

## Energy Transition in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities 4 November 2020

08:30~10:00 AM Beirut, i.e., 14:30~16:00 PM Beijing

### Background

The Arab region is a large and diverse region that shares a rich geography known for its natural resource wealth as well as its climate vulnerability. It is home to some 400 million people, stretching from the Atlantic coast of North Africa in the West to the Straits of Hormuz in the East, and includes some of the world's wealthiest as well as some of the world's poorest nations.

Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG 7)) in the Arab region requires significantly scaled-up progress in renewable energy and in decoupling regional growth from energy consumption through improved energy efficiency and increasing productivity of energy use while protecting the climate and ensuring a healthy planet for future generations, which constitute one of the most fundamental challenges across all Arab countries in the coming decades.

The full success of the energy transition is largely tied to strengthening the regional cooperation and trade among Arab countries and represents a fruitful avenue to support the common goal of more sustainable energy systems. This could help spur the deployment of clean energy options to the end of diversifying the region's energy mix, as well as the development of grid interconnections between countries, and promotion of pan-Arab electricity market, focusing on smart grids and green corridors. The development of local manufacturing of renewable energy technology components is also a key opportunity for components of technologies whose greater deployment could be driven by increasing regional cooperation, in particular renewable energy.

The energy transition will also require substantial financial and human resources, and many Arab countries should seek existing opportunities to capitalize on foreign aid channeled towards energy resilience to build essential infrastructure for sustainable energy and pursue ways to plan for sustainable financing of energy programs.

The UN Regional Commission of Western Asia (ESCWA), together with its partner organisations, League of Arab States (LAS), Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization (GEIDCO) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) have already recognized the importance of accelerating the sustainable energy development and energy cooperation, achieving a broader range of consensus on regional and trans-regional power connectivity and addressing common concerns and challenges of the transition to more sustainable energy systems in the Arab region.

In this context, ESCWA jointly with LAS, GEIDCO and IsDB are organising a virtual side event entitled “**Energy transition in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities**” on the **4<sup>th</sup> November 2020, at 08:30~10:00 AM Beirut, i.e., 14:30~16:00 PM Beijing**, on the sideline of the **2020 Global Energy Interconnection & Asian Energy and Power Conference**” to be convened from November 1 to 4, 2020, by GEIDCO together with the UNESCWA and UNESCAP

### The Virtual Side Event will address and discuss the following:

- Arab region progress towards SDG7.
- Major challenges and opportunities for building sustainable and resilient societies.
- Role of electricity interconnection and advanced technology on energy transition.
- Current challenges in the implementation of the Arab electricity market.
- Role of renewable energy for the uptake of the Arab regional electricity market
- How can the clean energy investments help to diversify the Arab States' economies.
- The role of access to financing for accelerating the energy transition and regional energy infrastructure.

## **Agenda:**

**Setting the Scene and Moderator:** Ms Radia Sedaoui, Chief Energy at Climate Change and Natural resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA

### **Welcoming Remarks: (15 mins)**

- Ms. Roula Majdalani, Lead Cluster at Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability, ESCWA
- Mr Han Huang, Director of Research Institute, GEIDCO

### **Keynote Speakers and Panalists: (50 mins)**

- Ms. Yi Gao, Director of Grid Planning Division II,.GEIDCO representative
- Mr. Nouri Alkishriwi, Energy Expert, LAS
- Ms. Fatima Al Foor Al Shamsi, CEO, ELIC, United Arab Emirates
- Mr, Zakariya Rammal, Advisor on Transmission sector, Ministry of Energy and Water, Lebnon
- Mr. Mohamed Al-Syaid, Manager Economic Infrastructure Division, ISDB

### **Q&A (20 mins)**

**Closing remarks :** ESCWA (Roula Majdalani), GEIDCO (Han Huang) (5 mins)