Lessons learned from the implementation of EU Directives on RE&EE
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Strong regional policy frameworks with ambitious and achievable targets that are combined with support instruments and implementation mechanisms are important catalysts to spur the achievement of SDG 7 and its sub-targets.

Regional organisations have a crucial role to play, not only in the development of regional policies and targets, but also in the design of regional processes – like the one presented by Mr. Kappiah in ECOWAS for the development of national sustainable energy action plans in all Member States – the definition of common procedures and methodologies, that will facilitate greater policy coherence and promote the exploitation of synergies between energy efficiency, renewable energy and energy access, but also ensure a nexus approach between energy and related sectors.

Individual countries may require support in the implementation of regional policies and legislation, which could be provided through structured dialogue and experience exchange processes. The European Union has chosen the approach of so-called Concerted Actions, which were launched as a joint initiative by the European Member States and the European Commission to assist Member States in the cost-effective implementation of European legislation in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy performance of buildings, to develop common approaches and to coordinate solutions wherever beneficial.

Concerted Actions are confidential fora in which representatives of implementing bodies can informally exchange and enhance their knowledge, share experiences and good practice examples and evaluate the most effective implementation options. Within this framework, participating countries can also informally and confidentially work with the European Commission. The work is structured in Core Themes which address the main areas covered in the RES Directive that require common understanding and approaches. Discussions within the Concerted Actions and its Core Themes (working groups) are strictly confidential, which ensures open and in-depth discussions between implementing authorities.

Drawing on the example of the Concerted Action on the Renewable Energy Sources Directive, which is coordinated by the Austrian Energy Agency, this mechanism has been shown to be an invaluable forum for sharing information, learning from experiences across EU Member States and for ensuring a thorough implementation of the directive. It has established and consolidated a strong network of experts, which serves as a point of departure for further discussions and cooperation.

Confidentiality of discussions is a valuable feature for in-depth discussions and the sharing of good practice examples and failures on the way, and flexibility is required to react to the changing needs and priorities of participating countries in the implementation process.

Creating a platform for structured discussion and experience exchange on specific topics of interest could also be used as a mechanism for LLDCs, that can lead to a strengthening of institutional capacities in the participating countries and can facilitate the identification of common approaches and shared solutions. Nonetheless, a further strengthening of institutional capacities will be of utmost importance to cope with the manifold challenges ahead.