

UN-Energy

Looking to the Future



UN-Energy Looking to the Future



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Foreword I

Since its inception in 2004, UN-Energy has been instrumental in sharing information and good-practices within the United Nations system on energy. It has also served as a platform for partnerships among various United Nations organizations and for coordinating their energy-related programmes and activities. Since there is no single United Nations entity that has primary responsibility for energy, UN-Energy is vital for a focused and collective United Nations engagement in the field of energy.

As chairman of UN-Energy over the last two years, I have become convinced of the centrality of energy to sustainable development. It is for this reason that I have commissioned this strategic review of UN-Energy.

Since 2004, energy issues have risen to the top of the international economic, security and development agenda. It is thus an opportune time to consider how the work of UN-Energy could evolve in the years ahead. This document is aimed at contributing to the discussion on the future functioning of UN-Energy. It presents a number of options for enhancing the delivery capacity of UN-Energy to better serve the global community and provide a strong foundation for collective and coordinated action.

It is my hope that the ideas and insights presented in this review will help us chart a clear course for UN-Energy in the future. They provide a sound basis for harnessing the full potential of the United Nations system in addressing the challenges and ensuring a more effective United Nations system engagement in the field of energy. I invite you to join me in working towards a UN-Energy that we can all be proud of.



Kandeh K. Yumkella
Director-General, UNIDO
Chair, UN-Energy

Foreword II

Energy is crucial to virtually all aspects of economic and social development, it is therefore essential that the international community embraces the provision of efficient and reliable energy services for widespread access with determination on a sustained basis. The United Nations is ideally placed to play a leadership role in ensuring that concrete actions are pursued to address the global energy challenges.

The lack of access to reliable, affordable modern energy services remains a major barrier to development for considerable proportion of the world population. Modern energy services also provide a significant opportunity to address wealth creation, security and health and gender disparity issues with well known and tested technologies and systems. It is now apparent that cleaner energy will play a key role in the energy transition required for a low carbon future.

UN-Energy is crucial for coordinating and bringing coherence to the work on energy carried out within the United Nations. It is now time to evolve the work of UN-Energy so that it can serve a wider set of stakeholders effectively, including building strong links to the private sector.

Efforts to improve the effectiveness of multilateral undertakings deserve unconditional support. The external review of UN-Energy is a timely initiative that provides its members with useful insights regarding possible options to enhance its role. A stronger UN-Energy will be in a position to better serve the Member States and their respective needs, and will provide the United Nations System with an authoritative voice on energy matters.



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Executive summary

There is an emerging consensus on the diversity and complex nature of key energy issues, and the requirement to look at them in a holistic manner. This consensus should be considered as an excellent opportunity for leadership. UN-Energy can take advantage of this, by evolving to function as a respected advisory group with a visible and credible role in orienting the global energy discourse.

UN-Energy was set up in 2004, and this review finds that the original justification and rationale for its establishment still exists, and the case for clear, coherent and coordinated engagement by the United Nations family in energy is even more compelling now than ever before. Utilizing the different perspectives of the United Nations bodies in a coherent way is likely to produce the richest and most comprehensive set of policies, engagements and actions to match the complexity of the issues faced. This paper:

- Reviews outcomes to date in undertaking an organizational assessment of UN-Energy
- Assesses current and future needs in order to evaluate necessary requirements for empowering UN-Energy to “scale-up” and strengthen its capacity to deliver results
- Provides a suite of options for future delivery

Some principles drawn from the review include:

- A central secretariat needs to have a clear role which adds value above and beyond facilitating the activities of members. It needs to have credibility and be effective at implementation
- A network must provide something its members cannot get unless they collaborate—this might be resources, technical advice, access to others, or personal support
- Formal mandates and structures and processes are important but they are not

sufficient; interpersonal relationships, trust and honest participation are also necessary

- “Networks” work if they acknowledge both the interdependency and independence of their members

Three different short-term scenarios for a future evolution of UN-Energy are provided to explore different levels of scale and scope. Each requires varying levels of engagement from members and external partners and different levels of resources. All are underpinned by the same following suggestions:

- A need to refine and augment the UN-Energy terms of reference
- A clear communication strategy for a diverse set of stakeholders including: developed and developing countries, the private sector, and internal United Nations colleagues is required
- A significantly strengthened and dedicated central hub or secretariat
- A bold new vision for UN-Energy needs to be clearly articulated—and then delivered
- A 3-5 year work plan needs to be formulated with clear goals, financial and human resources and indicators for success
- A renewed organizational mandate from within the United Nations and/or from an external inter-governmental body would empower any option. Likewise, embedding the “monitoring” of an international goal would provide a powerful foundation

This strategic review has been undertaken at a critical time for UN-Energy, and at a time of heightened awareness of energy issues by governments, civil society and the private sector. It provides input for ongoing discussions about the development of UN-Energy as a strong and effective interagency mechanism. It is not, however, a recommendation, nor a vision.

1 Introduction

It is a good time to examine the United Nations role in energy and increase its visibility, effectiveness and influence. As Daniel Yeargin noted in 2007,¹

“... energy has repeatedly emerged as an issue of great importance, and it is so once again today. But the subject now needs to be rethought, for what has been the paradigm of energy for the past three decades is too limited and must be expanded to include many new factors. Moreover, it must be recognized that [it] does not stand by itself but is lodged in the larger relations among nations and how they interact with one another.”

¹Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives Hearing on, “Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Oil Dependence”, 22 March 2007.

UN-Energy was initiated as a mechanism to promote coherence within the United Nations family of organizations in the energy field and to develop increased collective engagement between the United Nations and other key external stakeholders. Its envisaged role was to increase the sharing of information, encourage and facilitate joint programming and develop action-oriented approaches to coordination. It was hoped that it would develop into a system-wide network open to all and a mechanism by which a range of organizational actors could work with the United Nations to ensure a more coherent approach to addressing energy issues.

A previous review was undertaken in 2007² which noted that the establishment of UN-Energy had been a, “timely, albeit modest response to the institutional shortcomings of the United Nations System in the area of energy”. It also commented that, “...the time is right and the circumstances conducive for a higher level of ambition” and that how UN-Energy develops over the short-term, “...is critical to the future life and continued existence of this very good idea”.

The current strategic review has found the reason and rationale for setting up UN-Energy still exists and indeed the case is ever more compelling within a context where:

- There is a better understanding of the linkage between energy systems and security, poverty, and climate change
- Energy policy has become a national and international priority for governments and multilateral institutions
- The bulk of the growth in energy demand over the coming decades will be in developing countries
- There is an increased awareness of the underlying importance of accessible, safe, secure and sustainable energy to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)
- New global energy goals are emerging that require monitoring and reporting

The United Nations is uniquely positioned in the global effort to address these issues. There are resources, experience and skills available among the United Nations family of organizations which, if well focused, can play a powerful and positive role. Yet energy doesn't fit easily into a single part of the United Nations. Utilizing the different perspectives and angles taken by existing United Nations bodies in a coherent way is likely to produce the richest and most comprehensive set of policies, engagements and actions to match the complexity of the issues.

The different roles, cultures, and mandates of United Nations bodies though can often be opaque to others. It is difficult for external stakeholders to understand where to go for partnership, assistance or advice. If the United Nations itself is to enhance its impact and public standing then a key challenge is to manage both the breadth and diversity of the issues it addresses, yet retain clarity and coherence over its central message. Reform efforts such as the “One UN” process play a key role in this, as should mechanisms like UN-Energy. If effective, these can enhance the activities of the United Nations by ensuring that energy efforts are more than the sum of their parts, and facilitate more informed understanding and access to United Nations knowledge and experience by external stakeholders.

This review is informed by the recent review of UN-Water. In many respects UN-Energy shares similar challenges to UN-Water and is often, along with UN-Oceans, seen as being similar in organizational purpose, form and type. These bodies attempt to bring United Nations agencies together and, along with the “One UN” reform processes, they are focused on providing coherence under the common “United Nations brand” while recognizing the independence of those bodies that combine to form that brand. Where the two mechanisms differ, however, is in their stage of evolution. At present, UN-Energy is less evolved than UN-Water. It has fewer human resources and no dedicated “fund” to cover aspects of its work plan. This review considers the unique context of the energy field while drawing from learning and experience of

²“UN-Energy at a Crossroads” Luis Gomez-Echeverri.

cooperation mechanisms in other fields. It is not comprehensive, nor is it a final strategy or a recommendation. Rather, it provides fodder for ongoing discussions that might enhance and expedite the ongoing discussion about the evolution of UN-Energy.

