

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

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Sustainable, Inclusive Growth: The Way Forward from Rio+20 and G20

Eight months ago, at the 3G Forum in Copenhagen, we cemented our commitment to global green growth.

I well remember Prime Minister Thorning-Schmidt's call for international leadership for a green transition. She said, "The United Nations must be the overarching framework for our efforts."

I have been leading the call for a transition to a green economy around the world.

The argument is simple: when we invest in green growth, we benefit the economy and the environment. When we innovate clean technologies ... when we reduce, recycle and even recover energy from waste ... when we invest in education for advances in sustainability.

Countries around the world see the benefit of this approach. The Government of Mexico has made green growth a centrepiece of its development agenda. I thank President Calderon for his leadership. And I am proud that President Lee of Korea has a solid plan for green growth.

There are other examples around the world, from South Africa's New Growth Path to the National Strategic Plan in Barbados.

Here in Brazil, waste management and recycling employ well over half a million people – showing how cleaning up the environment can generate income.

I have often said that sustainable energy is the golden thread that weaves together the economy, the environment and equity.

At the 3G Forum, I called for a world where all people have modern energy services. ... where we double the rate of improvement in energy efficiency worldwide ... and where we double the share of renewable energy in the global mix.

Since then, I have been urging governments, businesses and civil society to take concrete steps to reach these goals.

The response has been very encouraging. Countries, communities and companies are sharing their ideas and taking action.

The Sustainable Energy for All initiative has gathered major commitments.

Over 50 Governments have engaged and tens of billions of dollars have been committed to support the goals of energy access, efficiency and renewables.

There are hundreds of other actions under way. To give you an idea:

Ghana is developing a national plan so all people there have electricity by 2020.

The European Commission has plans to support half a billion people in the developing world to gain access to sustainable energy.

The Zayed Future Energy Prize will award \$100,000 each to five high schools around the world that raise awareness of energy issues.

Nokero International is working with Navajo tribal leaders to provide universal access to solar energy in the Navajo Nation.

Some companies are reducing their own footprint. Infosys Limited committed to halving its energy consumption, using only renewables and becoming carbon neutral.

Other companies are working to improve green technology. D.light pledged to make more and better solar lamps for 30 million people in more than 40 countries.

Overall, more than one billion people will benefit from improved energy access in developing countries through SE4ALL's public and private sector commitments.

The United Nations is also practicing what we preach. The renovation of our Headquarters in New York will cut our energy consumption in half.

Not long ago, an NGO colleague, a doctor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, said that “In our part of the world, darkness means death.”

That is because clinics do not have the energy they need to treat patients at night.

This doctor received a “solar suitcase” – a portable power station designed for health clinics.

When cholera broke out, for the first time in the history of that village, no one died – thanks to solar power.

This doctor is now a passionate advocate of sustainable energy for all. As he said, “It will make many things possible that were impossible. It will bring hope and confidence to communities around the world.”

I completely agree.

And I would add that green growth means more than hope and confidence – it means jobs, innovation, cleaner air and more liveable cities.

Green growth is central to why we are here in Rio: to lift people out of poverty and protect the global environment.

Today, sitting under these bright lights, I ask you to remember the 1.3 billion people without access to electricity ... and the 2.7 billion people who still rely on wood, dirty fuels, or animal waste to cook or heat their homes.

Today I call for even greater commitments to Sustainable Energy for All.

I ask you to look ahead to tomorrow, when we carry this initiative forward through the power of partnerships ... and through our resolve to set this planet on course for a future that is bright precisely because it is powered by sustainable energy for all.

Thank you.