

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN FOSSIL FUEL TO RENEWABLE ENERGY (FFRE) WORKSHOP

Omar Dengo Foundation, San José, Costa Rica

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Welcome Remarks by Dr. Jong Soo Yoon, Head of Office

United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD)

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

As Head of the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), co-organiser of this capacity building workshop, it is a great pleasure and a true honour to welcome you all to this Latin America and Caribbean Fossil Fuel to Renewable Energy (FFRE) Workshop, which we have been organizing in collaboration with the United Nations Programme for Development (UNDP) and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office in Costa Rica.

I do apologize for having been unable to take part in the Opening Ceremony yesterday, as it was initially planned. The reason for this is that two days ago (Sunday) I was requested to speak at a conference on sustainable development in Jeju Island, in my country South Korea.

I don't know if some of you know Jeju Island —Please raise your hand if you happen to know this part of South Korea.

Jeju offers an interesting case, which can somehow compare with some of the countries participating in this workshop this week. For centuries, Jeju Island, which is just a stone's throw away from the continent, has developed independently from the rest of Korea. It shares some characteristics of the small island developing states (SIDS) as today, despite being part South Korea, Jeju has the particular status of Special Self-Governing Province. —No wonder why our

office has held a few SIDS- and sustainable development-related meetings in Jeju over the past few years.

Like in most SIDS, the population of Jeju is extremely interdependent with the Island's natural systems and surrounding environment and, of course, is also very much vulnerable to the effect of climate change. On top of this, as you can imagine, and despite proximity of the island with the rest of the country, Jeju's future is intimately linked to getting access to reliable sources of clean energy at a reasonable cost.

As you know, SDG 7, meant to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030, has for its Target 7.2, to also increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030.

The production and consumption of energy is at the core of the creation of wealth and sustaining livelihoods. All developed and developing countries alike rely on energy to support development. Today, governments are facing the threefold challenge of providing all their citizens with energy at an acceptable cost, ensuring that energy is used efficiently while limiting the impact on the environment, hence the urgent need for them to reduce the use of fossil fuels and spur the development of renewable energy options to ensure the fastest possible transition.

One of the first steps to ensure this rapid shift is abandoning the fossil fuel subsidies which, are diverting a significant share of state revenues from priority sectors —like health or education, where countries' failure to reach the most vulnerable, is having tremendous negative effects on their long-term prospects for development, not to mention their stability and security. As well, we should not forget that fossil fuel subsidies are also undermining international efforts to avert dangerous climate change.

As you know, the adoption of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 are two of the most important achievements to

ensuring a sustainable future towards 2030 and beyond. It is therefore important that we all join efforts to implement the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, where SDG 7 on Energy plays a major role.

If we fail in climate action, we will also fail in achieving the SDGs. We need to find ways to maximise the synergies and minimise the trade-offs toward a low carbon and climate resilient society to ensure the global temperature rise is under 1.5 or 2.0 degrees Celsius.

The recent publication of IPCC's 1.5 degrees special report also emphasized that a mix of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures will in turn benefit many of the SDGs. But it also recognized the potential conflict posed by poverty, hunger, and lack of economic development as being a threat to the greenhouse gas emission reduction agenda.

On our way to the 1.5 or 2.0 degrees reduction that we need to reach, I believe that our main challenges but also our most significant opportunities for success are certainly to be found in in our cities. As you may know already, more than half of the global population resides in urban areas, where we can witness the tremendously growing demand in energy and other resources from the rapid population growth in cities, especially in developing countries.

Challenges exist in cities, but with them come opportunities and solutions. Innovative ideas and technology revolutions are happening in the cities, and also elsewhere, every day. We need to harness those better to ensure a quick shift towards significant reduction of our energy demand, and the use cleaner energy to fulfil our needs.

However, we cannot rely only on technological innovation to address all our challenges around energy production and consumption. Beyond technical innovations, we also need political will to develop and implement innovative economic and regulatory measures to speed up the transition to cleaner energy.

Here, I would like to give you the example of South Korea, my home country, where the new Administration under Moon Jae announced an ambitious plan entitled “Implementation Plan for the 3020 Renewable Energy.” The 3020 Renewable Energy plan is to increase the rate of renewable power generation from 7% to 20% by 2030.

To meet this target, out of 63.8 GW of total renewable energy facilities, 17.674 GW should be supplied by wind power. It means that 48.7 GW renewable energy facilities need to be newly installed in around 12 years. The 3020 target includes respective capacity additions of 30.8GW and 16.5GW from solar and wind. For this, around 90 billion dollars will be invested, from which the main part (nearly 50 billion dollars) will be provided by the Public sector.

It is indeed a big investment and I can hear year saying that not every country has sufficient means to implement such courageous measures. This is why our workshop on transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy, where you will hear and discuss about policy instruments for energy transition, environmental fiscal reforms and FFRE strategies is so important.

I will not go further on the subject. I know that my colleague Jean has already talked about the FFRE and how our Office UNOSD is supporting Members States in the successful implementation of SDGs, including SDG 7 on energy, including the FFRE transition workshop, which is now at its third edition, after the first one held in Mauritius, in March 2014, and the second one in Nairobi, Kenya in October 2014.

I should let you know, before closing however, that UNOSD is very much eager to widen its partnerships and network. I hope that this workshop is not only a one-shot meeting in your mind. I invite you to join our network or community of practice composed of governments, experts, academics, private sector and civil society representatives working together towards the achievement of the SDGs.

In the same vein, I would like to ask you all to convey the message to your own departments, ministries, governments... that my Office, UNOSD, is ready to provide advisory support to the UN Member states in implementing FFRE, Goal 7, on energy, or even on any other SDGs. Upon request from your counties, we can put together a team of our own experts, external experts like the two consultants, Ms. Jacqueline Cottrell and Mr. Damian Ludewig, who are leading this FFRE Capacity Development Workshop, as well as other experts from within or outside the UN System, who can provide tailored assistance that can respond to your specific needs and contexts.

In closing, I would like to wish you all an active and productive participation and look forward to taking stock with you on the outcomes of this workshop at its conclusion.

Thank you very much.