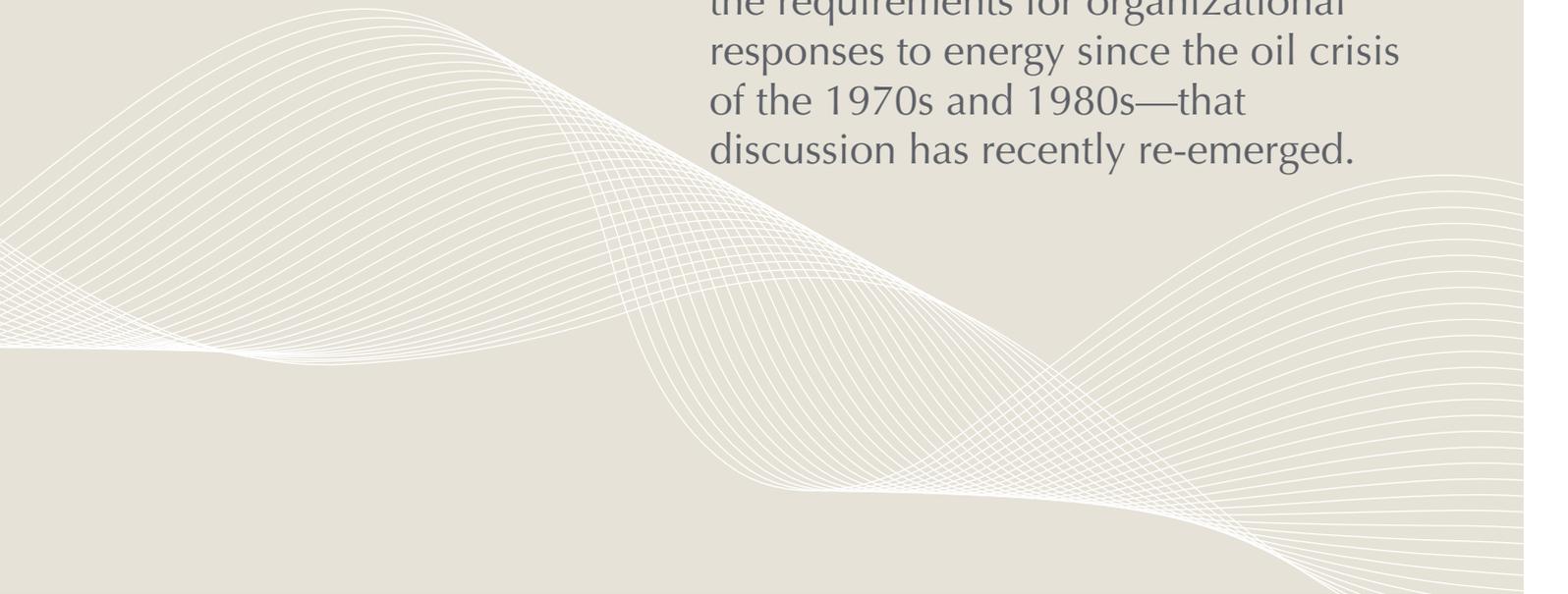
This review starts from the premise that an effective UN-Energy would enhance the work of the United Nations system and be an effective mechanism to support the transition to a new energy pathway; that the time is ripe for a focused effort on energy issues. It also assumes that a static future (operating in the same manner as at present) is not a viable option. It outlines what possibilities exist that could support the successful transformation of the current “network” into an “Action Platform”. It focuses on what UN-Energy’s role could be, various organizational configurations, associated human and financial resource implications, and the decisions, actions and processes required to realize these options. It also recognizes the

challenges faced, in particular an institutional context and mandate where UN-Energy, as a central coordinating body, has limited formal power and influence over a diverse set of contributing members. It is assumed that in the short to medium-term a new United Nations agency in the field of energy is unlikely. The range of future scenarios considered vary from a “loose” network to larger more permanent and resource intensive structures with a stronger mandate and increased authority.

The document is structured as follows: chapter 2 sets the stage by describing the context. The evolution of UN-Energy to date is reviewed in chapter 3. Chapter 4 draws analogies with other coordination mechanisms. The approach and methodology of the review is described in chapter 5. The review findings are presented in chapter 6, and the possible future options outlined in chapter 7. Lastly, chapter 8 provides concluding remarks on “looking forward”. The list of UN-Energy members is available in annex I.

2 Context

Energy has become a global headline topic. Driven in part by growing demand for fossil fuels, chronic power shortages in developing countries, new developments in clean energy, and a growing concern related to climate change, energy policy is at the forefront of all political agendas. There has been relatively little debate about the requirements for organizational responses to energy since the oil crisis of the 1970s and 1980s—that discussion has recently re-emerged.



Of course, the United Nations “family” is already deeply engaged in the global efforts to alter the energy landscape. (A parallel effort to this strategic review offers a mapping of the current UN-Energy activities and outputs of the 21 UN-Energy members, providing a full picture of exactly who is doing what and where.) Still, the changing energy landscape creates a timely opportunity for UN-Energy to establish itself as a mechanism to help coordinate the vast volume of energy-related activity within the United Nations system and to support concrete global action. Ultimately, the impetus of the United Nations systems engagement must be social and economic impact on the ground, and a concern for how the changing energy landscape affects developing countries’ efforts to meet the needs of the poor. UN-Energy considered the link between energy and the MDGs,³ and reminded us that:

- Energy services such as lighting, heating, cooking, motive power, mechanical power, transport and telecommunications are essential for socio-economic development, since they yield social benefits and support income and employment generation
- Reforms to the energy sector should protect the poor, especially the 1.1 billion people

who live on less than \$1 per day, and take gender inequalities into account in recognizing that the majority of the poor are women

The most pressing issue for developing countries is the need to continue to develop energy in a clean and sustainable way, but at the lowest cost possible. The clean energy sector and investments in sustainable energy have grown substantially over the last few years, going from \$35 billion to \$155 billion over the period of UN-Energy’s existence,⁴ but the question will be how to ensure that that investment benefits the poorest sections of society. This again, will require a coordinated response from the United Nations and potential partnerships with the private sector.

This review was undertaken within the context of on-going related processes and major events (e.g. climate negotiations, MDG Summit, and later the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012) which are shaping it. Although the energy challenges facing the developing world are pressing and daunting, they also present enormous opportunity for the United Nations family to play a leadership role.

³UN-Energy, 2005. The Energy Challenge for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

⁴UNEP, 2009. Global Trends in Sustainable Energy Investment 2009.

3 Evolution of UN-Energy

The first meeting of UN-Energy in 2004 established its point of departure as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), and that it would initially focus on a limited number of activities that could be delivered on a timely basis. It was decided that while UN-Energy would not set policy, it could provide options, strategies and analyses to support the implementation of the broad policy framework of Agenda 21, CSD-9 and the JPOI. Lastly, it was agreed that the work of the group should focus on activities that would have concrete and measurable impacts on efforts to achieve sustainable development.



These activities were to be centred on the following areas:

- Inputs to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)
- Promoting Policy Coherence
- Galvanizing Inter-Agency Operational Cooperation
- Information and Knowledge Management and
- Strategy for the Cooperation with non-UN partners

The first year of operations of UN-Energy was dedicated to establishing work modalities for the mechanism and setting out a long-term programme of work. It was agreed that one of the regular activities of UN-Energy would be participation in, and input into, the annual CSD. Also, UN-Energy/Africa was established as a subprogramme of UN-Energy during this time.

It was agreed that the CSD represents an important intergovernmental energy policy forum for the group and the contribution to its sessions should be appropriate in terms of enhancing implementation of the JPOI. Salient issues that would be covered at the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions (being the first sessions that UN-Energy could contribute to) included renewable energy, access to energy by the poor, energy efficiency and energy financing, all of which provided UN-Energy with an important platform of participation.

It was agreed that UN-Energy was well placed to facilitate agency/organization inputs to the Secretary-General's report on energy for sustainable development to be prepared for the fourteenth session of CSD. The report was to focus on areas identified in Agenda 21, CSD-9 and the JPOI and would identify gaps as well as barriers and constraints that impede implementation. It was agreed that UN-Energy could play a key role in facilitating inputs to the report and identifying integrated approaches to energy for sustainable development.

