

Statement at the 2021 HLPF Session on “Restoring the conditions for SDG progress in African countries, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries”

Thursday, 8 July 2021 from 15:00 AM – 17:00

Your Excellencies, colleagues,

I lived most of my life in Nigeria, a country of 200 million people generating 7,000 MW of electricity. In contrast, Norway, a land of fewer than 6 million people, generates approximately 38,000 MW.

Lack of electricity drastically reduced my productivity and forced me to sleep most nights in the office, school, or the radio studio where I hosted a show to enable me to have electricity to work and power my internet. Someone competing with the rest of the world in such a condition is already on a back foot before the race started. It is essential to ensure that countries guarantee Energy Democracy. It gives people and communities control over their energy sources and even generates income. Governments should not stand in the way of their people providing their electricity through clean energy sources. These unequal playing grounds are putting youth sustainable energy startups at risk of collapse and bullying by the big players in the sector.

As has been highlighted by the speakers, only a comprehensive multistakeholder effort will stand a chance of reducing the impacts of the pandemic.

Most developing countries are neck-deep in debts, and increasing disasters destroy their existing infrastructure, reducing their adaptive capacity. It is essential that developed countries offer urgent debt relief to support these countries in their recovery.

From the GCF’s message, it is clear the imbalance in climate financing of mitigation and adaptation remains. The latest figures for 2020 indicate that adaptation is still getting only 24 percent of climate finance from Multilateral Development Banks. Developed countries need to step up and make real of the 100 billion USD yearly GCF fund. For most developing countries, climate adaptation is an urgent need in the face of increasing and devastating climate impacts disproportionately affecting women and children. It is an existential threat for some already, and people have to be alive first. It throws open the question, why is it difficult to close this funding gap? Why are some countries struggling to present projects that meet the relevant criteria? Can we create criteria that ensure

that these funds address the disproportionate impacts on women and children other vulnerable groups?

Climate resilience must include vulnerable people in the most vulnerable communities.

What can the UN do?

UN can improve its country-level support, especially in the capacity building of relevant institutions, to rapidly address these challenges in a simultaneous and very effective way. It can also help countries in mobilizing financing and negotiating debt relief while engaging multiple stakeholders, including young people.

I thank you!