

Remarks by Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa,

Ms. Cristina Duarte at the

12th Session of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Assembly

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Ministerial Meetings

If we assess best practices of countries promoting economic transformation, ensuring food security, digitalizing education, revolutionizing health systems, building manufacturing, and industrialization capacities, or sustaining peace by creating quality jobs and delivering services, we will realize that no country in the world has achieved these ambitions without abundant and affordable access to energy.

Moreover, energy is the foundational building block to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals and to build Africa's resilience, especially as the continent struggles to adapt to climate change, including adverse weather events, water scarcity, and significant threats to livelihoods.

However, even though Africa is home to 17 percent of the world's population, the continent represents only 3.3 percent of global primary energy consumption, 1.1 percent of electricity generation, and 3 percent of global energy use in industry.

This means that African countries have a very long way to go in electrifying homes, supplying sustained and reliable energy for industrial use, as well as providing adequate and affordable clean cooking solutions.

Renewable energy sources, including geothermal and hydropower, have significant potential in building Africa's balanced energy mix.

With advancements in off-grid and utility-scale renewable technologies, there is a great opportunity to provide electricity for Africa's citizens especially through last-mile connections.

Doing so would free up grid systems to use a mixture of energy sources to supply power to high-energy industries and manufacturing, which have very little room for

We need to invest in making green jobs a reality and something worthwhile for African countries by shifting the manufacturing of renewable energy components such as solar panels to the continent.

Finally, we need to invest in making Africa's grids efficient and in building the financial viability and capacities of African utilities to regulate and manage increased renewables in the energy mix.

The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa is ready to work with IRENA, the African Development Bank, African Member States, and partners in transforming these needs into realities.

Thank you.