efficiency, a solution that can be deployed at scale today. Increasingly, countries are also looking to renewables for new and innovative adaptation strategies for resilient energy systems.
3. These views are reflected in NDCs, with 67% of the submitted NDCs or Intended NDCs (INDCs) featuring renewable energy targets, as of June 2019. The next round of NDCs represents an opportunity for countries to renew their consideration of how renewables can contribute to national mitigation and adaptation efforts, and to engage several groups of stakeholders (private sector, civil society, academia, etc.) to ensure that plans and targets are feasible and beneficial. And access to finance and investment at scale will be decisive in the countries' ability to reach the set targets and increase ambition as envisaged in the Paris Agreement.
4. This positions IRENA's work on supporting countries in their transition towards a sustainable energy future as a vital element of climate action. IRENA is a trusted source of data and analyses, and its technical expertise and excellence on renewable energy and the ongoing energy transition will only grow in importance. As the Agency orients its work toward enabling action on the ground, these data and analyses will play a major role in supporting informed and timely policy considerations and decision-making, and confidence in investment choices. IRENA's project facilitation work, along with the convening activities to match projects with financiers and investors will support countries in achieving their targets, as well as grow their ambition.
5. NDCs convey the message that only collective efforts will bring the world on a climate-safe pathway. This message is also reflected in the development and deployment of renewable energy. Collaborative efforts are necessary to build investment-ready pipeline of projects,

increase the flexibility of systems for high-share of renewables, and create economies of scale through cross-border cooperation. It is for these reasons that IRENA will concentrate its efforts on catalysing action at regional and sub-regional levels and such collaboration will play a decisive role in the ability of countries to achieve their objectives.

6. IRENA is broadening collaborative efforts to leverage the ability of the partners to contribute to the energy transition and NDC agendas. The Agency is an institutional member of the NDC Partnership, whose overarching goal is to fast-track climate and development action by working with governments, multilateral institutions, the civil society, researchers and the private sector. NDC Partnership's Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP) is designed to support countries to enhance the quality, increase the ambition, and implement NDCs, delivering country support via institutional and associate members of the NDC Partnership, and through a dedicated Technical Assistance Fund.
7. IRENA's knowledge and expertise in different facets of the energy transition, ranging from technology and planning to policies and finance, can inform NDCs to ensure technical and economic feasibility of the overall targets, and of the measures to achieve them. IRENA's roadmaps and outlooks provide insights to cost-effective ways to increase the share of renewables, while promoting efficiency measures and decarbonizing end-use. The Agency's pioneering knowledge of the social and economic footprint of the energy transition can contribute to the NDC processes, to ensure that such a transition is just and efficient.
8. Through its work at the level of sub-regions, IRENA will strive to identify where its capacity building and technical assistance are most needed. With its suite of tools, methodologies and platforms, and enhanced focus on enabling frameworks and project facilitation, IRENA can provide targeted support. This includes assistance to public entities interested in creating project pipelines, government-backed capacity building programs, and support to developers and entrepreneurs seeking to bring their project ideas to bankability.
9. IRENA's refined programmatic orientation will facilitate the implementation of NDCs and support the achievement of national renewable targets. Collaborative efforts with countries and partners will strive to increase the collective ability to be more ambitious and effective in the deployment of renewable energy. This, in turn, will bring countries closer to reaching the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.

Objective of the session

10. To gather feedback from Members on the role of IRENA in raising awareness on strengthening renewable energy in NDCs, on how to best position the Agency in the implementation of the national mitigation and adaptation strategies and how it can be of assistance in the period leading to COP 26.

Guiding questions

- What role does renewable energy currently play in your NDC?
- How can we increase the role of renewable energy in the development and implementation of NDCs? What can IRENA do in this regard?
- Are there difficulties in acquiring support for the energy part of NDC design and implementation?
- What should be IRENA's priorities in the coming period, given the 2020 timeline for NDCs?