Much discussion also focused on the fact that UN-Energy could play a role in ensuring that

measures and options for implementation of CSD outputs were consistent and that there was no overlapping of activities or duplication of efforts within the United Nations system. It was agreed that regular communications, including electronic communications, and regular updates on programmes and activities would be important in promoting policy coherence in the area of energy throughout the United Nations system.

Overall, the first year of operations was focused on setting the platform from which to grow the UN-Energy and identifying the main activities and programmes through which UN-Energy could add value and establish itself as the main coordinating body within the United Nations on energy matters. Early recognition was also made of the fact that partnerships (both internal and external with non-UN partners) would be critical to sustained success.

By 2005 UN-Energy began a "mapping" of UN-Energy work in progress and/or planned on the specific topic of access to energy. Each agency was requested to draft a short paper. DESA and UNDP were requested to conduct the mapping exercise. This was unanimously seen as a valuable output of UN-Energy work and one whose importance is only set to grow given the rapidly changing energy landscape and the increasing level of activity and number of actors in the energy sphere.

Concept papers were also introduced on the subject of renewable energy as well as bioenergy, as facilitated by UNESCO and FAO respectively. 2005 also saw the launch of the UN-Energy paper "The Energy Challenge for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals." This marked the first tangible output produced by UN-Energy—the paper was largely drafted by the World Bank and UNDP.

UN-Energy/Africa also presented a workplan developed around a newly approved GEF project on mini/micro hydropower aimed at improving capacities and to attract investment. UN-Energy/Africa also undertook an assessment on power sector reform in Africa to draw lessons from recent experiences with a special emphasis

on social implications and environmental aspects of power sector reforms.

The importance of mainstreaming energy and access to energy into regional policy frameworks as well as at the national level was discussed widely during UN-Energy sessions in 2006. UNDP offered to lead on-going UN-Energy work to provide toolkits for improving energy access at the national level, and suggested expanding this work to include a facility for knowledge sharing and a platform for making expertise within UN-Energy available at the national level. It was agreed to produce the following products by CSD15:

- Toolkit for national policies (facilitated by UNDP)
- Critical aspects of bioenergy (facilitated by FAO)

Two UN-Energy publications were also developed during the year: "Assessing Policy Options for Increasing the Use of Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development: Modelling Energy Scenarios for Ghana and Sichuan Province of China" and "Energy in the United Nations: An Overview of UN-Energy Activities".

In 2007, UN-Energy members re-examined the substantive focus of UN-Energy and how it should approach energy issues. Members agreed to adopt a cluster approach involving a limited number of issues around which joint work programmes could be developed by the agencies involved, looking to strategic engagement over a foreseeable timetable. The three clusters: Energy Access (led by DESA and UNDP in partnership with WB), Energy Efficiency (led by UNIDO and IAEA), and Renewable Energy (led by FAO and UNEP with support from UNESCO) were created to focus on salient topics. To some extent, the cluster leaders were tasked with setting their own strategic objectives over the mid-term considering joint publications, interventions, dialogue, participation at conferences, workshops and other meetings, including focused interaction with non-UN actors. The adoption of the cluster approach marked an important milestone of UN-Energy

activity in the sense that it created more concrete focus areas for activity.

Another important activity undertaken by UN-Energy during the year was the commissioning of an external review of UN-Energy. The review highlighted the growing importance of the existence of a body like UN-Energy and identified a number of challenges that could be addressed by the members of UN-Energy with some urgency with a view to better position UN-Energy as a coordinating mechanism within the United Nations on energy issues: The review found that UN-Energy could benefit from: (a) a (sharper) vision statement, (b) the right governance structure, and (c) a clear thematic focus in its work. The review further proposed: (d) UN-Energy to move from an information sharing to a knowledge sharing network, and stated that (e) partnerships will be essential, both to enrich the work as well as the resources of UN-Energy.

In 2008 a draft UN-Energy work plan element on energy efficiency was discussed at length. UNIDO and IAEA jointly introduced a proposal to develop and disseminate a modelling tool that could enhance the assessment of the cost effectiveness of energy efficiency measures. Work in this regard is on-going.

The 2009 UN-Energy activity focused on distilling lessons learnt and a reflecting on the next steps necessary for the sustainable evolution of the mechanism. In meetings held at the end of 2009, the chair, Kandeh K. Yumkella, urged development of a more strategic approach for UN-Energy. He stressed that UN-Energy should be able to respond more quickly to requests from Member States and to give clear advice. He suggested that for increased information dissemination UN-Energy should make use of, and refine, the DESA database containing a list of available expertise. He further stressed that UN-Energy be more pro-active and provide leadership and direction to ensure a coherent response to the needs of the Member States. The emphasis in the evolution of UN-Energy should be on policy frameworks, guidelines, capacity-building and issues

related to the ramp-up of an energy transition. It was also decided that GEF would be invited to join UN-Energy along with the Regional Development Banks as means of increasing UN-Energy's reach "on the ground".

The UN-Energy/GEF strategic programme for West Africa warrants special attention. In line with the objective of the GEF, the activities carried out under GEF programme do not only provide technical solutions but are more specifically aimed at catalyzing private sector investments and partnerships to stimulate renewable energy markets in West Africa, and promote productive and income generation activities besides yielding significant local and global environmental benefits. The project aims to promote knowledge management in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency in West Africa and with international partner institutions. One cornerstone to ensure the information sharing and communication is the ECOWAS centre on Renewable Energy based in Cape Verde which was created with the support of UNIDO. This work is currently underway and is the best example of UN-Energy undertaking joint programming on a large scale.

UN-Energy has achieved much and produced a number of useful outputs since it began, yet there is still a clear sense that it hasn't reached its full potential. Some of the limitations are clear. At present less than half of the 21 members contribute and engage regularly. The network is entirely informal, participation is voluntary, and there are no regular reporting mechanisms or data sets. Most significantly, there are no full-time UN-Energy staff and the funding for the modest programme is primarily supported by UNIDO, the home agency of UN-Energy's chair. Members actively share their individual work plans and discuss work being undertaken under the auspices of individual agencies, but there is much less focus on discrete UN-Energy outputs. There is no clear work plan with defined deliverables or required commitments for each cluster group. It is also clear that there is not a shared understanding of what role UN-Energy should play and how much the disparate agencies, programmes, and funds of the United Nations desire a framework in which they must collaborate. At present there appears a general consensus on the requirement for greater coherence and external engagement, yet cautiousness in allowing this mechanism realize its full potential.

4 Precedent

To better understand the evolution of UN-Energy we consider various precedents and analogies in the United Nations system. Within the United Nations there are at least 23 different “mechanisms”⁵ whose role is to coordinate or enhance the actions of their member organizations. They vary enormously in size and level of formalized mandate and have emerged at different points in time and in different circumstances. Some act as implementing bodies with large levels of programme resources, some have the prime purpose of galvanizing action.

⁵See annex II for indicative list.

They all have a leadership figure, usually a chair, and some form of secretariat. (UN-Oceans has two separate secretariats, one for organizing and convening meetings, the other for implementing actions.) They often include task groups and some have measurable objectives. Most try to make decisions by consensus, though some have a voting mechanism to decide on their chair and to break any stalemates. Funding varies, there are mechanisms that have little or no financial resources, in others member organizations contribute to a common “pot” or have a donor funded trust fund or direct donor funding.

They have all been created to fulfil a perceived need, whether to address a global emergency (e.g. UNAIDS), to help facilitate a global programme of Action (e.g. Agenda 21, UN-Oceans) or to coordinate or promote specific tasks (e.g. UNEG, United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force). Some work just as an internal UN mechanism and others primary role is working with and engaging external stakeholders.

Some have their origins in General Assembly Resolutions (e.g. UNCCD—United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) others have been created by resolutions of the United Nations Economic and Social Board (e.g. UNAIDS, Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality) or come out from recommendations made by the High Level Committee on Programmes (e.g. UN-Oceans).

The central reason for their emergence stems from the history, structure and operating processes of the United Nations itself and the changing global context in which it operates. The permanent United Nations bodies (e.g. programmes, funds etc) were created with specific, often functional mandates; as times change, challenges or tasks emerge which cut across these mandates or require different mechanisms for engaging. Creating new permanent mechanisms is either not possible, too time consuming, or not desirable. Inter-agency cooperation if done effectively appears a much more nimble and appropriate response and provides for the possibility of a variety of

structures ranging from loose informal networks to more structured and formalized engagement.

