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Statement

by

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Global Energy Ministerial

Future of Energy: Actions and Commitments

Welcome and Opening Remarks”

New York, USA

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Excellencies, Honorable Ministers,
SRSG, Mr. Kandeh Yumkella,
Distinguished delegates,

It is a pleasure for me to address this august gathering.

We are here at a time when the stars have aligned. We have SDGs, FFD, and Climate Change Summit all taking place in the same year, and they will reinforce each other. We have heard in the last several days that we need an ambitious and transformative sustainable development agenda for the people and planet together and that cannot be achieved without sustainable energy. I would add that SDGs and SE4All cannot be successful without putting the issues of vulnerable countries like LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS at the front and center. The reports have all pointed out that some progress has been made in all the three pillars of SE for all collectively and even in these countries.

However, our progress has been modest. More importantly, a large majority of people, about two thirds of the population in these countries, are without access to electricity and clean cooking. Our message is loud and clear, we need to scale up, speed up and make our success inclusive of all. Leaving no one behind continues to be our mantra.

It is also true that energy efficiency and technology have to play a very important role even in these countries, because inefficient use and many traditional appliances lead to a lot of waste, the savings from which could be used to scale up access quickly. Similarly, as these countries are still in the initial stage of industrialization and have not gone through a full-blown brown industrialization, there is a great opportunity to help them leapfrog those traditional steps and move towards a low carbon economy with a focus on renewable energy sources.

We had a very successful high level LDC ministerial side event together with the partners, yesterday. Some of the key messages coming out of that discussion are critical to reflect on in order to take forward the SE4All agenda.

It was stressed that there is a need for a strong national leadership and ownership that takes forward the sustainable energy agenda in an integrated manner with a multistakeholder approach. We saw that clearly building up in these countries. Government, private sector and civil society have great roles to play in partnership to leverage each other's strengths and resources. Unleashing millions of

entrepreneurship from the bottom up, especially for supporting decentralized energy services was mentioned in bringing innovative solutions to the underserved and the far-flung rural areas.

Policy stability, regulatory reforms and good business environment will be critical to support multi-pronged initiatives, from on-grid, mini-grid to off grid solutions.

Financing is a big challenge, given the limited financial capability, low economic development, under developed capital markets, and low human development coupled with smaller size of the market. All of them have to be built up together. Therefore, they need all forms of finance, ODA, concessional and non-concessional loans and blended finance. The financial instruments should also be developed in such a way that they cater to their particular needs and interests to leverage maximum resources, domestic as well as external. DFIs will have to play a larger role in investing in these projects, mitigating risks and ensuring guarantees. Given the acute challenges of these countries in developing bankable projects and closing deals and implementing them, there is a need for a dedicated mechanism to LDCs for a project development facility that will not only provide specific support to them but accompany their efforts all the way through to the end.

There was an emphasis on aggregation and development of regional projects that will create a bigger opportunity to attract larger investment and trade energy.

There was also a strong emphasis on making sure that access to energy should not only be looked at from the perspective of lighting and cooking, which are necessary but not sufficient, but it has to be integrated with programmes for income generating activities and productive capacity building, especially for the rural population, women and youth.

There was a clear emphasis on nexus and co benefits with health, water and food security, equity and strong linkages between access to energy and the structural transformation of the economy that ensures higher productivity, jobs and rapid and sustainable growth.

It was highlighted that there was a great enthusiasm, vision and commitment to sustainable energy, but there was a clear call for capacity building across the sectors, including through education, skill development and finance in an integrated and inclusive manner.

Technology was also emphasized as a critical component in driving all the three pillars in these countries, as they need to sidestep many levels to catch up with the rest of the world.

It is very important for us to remind ourselves that there is a strong can-do spirit in these countries. Now if we can do it there, we should be able to do it everywhere. With large unmet needs and demographic dividend, there is clearly a great opportunity for all of us there. We need to provide right instruments and targeted, comprehensive and stronger support. In a way, that calls for mutual accountability. Strong national ownership and drive for sustainable energy in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS needs to be complemented by equally strong global support, solidarity and partnership.

It is not only our moral responsibility; it is in the enlightened self-interest of us all. In this day and age of unprecedented revolutions in science and technology, it should be unacceptable for us that we should continue to have so many people without access to energy and modern cooking. Now we have the vision, we have the means, we know the pathways and we have the capability to do so. We need to pull all our strength together and walk the talk. Collectively, we should do it and we can do it.

The famous singer Akon, the co-founder of Akon Lighting Initiative for Africa, gave a key note address in our event of the LDC ministers. I would like to end by quoting what he said there, I quote “in order to get things done and to accelerate the energy reform, we need to be bold and take tough decisions and we all have to make small sacrifices that will benefit millions.” Unquote. That is a call for going beyond our comfort zones and multiplying impacts.

I think that is the spirit that reverberates all around here. Many new initiatives and innovative approaches such as ‘Eletrifi’ and many others have been announced and they are coming up. Let us make them a reality in a true spirit of partnership of all and partnership for all.

Thank you for your kind attention.