



CONCEPT NOTE

Just Energy Transition: Efficiency, Clean Energy, and Workforce Transformation

29 October, 09:00-17:00 (Skopje/Geneva) time

Background

The global energy system is undergoing a profound transition, driven by the urgent need to shift away from fossil fuels and toward clean, renewable energy. On 22 July, UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated that “...we are on the cusp of a new era. Fossil fuels are running out of road. The sun is rising on a clean energy age.”, embracing the oncoming era of renewable energy. Global energy demand is projected to continue rising, especially in developing and emerging economies. Meeting this demand, while staying the course for meeting climate and sustainable development goals requires a rapid scale-up of renewable energy and energy efficiency, with an emphasis on intergenerational equity.

Countries have committed to tripling renewable energy, doubling energy efficiency, and phasing down fossil fuels, particularly coal by 2030.¹ However, global reliance on fossil fuels remains high. For instance, despite ongoing efforts to phase down coal use, global coal demand remained steady in 2025, and production reached a historic peak. Nonetheless, there are promising signs of change: coal is being phased down in many countries, particularly in Europe; coal-fired plants and mines are being decommissioned; and clean energy investments reached over \$2 trillion in 2024 - \$800 billion more than investments in fossil fuels. These shifts highlight that the energy transition is not only a climate imperative but also an economically sound strategy.

¹ COP28 Pledge: [Global Renewables And Energy Efficiency Pledge](#)



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The transition to a low-carbon economy is inherently disruptive, affecting a significant portion of the global population and a wide range of industries. It is therefore critical to ensure that this transition is just - fair, equitable and inclusive.

Regional disparities must also be addressed. Today, 90% of installed renewable power capacity is concentrated in OECD countries, and in China, Brazil and India, while Africa accounts for only 1.5%. In order to ensure a Just Energy Transition where no one is left behind, efforts must be made to address challenges related to financing Just Transition in regions experiencing slower growth in adopting renewable energy. International cooperation – particularly through international organizations and financial institutions – is essential to mobilize investments, facilitate technology transfer, build local capacity, and support inclusive policy frameworks.

This session will be structured around the following themes:

- **Guiding Principles for Just Transition:** Overview of the foundational principles and pillars that underpin a just energy transition.
- **Workers' Protection and Empowerment:** Ensuring that the shift to a green economy protects workers from economic displacement, safeguarding their rights, livelihoods, and well-being. Protecting and empowering workers is fundamental to guaranteeing that the transition to a green economy does not come at the expense of the workforce in legacy industries and their surrounding ecosystems.
- **Planning for and Financing Just Transition:** Effective just transition planning should begin well in advance of anticipated transitions to allow sufficient time for stakeholder engagement, capacity-building, closure planning, workforce reskilling, and financial model development. Effective planning also requires a clear, inclusive governance structure that enables cross-sectors and multi-level coordination, ensures multistakeholder representation, and integrates accountability and grievance mechanisms to guide a coherent and equitable transition
- **Institutional Support:** Governments and stakeholders should provide strong institutional supports - tailored education and training, support for SMEs, outreach efforts, and alignment between education and industry needs – to foster resilience in communities and promote long-term sustainability.

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UNECE has established a task force under the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition, to address the issue of just transition in coal mining regions. It recently published the Guiding Principles for Just Transition: An integrated approach to facilitating a just energy transition to low-carbon, resource-efficient, and resilient economy.

ESCAP, in cooperation with the Issues Based Coalition on Climate Change and Air Pollution - a group of UN agencies working together on these issues – has undertaken several studies to support Asia-Pacific coal phase-down and transition to a renewable-based energy system aligned with the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.

ESCWA has hosted a series of dialogues on inclusive energy transition in the Arab region and recently launched the report “Investing in the Future: The Role of Human Capital in Enabling Just Energy Transitions in the Arab Region”.

ECA is providing technical assistance to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat to develop a SADC Regional Just Energy Transition Framework. This initiative offers transformative opportunities that exceed environmental aspects. By shifting to renewable energy systems and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and costs, SADC countries can tackle unique developmental challenges.

UNDP launched the Just Transition in Eurasia Navigator under its Climate Promise initiative, which focuses on four core areas: economic diversification, inclusive energy transition, governance, and regional collaboration.

North Macedonia has shown leadership in the region by launching a Just Energy Transition Investment Platform at COP28. Its Just Transition Roadmap outlines national strategies for climate action and an inclusive energy shift.²

The workshop is jointly organized by North Macedonia, ESCAP, UNECE, ESCWA and UNDP.

² North Macedonia Just Transition Roadmap



Republic of North Macedonia
Ministry of Energy, Mining
and Mineral Resources



14th International Forum on
**ENERGY FOR
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**
28–30 October 2025, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia



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Objectives

- Foster a shared understanding and aligned approach to Just Transition across regions.
- Facilitate exchange of knowledge, experiences, and good practices among countries and regions at varying stages of energy transition.
- Enable multi-stakeholder dialogue to promote a transition that is inclusive, participatory, and equitable.
- Highlight the role of UN intergovernmental bodies and platforms in promoting peer learning and monitoring progress on Just Transition.

Target Group

The Fourteenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development aims to bring together ministries, the private sector, financial institutions, international organizations, and civil society to discuss and align perspectives and approaches concerning Just Energy Transition.

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Provisional Programme

Time (Skopje/Geneva)	Agenda
09:00 – 10:15	Welcome and Introduction Presentation of the Guiding Principles for Just Transition
10:15 – 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 – 12:00	Planning for and financing the Transition
12:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 15:15	Role of human capital in enabling just and sustainable energy transition
15:15 – 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30 – 16:45	Beyond Energy: Building Skills and Institutions for a Just Energy Transition
16:45 – 17:00	Closing remarks

Mode of participation

The workshop (seminar, roundtable, etc.) will take place in a hybrid format (in-person and online).

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