Several evaluations or assessments of United Nations coordinating mechanisms have been undertaken⁶ (the text box below provides a summary of the UN-Water review). Their findings reflect the very different nature and size of these mechanisms but there are some generic conclusions. To be successful it appears that there are the following central requirements:

- A clear vision over the role the mechanism plays and what it is trying to achieve, in particular clear assessable goals
- Clear leadership
- Commitment and engagement from “members” towards the common purpose

There are also some common central management challenges:

- A lack of real consensus and a common approach between the central coordinating hub (secretariat) and members
- The nature of incentive structures within the United Nations system which are organization specific and mitigate against effective joint working

The United Nations is not alone amongst multi-lateral bodies in both having and assessing the value of collaborative mechanisms. A recent EU Evaluation⁷ outlined some significant factors required for effective coherence management:

- The need for any central unit to have a clear “formal” mandate accepted by all those being coordinated
- Clear and transparent decision-making structures
- Processes which allow for joint agenda setting

⁶For example: UNAIDS: Second Independent Evaluation 2002-2008, ITAD and HLSP; IOD’s assessment of UN-Water 2009, Evaluation of UNEG (2000)

⁷Evaluation Services of the European Union, 2007. Evaluating Coordination, complementarity and coherence in EU development policy: A synthesis.

Summary of the IOD UN-Water Review

The review of UN-Water examined the performance and impact of UN-Water against its mandate and objectives and suggested recommendations to ensure the continued sustainability and success of the mechanism.

The review concluded that the organization has a history of good leadership, and has recently increased its efficiency, and made its management and communications more effective. UN-Water, however, needs to achieve a consensus regarding its primary mandate, and establish adequate accountability mechanisms to ensure cohesion in delivery and outcomes. It must also increase its impact in order to retain a perception of relevance, which can be achieved through better coordinated and more flexible funding. It should furthermore strengthen its core governance mechanism and maintain its focus on coordination and not implementation.

The review recommended that:

- UN-Water should create a core team of 4-6 staff to support the chair, without revolving with it
- The Trust Fund should be managed by a neutral agency such as UN-Operations
- A framework of competencies for the chair and technical advisor should be clearly outlined
- The role and responsibilities of the different Task Forces should also be clarified
- The role of the Programme Advisory Board should be enhanced in order to strengthen the work of the programmes and align the outputs of these with the organization's mandate
- UN-Water must decide on priorities within its work plan, with a focus on country-level impact

UN-Water's management responded by taking steps to address the issues raised by the review.

- A requirement that the "mechanism" must involve more than just the exchange of information between members
- Clear division of tasks preferably where all those who are being "coordinated" have responsibility for at least one element of delivery
- They also recommend the role of the "central unit" should include monitoring and possibly standard setting, and evaluation and learning

Tsai⁸ writes about the notion of "coopetition" where units within organizations both need to cooperate with each other but also compete for

resources. Given the institutional context of the United Nations it is interesting that his research suggests this can be positive for collaboration and, perversely, it is those units who compete the most who most want to learn from each other. In this setting Tsai suggests that the central coordinating body must remain neutral for the "contradiction" of both competition and coordination to work, and that formal coordinating structures, effective social interaction and planned joint action must all be in place.

Kanter (1994) and Jackson et al. (2003) recommend that the central "organizational entity" needs to have independent resources and needs to develop high quality communication strategies to publicise the difference it is making (above and beyond the work undertaken by its members). It needs to have staff whose

⁸Tsai W., 2002. Social Structure of "Coopetition" within a Multiunit Organization: Coordination, Competition, and Intraorganizational Knowledge Sharing. *Organization Science*, vol. 13, No. 2.

professional identity becomes bound up with the success of the network and with job descriptions and performance targets that are related to network success. Bauer (2006)⁹ whose research focuses specifically on the role of central secretariats also comments on the need for staff working at the centre of a network or coordinating body to feel personally and professionally committed to their role, their work to be valued by members and for them to have “authority” bestowed on them by member agencies.

Bauer’s view is that coordinating hubs need to balance being both neutral and an active player who add both value and shapes the agenda it is helping to coordinate and make coherent. His view of what is required for a secretariat to be successful includes the following:

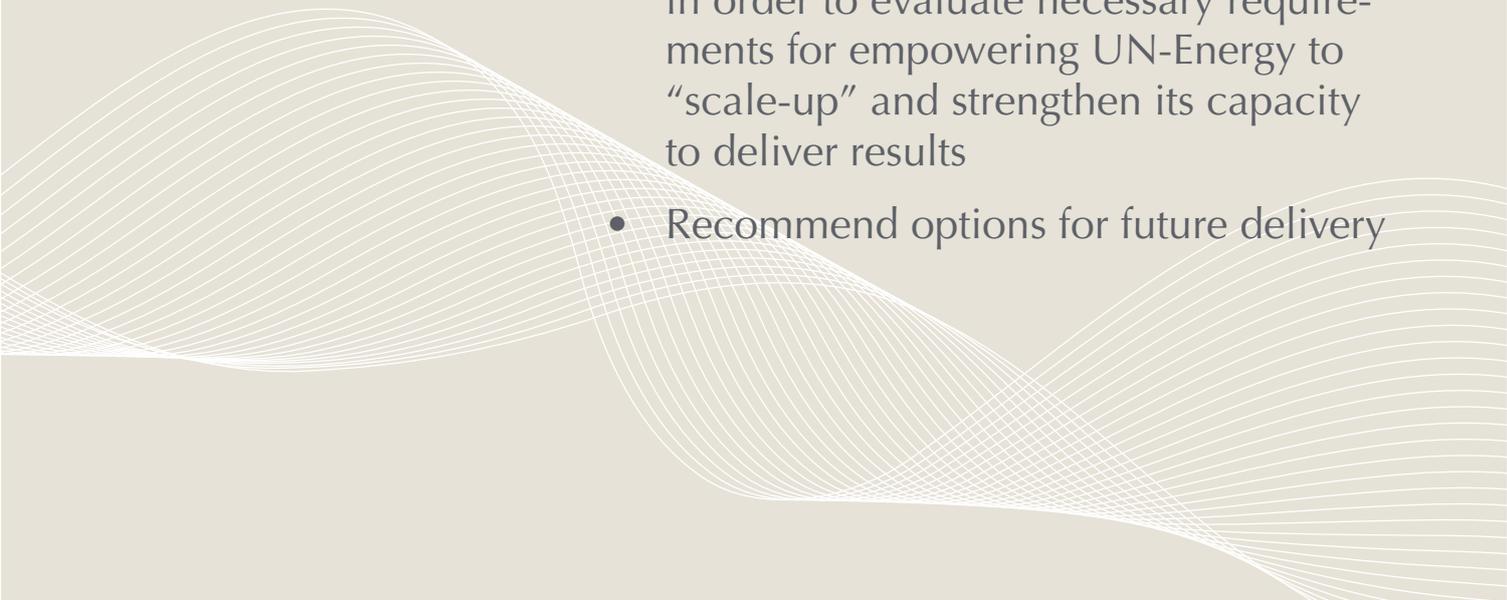
- Skilful and charismatic leadership—though this must be managed with careful diplomacy as the power of the leader may lead to perceived politicisation of their role and actions seen as too closely attached to their views or interests
- The need for both a “bureaucratic” and “legal” authority—a mandate is not enough there needs to be purposes, tasks, roles and outcomes which allow for a central hub to add value
- The need for credibility amongst secretariat staff—this might take the form of technical, administrative or procedural knowledge, or contacts, experience and engagement with organizations who can contribute to the shared purpose of members
- Being able to manage the complex web of relationships and individual and institutional egos. This means secretariat staff need high level relationship management and diplomacy skills, and sufficient professional knowledge to engage meaningfully in the technical discourse in which they are operating
- Because of the need to be both active and neutral the secretariat must develop its own culture independent of its component members

UN-Energy is, as all organizational forms are, unique; but it shares parallels in context, purpose and form both with other mechanisms within the United Nations system and with other coordinating bodies in different institutional environments. This review draws from an assessment both of UN-Energy within its rich United Nations and international energy contexts and from the lessons and frameworks used in different institutional environments

⁹Bauer S., 2006. Does Bureaucracy Really Matter? The Authority of Intergovernmental Treaty secretariats in Global Environmental Politics. *Global Environmental Politics*, vol. 6, No. 1.

