

## Report: Universal Access to Sustainable Energy Will Remain Elusive Without Addressing Inequalities

*Sustainable solutions must target African countries left behind in quest for global energy access*

**WASHINGTON, June 7, 2021** During the last decade, a greater share of the global population gained access to electricity than ever before, but the number of people without electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa actually increased. Unless efforts are scaled up significantly in countries with the largest deficits the world will still fall short of ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy by 2030, according to [Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report](#) released today by the International Energy Agency (IEA) the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the World Bank, and the World Health Organization (WHO).

According to the report, significant progress has been made since 2010 in meeting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7, but progress has been unequal across regions. While more than one billion people gained access to electricity globally over the last decade, COVID's financial impact has made basic electricity services unaffordable for 30 million more people, the majority located in Africa. Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia had the biggest electricity access deficits, with Ethiopia replacing India in the Top 3.

Globally, the number of people without access to electricity declined from 1.2 billion in 2010 to 759 million in 2019. Electrification through decentralized renewable-based solutions in particular gained momentum. The number of people connected to mini grids has more than doubled between 2010 and 2019, growing from 5 to 11 million people. However, under current and planned policies and further affected by the COVID-19 crisis, an estimated 660 million people would still lack access in 2030, 16(r)8(e)6(n)6(t)56(a)-18(n)66T nr 315.38 .43

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in 2030. Of the top 20 countries with greatest number of people lacking access to clean fuel and technologies for cooking, 10 are located in Sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar, Ghana, Niger), 6 are in Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia (China, Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Viet Nam, Democratic Republic of Korea) and 4 are in Central Asia and Southern Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan). During the period 2010-2019, the top 5 most populous low- and middle-income countries (China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, and Pakistan) increased their combined access rate by 2 percent where progress in all other LMIC, remained unchanged or stagnant over the same period. To ensure no one is left behind, the political commitment, and financial incentives must be prioritized in all access-deficit countries to achieve the universal target of SDG 7.

**Renewables.** The COVID-19 crisis resulted in an estimated 7 percent year-on-year expansion of renewable electricity generation, supported by long-



This is the seventh edition of this report, formerly known as the Global Tracking Framework (GTF). This year's edition was chaired by the United Nations Statistics Division.

The report this year comes at a crucial time as Governments and stakeholders are gearing up for the UN High-level Dialogue on Energy, a summit-level meeting in September 2021 that will examine steps needed to achieve SDG7 by 2030 and mobilize voluntary commitments and actions in the form of Energy Compacts.

The report can be downloaded at <http://trackingSDG7.esmap.org/>.

Funding for the report was provided by the World Bank's Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP).