



**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
INCHEON, REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Draft Concept Note and Agenda

**The role of fossil fuel subsidy reform (FFSR) and renewable energy investment for a green recovery:  
Building capacities for fossil fuel to renewable energy (FFRE) transition  
Side event at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties 2021 (COP26)**

**Date: Thursday, 4 November 2021**

**Time: 12:15pm – 1:30pm**

**Venue: SDGs Pavilion of COP 26, Scottish Event Campus (SEC Center, Hall 4, PV 06), Glasgow, Scotland**

### **Background**

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Change Agreement adopted in 2015, the issue of energy transition became ever more central to both national and global agendas. The Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Goal 7) advocates universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services. It aims for a substantial increase in the share of renewables in the global energy mix, while increasing affordability of energy and doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.

In line with its capacity development mandate, and in response to requests from Member States, UNDESA together with its UN Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) have supported the organisation of training workshops on fossil fuel to renewable energy (FFRE) transition policies and fiscal reforms. A first one-week workshop was organized by UNOSD in Mauritius in May 2014 for the benefits of policymakers of ten island states, mostly from the Indian Ocean basin. The event also provided the opportunity to develop a FFRE capacity building and collaborative policymaking methodology, already re-used with other regional groups, notably in Nairobi for East African and South Asian countries in October 2014.

Four years later, in November 2018, UNOSD has organized a similar FFRE transition training workshop, including environmental fiscal reform (EFR) and fossil fuel subsidy FFS reforms, where 21 countries, including 11 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and one Least Developing Country (LDC) from Latin America and Caribbean participated.<sup>1</sup> Reflecting on the five-day training, the participants of the *Latin America and Caribbean Fossil Fuel to Renewable Energy Workshop*, held in San Jose, Costa Rica concluded that transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy will become a central issue of the policy debate in the near future. Energy transition is essential for the achievement of the targets of the Paris Agreement and many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), besides SDG7. Energy and climate policy are complex fields, occupied by a multitude of actors – some of them being more powerful and influential than the states themselves. Knowledge amongst policymakers for the realisation of energy transition is often incomplete or not sufficiently in-depth. Fossil fuel to renewable energy (FFRE) transition trainings have the potential to fill an important gap and to build the capacity of policymakers to develop strategies for fossil fuel subsidy reforms and design policies for clean energy transition.

This was also the conclusion of a panel discussion organized by UNOSD during a side event at the 25th Conference of the Parties (COP25) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which took place in Madrid on 2 to 13 December 2019. The panellists from Asia, the Arab region and Latin America recognized the daunting challenges of implementing fossil fuel subsidy reforms and renewable energy transition in their respective regions. They also welcomed UNOSD's will to continue to build Member States' capacity towards FFRE transition through the development of a second phase of its fossil fuel to renewable energy (FFRE) transition training and capacity building programme, which is currently under review with the aim of not only supporting the realization of the SDGs and particularly SDG 7 meant to ensure access to

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<sup>1</sup> Latin America and Caribbean Fossil Fuel to Renewable Energy (FFRE) Workshop, San Jose, Costa Rica, 12-16 November 2018.

affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, but also other major international agreements such as the Paris Agreement for Climate Change while, at the same time, contributing to a green, inclusive low-carbon recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

This serves as the backdrop of this side event organized by UNOSD at COP26, where the discussion will integrate an introductory presentation on renewable energy's contribution to green recovery, followed by presentations of good practices by countries. These will be followed by a presentation of UNOSD FFRE trainings that have been delivered in the past. Participants will be asked to contribute to the discussion by presenting their countries and/or regions' needs in relation to green recovery and fossil fuel subsidy reform (FFSR) and renewable energy investment. Among the questions participants will be asked are: What are the challenges and obstacles to FFSR and renewable energy investment? Why aren't governments doing more? What do they need to act? Where are the gaps? What can UNOSD do to help fill those gaps?

### Expected Outcomes

It is expected that this UNOSD-led side event will result in the following outcomes:

- Enhanced awareness and improved understanding of the renewable energy's contribution to green recovery
- Improved dissemination/knowledge of country cases where COVID-19 recovery packages prioritized green recovery
- Increased knowledge about fossil fuel subsidy reforms and renewable energy investments and their contribution to a green, inclusive, low-carbon recovery
- Increased knowledge and understanding of the challenges faced by countries regarding green recovery and the need for support, by UNOSD, particularly regarding FFRE programming

### Schedule and Venue

The side event is scheduled to take place at the UN DESA SDGs Pavilion of COP 26, Scottish Event Campus (SEC), Glasgow, Scotland on **4 March 2021 between 12:15pm and 1:30pm**

### Tentative Programme

<b>12.15pm</b>	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <b>Mr. Chun Kyoo Park</b> , Head of Office, United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD)
<b>12:20pm</b>	<b>Mr. Brian O'Callaghan</b> , Global Recovery Observatory, Lead Researcher and Project Manager, Oxford University Economic Recovery Project, Research Fellow, Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
<b>12:30pm</b>	<b>Mr. Michael Williamson</b> , Chief of Sustainable Energy Development Section, Energy Division, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Asia —UN ESCAP ( <a href="#">virtual presentation</a> )
<b>12:40pm</b>	<b>Ms. Jiyoung Choi</b> , Director of Green Climate Policy Division, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Republic of Korea (South Korea's Green New Deal)
<b>12:50pm</b>	<b>Ms. Laura Isabel Lizano Ramon</b> , Director, Energy Planning Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica
<b>1:00pm</b>	<b>Mr. Gabriel Prudencio Flaño</b> , Chief of the Sustainable Energy Division, Ministry of Energy, Chile ( <a href="#">virtual presentation</a> )
<b>1: 10pm</b>	<b>Ms. Jacqueline Cottrell</b> , Green fiscal policy consultant, Freelance Associate, Green Budget Germany
<b>1: 20pm</b>	<b>Moderated Discussion</b> <b>Moderators:</b> <b>Ms. Jacqueline Cottrell</b> , Green fiscal policy consultant, Freelance Associate, Green Budget Germany, and <b>Dr. Jean D'Aragon</b> , Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD
<b>1:30pm</b>	<b>Closing of Event</b>

## **Organizers**

The side event is organized by the [United Nations Office for Sustainable Development](#) (UNOSD), Division of Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

## **Target Audience**

This side event aims to engage with country representatives, government officials, experts from national and subnational institutions and other stakeholders concerned with the implementation of the SDGs (SDG 7 in particular) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and a green, inclusive low-carbon recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

## **Contact Information**

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