5 Methodology

This review is based primarily on the views and perception of stakeholders and an assessment of available documentation. Its objectives were to:

- Review outcomes to date and undertake an organizational assessment of UN-Energy
 - Assess current and future needs in order to evaluate necessary requirements for empowering UN-Energy to “scale-up” and strengthen its capacity to deliver results
 - Recommend options for future delivery
- 

The timing of the review is well aligned with the delivery of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change (AGECC).¹⁰ Those recommendations contain items that may be attractive to be institutionally “embed” in UN-Energy, such as global targets, campaigns, and specific areas of public—private cooperation.

Assessing outcomes and impact

Assessing UN-Energy outcomes and impact is difficult because of the lack of specified indicators or clarity on what “success” would look like. As an entity UN-Energy's role is difficult to assess as its “results” involve influencing and shaping the actions primarily of others. Its overall objectives are to (a) promote coherence internally amongst United Nations member bodies; and (b) to promote and enhance interaction between United Nations bodies and external stakeholders. To assess outcomes, this review primarily considered two things: firstly examples where coherence and increased interaction has been achieved and secondly, process-based “indicators” where the evolution of UN-Energy as an example of a “coherence providing/coordinating body” is assessed against what might be considered necessary for an organization of its type. The basis for assessing “an organization of its type” draws from the analysis undertaken in the previous section accepting the unique characteristics, stage of development and current challenges facing UN-Energy.

In looking for examples of coherence and increased interaction we have taken suggested examples from UN-Energy's terms of reference as a starting point, these include evidence under coherence of:

- Increased examples of sharing of information, experiences and good practice
- More effective joint programming
- Action-oriented approaches to coordination

¹⁰Energy for Development: Towards a Sustainable Global Energy Future. Jointly organized by: UN-Energy and the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change. United Nations Headquarters, New York, 28 April 2010.

In assessing enhanced interaction we have looked for:

- A system-wide network open and being used by all
- Mechanisms and processes leading to increased meaningful engagement between UN-Energies members and external bodies

Impact normally refers to “change that has occurred because of a series of actions or interventions from a group or organization”. For a mechanism such as UN-Energy this is difficult, as to a degree direct impact is around changing the actions, behaviour and policies of United Nations bodies, rather than the results of those actions for recipient stakeholders. This review is not able to create a complex “impact or results chain” which can track how changes influenced by UN-Energy lead to results at a ground level; what it can do is assess impact based on a perception of whether UN-Energy has contributed at a global, regional or national level.

Running in parallel with this review has been a “backwards-looking stocktake” of UN-Energy and the work members do in the energy field. This review focused on understanding what has been achieved so far, as the basis for learning about future possible options and what is required to make them work.

Organizational assessment

In undertaking the organizational assessment, we used a systemic approach to reviewing UN-Energy. This method “deconstructs” the organization to key component parts and examines these parts both singularly and their interrelationships to one another. This approach, informed by the work for example of Lusthaus, et al. (2002),¹¹ seeks to assess the organization as a whole by first understanding the discrete functions and processes which guide its operation and then identify the required interactions and competencies for effective performance. A number of operational dimensions which form

¹¹Lusthaus, C.; Adrien, M.H.; Anderson, G.; Montalván, G.P., 2002. *Organisational Assessment: A Framework for Improving Performance*.

the basis for the structure of the organizational assessment:

- Leadership
- Governance and management structure
- Internal collaboration and coordination
- Financial and resource management
- Process management
- Capacity and resourcing

These are drawn from the Wilson-Grau and Nunez (2006)¹² framework used in the UN-Water review undertaken by IOD¹³ in 2009. These dimensions were developed from research which focuses on the properties and characteristics of “Social Change Networks”. In classifying social change networks Wilson-Grau and Nunez outline a series of functions performed by social change networks which both resonated and equated to elements of UN-Water’s role, these were:

- Managing knowledge
- Promoting dialogue
- Convening “members” and bringing in new parties
- Shaping global agendas
- Facilitating and coordinating actions
- Promoting shared values and standards
- Mobilizing and rationalizing the use of resources
- Strengthening international consciousness

They also outlined the characteristics and qualities that appear to underpin successful “social change networks”:

- **Participation**—the need for all members to actively both feel able to participate and to actually do so

- **Motivation**—member organizations had to both believe in the goal of the network and in the need for collaborative action to achieve results.
- **Usefulness**—the network and its central hub or secretariat had to add value and provide something to its members which it wouldn’t get if it wasn’t a member. This could vary from purely solidarity to an agenda or cause; access to resources, whether money or advice or access to others; forums for engagement.
- **Facilitation, coordination and cooperation**—skills within the network needed to go beyond technical understanding and communication of shared positions. Networks need to be able to facilitate, plan and advocate, and for members to allow themselves to be guided based on joint not individual agendas.

The main qualities identified are democracy, acceptance of diversity, dynamism and a performance focused culture. This review uses the Wilson-Grau framework as the basis for the organizational assessment, though also attempts to utilize other lessons and analysis drawn from the literature and frameworks introduced in chapter 4. In addition looks at some more fundamental questions faced by UN-Energy at this stage of its development. Initial feedback from inception stage interviews highlighted:

- The imprecise nature of UN-Energy’s mandate and terms of reference, and differing views as to its primary role
- The levels and equality of engagement and contribution to UN-Energy activities and processes
- The lack of full-time staff, budget or formal operating processes
- The informal nature of engagement or membership of UN-Energy
- Its lack of systematic engagement with external stakeholders

¹²Wilson-Grau R. and Nunez M., 2006. Evaluating International Social Change Networks: A Conceptual Framework for a Participatory Approach. *Development in Practice*, vol. 17, issue 2.

¹³International Organisation Development (IOD) Ltd.—A UK based Change Management and Performance Assessment consultancy-company.

- The different institutional context in particular the current opportunity to shape and develop UN-Energy given a growing understanding of Energy and the clear drive for more coherent action coming from the Secretary-General
- Different power relations between United Nations bodies in the field of energy compared to the field of water

Options for future delivery

In formulating options for the future we designed three possible future scenarios. These options are presented in narrative form to make them accessible and try to give readers a real sense of what they might “look like” if implemented. However, they are indicative and shouldn’t be seen as “stand alone” definitive proposals. In most cases, it is possible to “mix and match” from the different configurations and thus the options present a menu of sorts.

As an introduction to the options section we have tried to generate some key principles based on the organizational assessment undertaken which underpin why we have suggested certain aspects of the potential ways forward and what issues they are aiming to address.

Approaches

The review has used three main inquiry approaches:

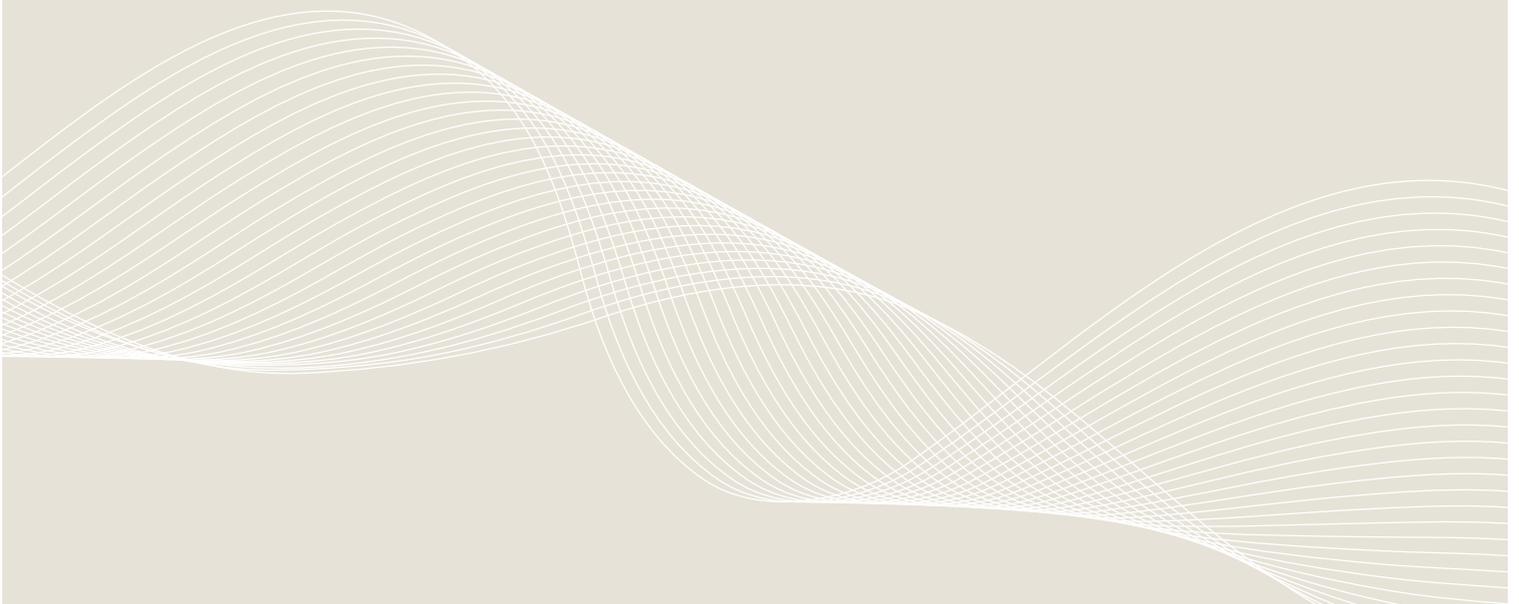
- **Desk review**—focusing initially on the literature relevant to UN-Energy in order to give a base understanding of what

UN-Energy is, its context and what it has been trying to achieve; and then broadening out to include other relevant research undertaken on similar organizational configurations in other contexts.

