UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION

CLEAN ENERGY
FOR HEALTH CARE

**HARNESSING RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TO CREATE STRONGER, MORE RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS**

April 24-25, 2019 | Nairobi, Kenya

CONCEPT NOTE

CONTEXT

It is estimated that one in four health facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa lack access to electricity, and three in four facilities lack reliable power. This absence of adequate power impedes the delivery of quality health care. It leads to vaccine spoilage, interruptions in the use of essential medical and diagnostic devices, and lack of even the most basic lighting and communications for maternal delivery and emergency procedures. It also limits the hours of operation and retention of rural health workers and undermines the provision of adequate water, sanitation and hygiene. Simply put, the capacity of Africa's health systems - from community clinics to urban hospitals – to deliver adequate care is hugely hampered by the continent's lack of access to electricity.

Fortunately, heightened political commitment to universal health coverage and energy access, coupled with recent advances in clean energy and the impetus for climate action, present a timely opportunity to improve access to quality health care while making health facilities more resilient. Off-grid renewable energy solutions present an opportunity to provide clean, reliable and cost-effective electricity to hospitals and health centers, which can help improve the quality of health care services. In particular, the dramatic cost reductions and technological improvement of renewable energy technologies in the past several years makes renewables an economically and technically viable solution that can be deployed in a fraction of the time it takes to electrify health facilities via grid extension. The increasing array of portable and energy-efficient medical devices that are being specifically designed for resource-constrained environments also have the potential to generate considerable savings for health facilities, in particular on the amounts spent on fuel to operate a generator either as a primary or a back-up energy source.

These clean energy advances are timely as they coincide with greater emphasis on improving access to quality, facility-based primary health care, as a key pillar of efforts to ending preventable maternal and child deaths and to achieving universal health coverage. They are also consistent with multi-sector approaches, like those being taken by the updated *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health*. Recognizing these synergies, WHO's Director-General committed the organization to "working towards

universal electrification of health facilities with sustainable energy by 2030 to support universal health care access".

Capitalizing on this momentum and harnessing the enormous potential of clean energy to improve the delivery of health care in Africa requires a concerted and coordinated effort by the health and energy sectors. This conference on Clean Energy for Health Care is a response to this need.

CONFERENCE AIMS AND OUTCOMES

The conference will bring together global, national and local partners from the energy and health sectors for the purposes of:

- **Raising awareness** among policy makers to the importance of and the opportunity that renewable energy and energy efficiency play in creating stronger, more resilient health systems in Africa and *why* additional attention to and resources for this issue are urgently needed.
- **Exchanging knowledge** and practical experiences in delivering energy services to health facilities in resource-constrained environments. Emphasis will be on *how* to improve upon the "business-as-usual" approach to powering health facilities, through innovations and best practices in fields such as decentralized renewable energy, energy efficient medical devices, and financing/delivery models.
- **Building a coalition** in support of global action on clean energy and health care.

Participants will include Ministries of Health, Energy, Finance and Planning, and other national government representatives; multilateral and bilateral development partners and foundations; and solution providers and innovators, including the private sector, NGOs and civil society.

A broad and inclusive process will be conducted ahead of the conference, where experts and representatives from relevant organizations and agencies will be consulted on the conference objectives and how they can contribute to the event.

This process will support the following conference outcomes:
- Momentum built for the powering health care agenda ahead of key moments in the political calendar, including WHO's World Health Assembly (May 2019), Women Deliver (June 2019), G20 (June 2019), High-Level Political Forum (July 2019), and the UN Climate Summit (Sept 2019). Concrete messages fed into subsequent energy and health fora.
- Mobilization of additional interest and resources from governments, donors and the private sector to support efforts to achieve universal electrification of health facilities by 2030, in line with WHO's commitment to this target. New evidence and leadership inspire action.
- Policy silos bridged as a result of cross-sectoral dialogue, leading to opportunities to form new alliances.
- Agreement reached around ways to achieve better coordination and cooperation among development partners seeking to advance the clean energy for healthcare space.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS AND THEMES

The conference will feature a range of discussions focusing on the following themes:

EVIDENCE
- New developments in the evidence on the need for and importance of decentralized sustainable energies to improving the availability, quality and affordability of health care in Africa.
- Addressing key knowledge and research gaps.

INNOVATIONS
- Latest innovations and best practices in supplying electricity to health facilities in remote and underserved areas (e.g. solar PV, remote monitoring, battery storage, etc).
- State of play of energy-efficient electricity-dependent medical appliances.

FINANCE
- Lessons learned and best practices in financing distributed, clean energy solutions.
- Role of different sources of capital (public vs private; energy vs health) in closing financing gaps.

POLICY AND INTER-SECTORAL PLANNING
- Examples of successful cross-sector collaborations between energy and health.
- Emerging quality assurance frameworks for institutional solar PV solutions.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION
- Lessons and best practices in designing monitoring and evaluation strategies to capture 'impact'.

PARTNERSHIPS
- Building momentum for the achievement of SDG7 and SDG3, by catalyzing and coordinating action at a regional and global level.
- Provide a platform to champion the issue of clean energy for improved health outcomes at a global level.

CONFERENCE PARTNERS

The conference is being organized by the **UN Foundation**, in partnership with **Sustainable Energy for All**, **United Nations Development Programme**, **International Renewable Energy Agency**, **U.K. Department for International Development**, **Energy Sector Management Assistance Program** and the **World Health Organization**.

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