

## United Nations High Level Dialogue on Energy 2021 Off-Grid Solar Energy Compact: Power 1 Billion Lives

While most of the world has benefitted from unrestricted access to electricity for decades, 760 million people, more than the entire population of Europe, are still trapped in acute energy poverty: using kerosene, candles or torches to light their homes<sup>1</sup>. Over one billion more people<sup>2</sup> have an insufficient electricity supply. This lack of power is also hampering farms, enterprises and public institutions: reducing food security, economic opportunity and welfare.

Life-changing off-grid solar technologies provide the fastest, most affordable, way to address this huge inequality.

To unlock the vast potential of modern energy, we commit to delivering electricity access to one billion people by 2030; driving green growth, boosting resiliency, and ensuring the world's most vulnerable communities are placed at the forefront of a cleaner, fairer, energy transition.

Achieving the aims of this Compact will mean that within the next nine years:

- 550 million people living in energy poverty will gain modern electricity access (Tier 1+)<sup>3</sup>, often accompanied by life-enhancing appliances such as TVs, radios, phones and fans
- Energy services are strengthened for a further 260 million people, where off-grid solutions provide a back-up to grid energy and/or displace the use of expensive and polluting diesel generation
- 190 million people will directly benefit from the productive use of off-grid energy in micro-enterprise, agriculture (via solar irrigation, cold storage or agro-processing) or public institutions

Amongst other impacts, this will:

- Improve energy access, equity, and quality of life for 1 billion people, including those living in poverty and areas of humanitarian crisis
- Drive enterprise growth and unlock greater income for millions of businesses
- Create 2.2 million green jobs directly within the off-grid industry, and many more full-time equivalent jobs amongst off-grid solar customers as a result of greater access to electricity
- Boost resilience for many of those most vulnerable to climate change through diversified livelihoods, improved infrastructure and better health, safety, and food security
- Avoid 450 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e, equal to taking 113 coal fired power plants offline for a year

In support of this goal, we will:

- **Off-grid solar companies:** provide underserved communities with high-quality, affordable, sustainable energy products and services
- **Governments in high-energy access deficit countries:** create a supportive enabling environment for sustainable off-grid markets and mobilize public funding to enable the rapid adoption of clean energy technologies
- **Public and private investors:** invest more capital in the off-grid solar sector, increase climate finance and build innovative financial mechanisms on terms that enable rapid, and inclusive growth
- **Development partners, non-government organisations and industry associations:** support governments, investors and off-grid companies to catalyze sustainable off-grid markets, leverage investment and ensure that no one is left behind in the bid for universal electrification

Accelerating access to off-grid solar is vital for achieving the SDG7 target of affordable, reliable and modern energy for all by 2030, underpinning a further 10 SDGs, and meeting the Paris Agreement's net-zero emissions target by 2050.

Reaching this goal will require an urgent step-change in action. It is one that must be achieved. We cannot leave another generation behind.

We call on Partners from across the private sector, government, development and financial communities, civil society, and all those committed to achieving a cleaner and more equitable society, to join us in endorsing this Compact and working with us to ensure its ambition is realised.

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<sup>1</sup> IEA, IRENA, UNSD, World Bank, WHO. 2021. Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report. World Bank, Washington DC.

<sup>2</sup> ESMAP, GOGLA, IFC, Vivid Economics. 2020. Off-Grid Solar Market Trends Report 2020. Washington DC.

<sup>3</sup> ESMAP, Sustainable Energy for All. 2015. Beyond Connections: Energy Access Redefined. Washington DC.