

IRENA Statement
Third Session of The Committee on Energy
24 February 2021

*Distinguished Delegates,
Dear Colleagues*

On behalf of IRENA, I wish to thank our colleagues from UNESCAP for inviting IRENA to the Third Session of the Committee on Energy and the presented opportunity to address you today.

The world changed drastically at the beginning of 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing most of the countries and their residents into lockdown. IRENA's Special Report "Post-COVID recovery: an agenda for resilience, development and equality" launched last year brought timely insights highlighting that national and regional energy transitions can help to build resilient economies and societies. As ESCAP also identified in a recent COVID-19 policy report for Asia and the Pacific - now, as we slowly make progress towards the new, post-COVID normality in many countries, renewable power generation must form a key part of global economic stimulus measures.

While COVID-19 is the most urgent threat facing humanity today - we cannot forget that climate change is the biggest, existential threat facing humanity over the long term. IRENA's Global Renewables Outlook launched in April last year has shown how to transform the global energy system in line with the Paris Agreement, highlighting clearly that half of the necessary reductions in emissions would come from renewable energy, both the power and end use sectors, followed by around one quarter from energy efficiency.

And this energy transformation has a huge socio-economic impact and creates much needed jobs, especially in the context of the current crisis. About 42 million people will work in manufacturing, installing, operating and maintaining renewable energy systems in 2050, most in solar energy sector, followed by bioenergy and wind energy. It is important to note that almost two-third of these jobs will be created in Asia: East Asia (36%), Southeast Asia (16%) and the rest of Asia (12%).

In a continued effort to lead the transformation of the global energy system - one that is inclusive, sustainable and equitable, in March this year, IRENA will launch its flagship report, the first ever ***World Energy Transition Outlook*** report, that will outline a global pathway to a net-zero future by 2050. The analysis will provide a framework for the policy, investment and technology measures needed to decarbonize the energy system in line with the Paris Agreement. The report will also highlight the magnitude of the socioeconomic benefits possible through accelerated action.

Distinguished Delegates;

During the 10th IRENA Assembly in January 2020, ESCAP and IRENA signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to increase the uptake of renewable energy in the Asia-Pacific region, support the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and contribute to the achievement of SDG7 by 2030. We attach great importance to the regional, sub-regional and national level dialogues in Asia-Pacific on challenges, gaps and opportunities for scaling up RE deployment through enhanced

and reinforced collaboration with partners such as UN ESCAP. Besides, IRENA and ESCAP, together with UNEP, co-lead the multi-stakeholder technical working group on energy transition, to support the preparations for the upcoming High-Level Dialogue on Energy under auspices of the UN General Assembly. IRENA is also collaborating with ESCAP to jointly support member countries the region; as an example, we will jointly provide technical support on RE technologies in cities and urban planning for RE applications in Thailand.

As one of the fastest growing regions in the world, Asia and Pacific is crucial to global energy transformation, and for IRENA, it is heartening to see the renewable energy remains a strong priority for the region. IRENA supports member States of the region in several ways, such as technical assistance, capacity buildings activities and knowledge support during the revision of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This year, IRENA is developing Renewable Readiness Assessments and Outlooks for Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia, Malaysia at the national level, as well as a Regional Renewable Energy Outlook for ASEAN; besides, we are delivering NDC support for a number of countries in the region, including Bhutan, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and a large number of pacific SIDS; we are also further deepening our strategic collaboration with China, India, Indonesia; assessing the positive linkages between energy transition, regional power system interconnection and renewable energy development, especially in Northeast Asia; and we will continue to provide regional platforms for knowledge sharing and capacity building on important topics, including long term energy planning in the context of NDCs in Central Asia, and project development support for bankability in South Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In less than a decade, renewable energy has moved from the side-lines to the centre stage of the global energy landscape thanks to technological innovation, supportive policy and regulatory frameworks, and resulting rapidly decreasing costs. Renewable energy is no longer an alternative energy solution but offers a mainstream solution for addressing energy needs of growing number of countries around the world – and with a strong business case for this transition.

In the context of the 2021 agenda, IRENA is focusing on cross-regional discussion on building momentum towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, High-level Dialogue on Energy and on climate action in the lead up to COP26, through enhanced NDCs and developing LTS, and exploring in particular the vital role these play in Asia-Pacific countries' economic recoveries from COVID19. Hence, we would like to thank UN ESCAP for providing the Committee on Energy platform for facilitating enhanced dialogue on regional co-operation, and we welcome participation of wide range of stakeholders to exchange ideas on the issues hindering accelerated deployment of renewables. In collaboration with our close partners, UNESCAP and others, IRENA will continue to lead the efforts for a sustainable energy transition in Asia-Pacific, regardless of the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic.

Thank you for your attention.