- **Interviews**—In addition to an introductory video-conference to UN-Energy members, 20 semi-structured interviews were undertaken. The spread of interviews across the United Nations is reasonably representative and was enriched by the insights from a few non United Nations stakeholders. The interview process focussed on five main areas, based on the objectives of this review:
 - What do you think UN-Energy’s role is within the United Nations system and within the field of Energy?
 - What do you think its role could/should be?
 - What do you think UN-Energy does well?
 - What do you think are its key challenges?
 - If UN-Energy is to successfully evolve what needs to happen and who needs to be involved?
- **Questionnaire**—This was designed to solicit views on what members and stakeholders value about UN-Energy, the impact of its work and the clarity, efficiency and effectiveness of its governance structure. The electronic questionnaire examined how respondents (13 responses) agreed or disagreed with statements around impact, effectiveness and sustainability of UN-Energy.

6 Review findings

This section is split into two parts: the first considers outcomes and impact, the second focuses on organizational assessment. The possible future scenarios and the rationale for them are included in a later section.



Outcomes and impact

It is important to reiterate that assessing outcomes needs to be contextualized within the accepted view that UN-Energy has not evolved as far as some stakeholders might have desired, but far enough for others. It is clear it can achieve more and there is sufficient excitement and commitment to make this happen. There are some examples though of outcomes achieved, not least the publications that have been produced and the participation in joint activities, meetings and fora over the past six years. Despite a distinct lack of centralized resources there are examples of outcomes that can illustrate both what UN-Energy can achieve and how it might go about scaling up activities.

Increased examples of sharing of information, experiences and good practice

As a means of initiating increased coherence and reflecting back who is doing what, the UN-Energy publication “Overview of Activities” (2006) was an important first step. Other UN mapping exercises such the *Trade Capacity Building—Inter-Agency Resource Guide* (2008) have similarly focused on looking to identify mandates, and United Nations institutional strengths and gaps in certain areas. There clearly needs to be a next step. Written documents in themselves do provide a way of accessing what others are doing but more interactive processes which allow discussion and time to reflect on lessons and share experiences are important. Given the global dispersed nature of the United Nations system and the variety of activities and energy areas, the most likely ways of doing this are through: facilitated meetings with reflective presentations on work undertaken, some form of annual or periodic event where this is done formally, or increased joint collaborative working including some “after action review” process which explicitly aims to pull out learning. One measure of effectiveness is likely to involve the number of members and potentially external stakeholders who are able to participate, plus a

willingness for members to openly reflect on both what they have done well plus what they might have done differently.

The ongoing Knowledge Network programme for UN-Energy is an excellent step in this direction. Indeed, such an undertaking will enhance the operational and delivery capacity of the inter-agency mechanism by expanding its knowledge base and introducing a smooth transition to a closer, unified UN-Energy with stronger collaboration among more professionals, both inside and outside the United Nations system. Internally, the Knowledge Network shall enable UN-Energy members to engage in efficient internal discussions and knowledge sharing activities at all working levels, drawing from each member’s comparative advantages. For external stakeholders, the Knowledge Network will help UN-Energy to become a key entry point (“one-stop-shop”) into the United Nations system’s work on energy.

More effective joint programming

There has been some joint programming undertaken. The clusters have involved some joint activity and the energy component of the GEF West Africa Programme and the energy modelling work in Ghana and China are examples where collaboration has improved programming. Still, there has to be a better rationale for joint working where it is clear what each party brings and gains from the arrangement. It also requires members to think ex-ante about collaboration when undertaking their own internal strategy development and programme planning. This may well be a significant challenge for some members, but does not preclude smaller groupings of members to emerge around specific themes or projects.

Action-oriented approaches to coordination

The three “cluster” programmes are perhaps the most obvious forms of coordination which have emerged from UN-Energy; however there is work to be done in institutionalizing processes and

providing support to describe in detail how they might work, who does what, and what they are trying to achieve. As an analogy, the UN-Water task groups, and the procedures which outline what members can expect from the secretariat and what is expected from them, could form the basis broadening engagement and participation amongst members. There are few examples of the UN-Energy secretariat actively coordinating, but at present the primary role of the secretariat is to organize meetings and video-conferences.

The current chair has clearly been an energetic and positive action-oriented force in convening discussions between members and also in attempts to engage external energy players. This has also improved the optics and “brand recognition” of UN-Energy. There is definitely room for UN-Energy to be both proactive as well as facilitative in looking for shared opportunities and suggesting ways in which members might collaborate. Interviewees and questionnaire respondents both felt that an initial step would be for the central coordinating hub (whether an enlarged secretariat, the advisers to the chair or a merged combination of the two) to focus on generating financial resources as the basis for both incentivizing members to work together and also illustrating the value it can provide.

A system-wide network open and being used by all

The current initiative to develop a “UN-Energy Knowledge Network” is a positive step to address an area where progress so far has been limited. Useful tools in this regard include:

- An up-to-date dynamic website with a calendar of events, newsletter and discussion forum
- Access to the publications of UN-Energy members and their ongoing initiatives
- Access to thematic experts who can provide support
- Online space for inter-agency collaboration and additional formal process “tools” which allow for easy knowledge sharing and communication

- An annual conference which moves beyond current video-conferencing arrangements and allows for focused time for all members to engage and develop their understanding and their relationships with other members

Meaningful engagement between UN-Energy members and external bodies

At present engagements between UN-Energy members and external bodies are mainly based on existing relationships. The chair has been effective in addressing this but relationships are still mainly based on informal ad hoc processes rather than through more structured processes. Examples have been given of where engagement has clearly enhanced outcomes, such as the Progress Review and Consultation Meeting held in Cotonou, Benin, on 16-19 February 2010 on the Energy Component of the GEF West Africa Programme.

The emerging knowledge platform should definitely play a key role in bringing external stakeholders in and it will be important that it is open and attractive to those needing assistance or partnership from the United Nations. Tools and guidance such as the: UN-Energy bioenergy framework document, the “Toolkit for national policies”, and the “Climate change and energy: guidance for decision makers” are examples of products which may help showcase what UN-Energy has to offer.

The key missing factor is resources—both financial and human. To ensure impact and influence, there clearly needs to be incentives for meaningful engagement. The “central hub” of UN-Energy needs to have sufficient staff and time to proactively reach out to possible partners and to formulate ways by which engagement can move beyond being either opportunistic or based on existing relationships. From the perspective of “outsiders” UN-Energy needs to have a clear message as to what its role is and how it adds value. There are different approaches that can be taken to increasing external engagement based on how far members wish partners to be brought

into UN-Energy itself. At a minimum, meetings should likely include external observers and that external partners could add value to existing clusters or new work streams. Those main stakeholders can be categorized into (at least) four groups: developed country governments who may act as donors, developing country governments who may seek either direct contact from UN-Energy or require an entry into the wider United Nations system, the private sector, and internal United Nations colleagues.

