

## United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable & Clean Energy

Developed in 2012 at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a set of universal goals that are aimed to meet environmental, political, and economic challenges facing the entire world. They were adopted by all United Nations members in 2015 as a call to action.

Goal 7 was created to ensure access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable modern energy for everyone. As the global population continues to increase, so does the demand for cheap and reliable energy that is not dependent on fossil fuels. However, approximately one billion people still lack access to electricity and about three billion people rely on polluting the environment for energy.<sup>1</sup> One of the main priorities of this goal is to make modern energy services universally accessible by expanding the infrastructure and technology for renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and thermal power.

In addition to providing everyone with modern energy services, a core tenet of Goal 7 is to create more clean and renewable energy. Currently, energy from fossil fuels is the main contributor to climate change, producing around 60% of greenhouse gases.<sup>2</sup> Renewable energy comes from sources that are naturally replenished such as water, wind, solar, biomass and geothermal. In 2017, 18% of the energy consumed globally came from renewable sources.<sup>3</sup>

### How to Achieve Affordable and Clean Energy?

The majority of the African continent is rural and many people lack access to basic needs such as electricity. In Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania, the United Nations Development Program installed solar panels on top of the United Nations House. This was part of the UN's *Sustainable Energy for All* initiative and is a first step in bringing more solar energy to Africa. The solar panels are estimated to reduce 68 tons of carbon dioxide emissions in a year and potentially result in about \$35,000 of annual energy savings.<sup>4</sup>

The amount of money flowing to projects in developing countries that support clean and renewable energy continues to grow. A total of \$21.4 billion was allocated in 2017, which is double the amount that was committed in 2010.<sup>5</sup> Businesses throughout the world have an opportunity to help achieve these sustainable development goals. The UN Global Compact was created to help align company strategies and operations with universal principles to help meet the 17 SDGs.<sup>6</sup> As of 2020, there are over 11,000 companies in 157 different countries that have joined this initiative.<sup>7</sup>



1. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-7-affordable-and-clean-energy.htm>

2. Ibid.

3. <https://www.c2es.org/content/renewable-energy/>

4. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/stories/a-new-era-for-clean-energy-in-tanzania.html>

5. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal7>

6. <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc>

7. Ibid.