Impact

The main outputs from UN-Energy have so far been the publications produced. Members feel that these have had impact and have influenced debate as well as some policy and programmatic activity. Other examples of activities which are felt to have had impact include:

- Work on biofuels—this is an example of where UN-Energy has been able to convey a common United Nations position and approach from its members
- Training workshops for capacity-building in energy analysis at a national and local level—these have illustrated value added for external partners
- The exchange of information and concrete cooperation activities and projects in the field of financing energy efficiency investments for climate change—this showed how UN-Energy can enhance action through bringing in technical expertise

Being able to create and communicate impact both within the United Nations and between members and external partners is essential if UN-Energy is going to develop. Without this evidence of added-value, members are not going to commit time to meaningfully participate and donors or external partners are not going to engage or provide resources. A starting point needs to be a clear plan with objectives which includes indicators of impact. These indicators need to be framed around internal UN-Energy goals which evidence increased collaboration

and external changes where UN-Energy can aim to play a meaningful contributing part. One way of organizing this would be to look explicitly at what levels UN-Energy wants to engage, for example global, regional or national. Monitoring processes need to be established to help assess whether UN-Energy is on track. Again, all of this relies on a well resourced and functioning central hub.

Organizational assessment

UN-Energy is a difficult “organization” to assess. An underpinning issue which runs through the analysis is the problem of power and authority. What differentiates these organizational forms from other more conventional types is the need to bring together, catalyse, galvanize, “herd”, incentivize, and/or coordinate with little control or hierarchical authority. Network hubs need to “earn” the right to coordinate; yet often lack the human and financial resources to kick start the any “added value” initial momentum. Without those initial quick wins, members become more cautious in the “authority” they are willing to bestow which in turn prevents the continued growth of the coordinating mechanism.

An “external” mandate or framework would be useful. Energy is at the forefront of the international agenda and the AGECC report and the “Energy for Development” meeting are clear opportunities for a clear policy direction that includes a designated role for UN-Energy. Likewise there are bodies such as the G8 and G20 that, in their various communications, could empower a body like UN-Energy with a specific task. However, the energy field is complex and within UN-Energy’s members there are still wide ranging views on what is important and which interventions and activities are appropriate to meet the global challenges. UN-Energy and its “centre” also need its members to allow it to fulfil a coherence role, as research suggests that mandates and formal structures are not enough and neither is inspirational leadership. There is a need for more transparency over differences, the development of greater trust and an acceptance that all parties

may have to change their attitudes and behaviour if UN-Energy is to reach its potential.

This assessment focuses on several operational dimensions, but first briefly looks at two more fundamental issues, namely: the role of UN-Energy and the commitment required for it to be successful.

The role of UN-Energy

What UN-Energy should actually do and to what degree it should actively facilitate or shape coherence and collective engagement is central. There are vastly varying views particularly from those inside and outside the United Nations.

The United Nations has a unique structure and history. Given this background it is clear that any definition of role needs to achieve certain goals. It needs to excite and energize members by clearly illustrating how it adds value to them both individually and collectively; but be politically sensitive enough for members to clearly accept their interdependence without compromising their own individual identities. For non United Nations stakeholders it has to act as an entry point for working with the United Nations on specified energy issues. There must be a clear sense of the additional benefit of working with a collective rather than approaching an individual agency.

Commitment

Members' current participation and championing of UN-Energy is patchy. Some members do not see UN-Energy as adding sufficient value to global energy issues, so there is little incentive to advocate on its behalf.

In order for UN-Energy's members to participate in and contribute to its success, increased effort should be made for greater advocacy on behalf of UN-Energy. This may become formalized in the development of a code of conduct for members. However a strengthened secretariat could have this as a distinct role, with a clear targeted plan and series of activity.

UN-Energy suffers from a limited external support base. Although the UN Foundation is pushing for a more important role for UN-Energy and providing funding, much more backing from external stakeholders is needed—this might usefully come from the private sector.

A committed UN-Energy “support club” needs to be developed that would push the materialization of a single, united network that works together efficiently and coherently. It would serve to illustrate what UN-Energy can and does achieve. Resources would be needed to create and maintain the momentum resulting from these efforts.

Leadership

Its terms of reference outline what it is attempting to achieve but do not make explicit what the role of the mechanism is, how it should undertake it or what success looks like. “Energy” itself is a hugely broad and ill-defined area and UN bodies have very different views on what they should be doing and are therefore wary of being coordinated. These issues together do not support or engender sufficient trust amongst members for them to truly collaborate on one way forward. The forthcoming recommendations from the AGECC may provide a significant opportunity for UN-Energy in defining its strategic direction.

The current chair is providing significant leadership and direction and this is an important strength. In essence, he will be a hard act to follow especially given his role as head of an agency as well as his drive and commitment within the energy area. This also poses a potential threat for the future of UN-Energy. As outlined in chapter 4 there is also a danger of over associating UN-Energy with its chair and his/her values and interest.

Effective succession planning for the chair is fundamental for the sustainability and stability of UN-Energy. In addition, clear terms of reference or job description should be drafted, identifying knowledge, competence and influence required. This is necessary for the role to maintain established credibility. Depending on

the scope of UN-Energy in the future the amount of time required may also need to be reviewed. Other coordinating mechanisms have full-time directors. If this type of model were employed, the leadership structure itself will need to be reviewed and alternatives mapped out.

Secretariat, technical advisor/ support to the chair

There needs to be one body whose principal function is to coordinate and drive the work of UN-Energy. Currently, the secretariat's formal role and relationship to the chairs' support team are unclear. There are a variety of ways by which a single central hub may be staffed and managed including clear terms of reference and/or job descriptions, with lines of accountability.

Furthermore, given a clear mandate, the secretariat must develop the capacity to undertake the roles mandated to it. This will necessitate more resources, as well as the ability to better liaise with members, provide technical advice, undertake analysis, and engage with external stakeholders. Under this scenario, the secretariat must have more than just an administrative function, and so needs to be a proactive leader in its own right both in maintaining the unity and momentum of the UN-Energy and shaping the agenda of its work and its relationship with other stakeholders.

Governance structures and management

The current terms of reference for UN-Energy may be a significant barrier to the success of the organization—reflecting on them might offer a large opportunity. There needs to be further work undertaken on the role of the vice chair and some accountability amongst different members to establish the boundaries of authority UN-Energy has. UN-Water has a clear outline of who is responsible for what as does UN-Oceans. These may be useful reference points for further development.

For UN-Energy to move forward, the first step is to revise the terms of reference. This should be a collective effort involving all 21 agencies. The terms of references should establish objectives, state the roles and responsibilities of members, define the role of the chair, determine the resources required to achieve the objectives, various innovative ways to secure these resources, and create a decision-making mechanism. In addition, specific terms of reference should be created for the secretariat team, perhaps including a technical advisor.

The development of a mechanism to engage UN-Energy at country and regional levels is also essential. This will require some thought and mechanisms through which UN-Energy and its members engage in particular with country teams and United Nations resident coordinators. The presence of regional United Nations bodies as UN-Energy members should mean this is less problematic and it may be that the route to country engagement is through regional contact. Whatever approach is adopted, it is important for UN-Energy to not just engage at a global level but to add value to United Nations Member States (in particular LDC's) in its core areas.

Overall, the structure of the organization should both define its objectives and direction on the one hand, and determine the way to achieve these on the other.

Financial and resource management

UN-Energy does not generate sufficient resources to evolve. This is why there are no clear, strong financial and resource management systems. This is a significant obstacle to the effective collaboration and coordination of UN-Energy's work. The development of clear budgets, work plans and resource requirements would be a straightforward and necessary first step. There is also a need for a clear financial "home" which needs to be part of a revised governance and management system. Experience, and the literature, suggest that the "central hub" needs its

own resources to maintain its neutrality and to allow it to be responsive to the requests of external stakeholders. This independence is also a potential “carrot” to incentivize coherent participation and to assist in ensuring system wide coherence.

UN-Energy should design a clear plan of what needs to be done to attract resources. This involves both specific processes and people (e.g. secretariat, external stakeholders, etc). There are numerous financing models that might be then applied. These include everything from: sharing costs between United Nations members, to allocating a small amount from joint activities to UN-Energy, to getting fees for service, to bringing in private sector funders. The model used by UN-Water is also an attractive option. It might be important to ensure it is designed to ensure multiple donors in order to ensure both real and perceived neutrality.

Capacity and resourcing

The United Nations commits a large, and growing, amount of resources to the energy area. If UN-Energy is going to have a more meaningful presence and play a greater coordinating role then it needs to ensure it has the requisite ability and capacity to add value and provide credible support. There are a number of models which may be followed but they all require a clear vision of what UN-Energy is there to do. Internal secondments might be possible, as could a combination of permanently employed staff and a database of available technical experts. Depending on the long-term plan, UN-Energy could become an attractive place to work within the United Nations system.

Process management, planning and implementation

At present, UN-Energy meetings are held virtually or in the margins of other sessions. On the one hand this is cost effective and reduces unnecessary travel, but it appears insufficient to effectively galvanize the work and operations of the mechanism given its current stage of evolution.

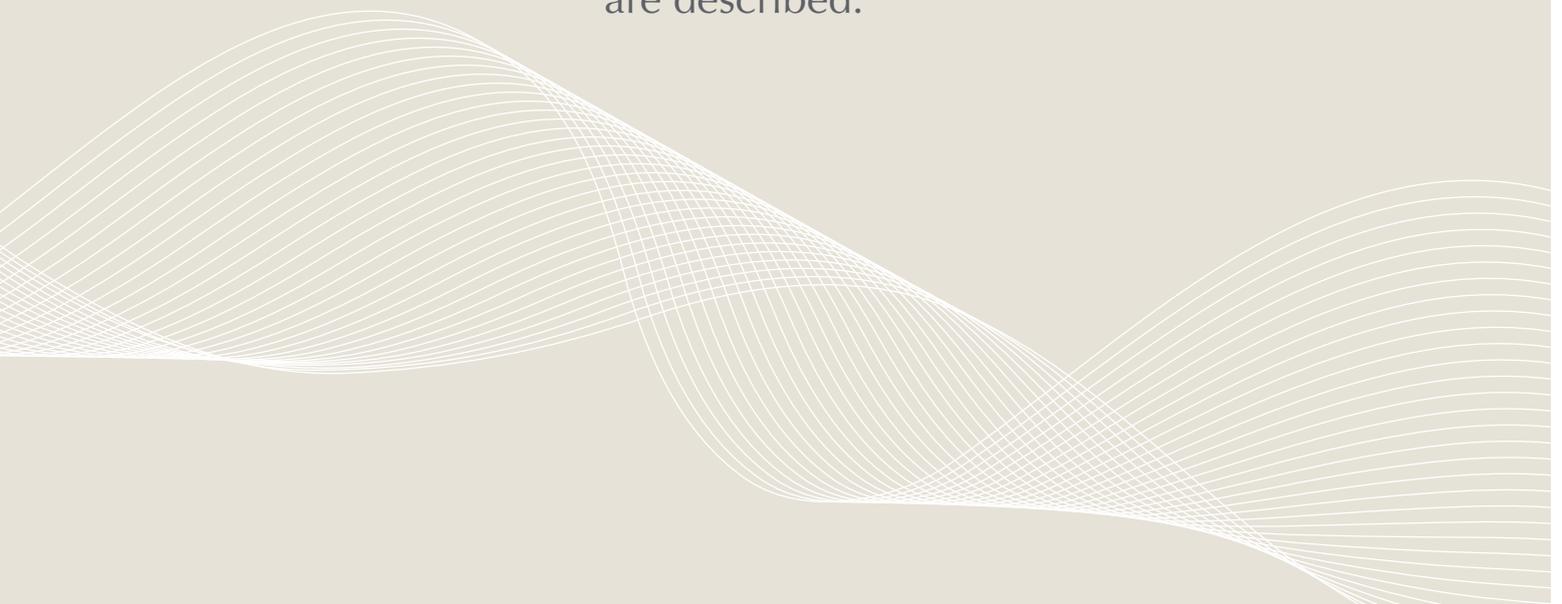
Cluster activities seem to be planned based primarily around the work approaches of member agencies. This is understandable but might appear to those less involved as a barrier to greater engagement. It may be useful to consider some form of collaborative guidelines as to how operational activities are managed, or it might be helpful if clusters themselves produced some feedback as to what worked well in their collaboration and why.

UN-Energy’s planning and implementation must aim to strike a balance between necessary bureaucracy whilst maintaining enough flexibility to be responsive and accountable. Virtually all respondents felt that a comprehensive work-plan allied with more formal processes for engagement was important. The Knowledge Platform should also assist in helping to provide other clear ways of engaging and opening up new ways of bringing in external stakeholders.

One of the interviewees stressed that one of the major areas of value as a long standing member of UN-Energy has been the social interaction and build up of personal relationships with key staff members from other agencies. This should not be underestimated and though potentially difficult to “manage”, it is important to think about how opportunities for interpersonal informal engagement can be fostered and supported.

7 Possible future scenarios

This report does not make any firm recommendations about any one “best way” forward for UN-Energy. Instead, we identify possible scenarios which differ primarily in terms of the role UN-Energy should play, its scope, the level of authority and mandate it has and the required resources. Three short-term (actionable in a 1-3 year time horizon) scenarios with associated options are described.



The scenarios have several central themes in common:

- A need for a joint review by all UN-Energy members of its terms of reference
- The roles, responsibilities and competencies required for a central secretariat, the chair and members needs to be clearly articulated
- A resourced workplan/strategy needs to be formulated with clear goals, resources and indicators for success
- Engagement between members needs to be both virtual and in person so there is at least one full meeting annually

There are also some principles drawn from the review of what is considered helpful in making coordinating/collaborative mechanisms successful:

- A central secretariat needs to have a clear role which adds value above and beyond facilitating the activities of members. It needs to have credibility and be able to get things done
- A network must provide something its members cannot get unless they collaborate—this might be resources, technical advice, access to others, or personal support

- Formal mandates and structures and processes are important but they are not sufficient; interpersonal relationships, trust and honest participation are sometimes even more valuable
- Members will always be different—that is why networks or coherence mechanisms add value—but this difference needs to be acknowledged and managed. “Networks” work if they acknowledge both interdependence and independence.
- Participation and usefulness are useful indicators of how successful coherence building has been. Having clear decision making processes supports this and at least some element of open democracy is essential

The scenarios are presented as “internally consistent” narratives. However, essentially what they present is a menu of increasingly bold options in terms of scale, scope and remit. In other words, they are not discrete options and all the individual elements could be combined in different ways. It is also feasible to consider the options in terms of an incremental evolution. In any case, the options do not define an end point, but rather short-term pathways. They all indicate a scale-up of current activities—the last one moving to a 10-20 x increase in funding.

Scenario 1: Collaborative Knowledge Network

This model has UN-Energy remaining a loose network but with a stronger secretariat and knowledge management function. The secretariat needs to involve a small number of full-time staff that have clear roles and responsibilities in key agreed areas, though secondees from members could be considered. There is a continued link with New York (so a member of the secretariat would be based there) but the “home” should be based around the chair.

It requires a transparent workplan for the clusters (or other vehicle for joint working) with required resources and expected outcomes and impact, including at national level. Participation in these clusters remains voluntary and is likely to still be based on members primarily raising required resources. A programme budget for UN-Energy should exist but its key role should be to support those members who do not have the finances or personnel to do things in line with the UN-Energy workplan and only be made available for activities which involve joint-working. The chair should still rotate, and be democratically voted upon, but there needs to be clear acceptance of what competencies and influence are required for the role. It requires a high profile figure who has influence and credibility in this arena. The workplan should be approved annually by members and reviewed every six months preferably in face-to-face meetings. It is recommended that external observers sit in on these meetings.

There will need to be an increased annual budget—likely to be \$2-3 million. This amount will need to cover costs of approximately 3-5 staff, a small collaborative activity fund, and funds for conferences and travel to develop

external relationships and ensure member participation in meetings. A multi-donor trust fund could be established and managed by the secretariat and be set up based on the work plan budget. External relationship management will primarily be the responsibility of the secretariat who would need to both work for and where necessary represent UN-Energy. A clear mechanism by which technical expertise and energy advice is available to country United Nations teams needs to be established with different strategies for different country contexts.

The secretariat needs to include a dedicated knowledge manager to work with members to ensure the newly developed knowledge platform is up to date and that a publication outlining who does what and their areas of expertise is updated annually. They will also develop and keep a database of technical professionals (internal staff or external consultants) who might assist external partners, such as Member States, and the private sector; and a set of assessment and capacity-building tools and processes which might be of assistance. Expert technical advice on energy related areas should primarily come to the chair though the secretariat will also need to have high level engagement with both the Secretary-General and the CEB internally but also with key external players such as national governments and heads of private sector organizations. The initiation or enhancement of UN-Energy should be accompanied by an endorsement from the High Level Committee for Programmes and a re-branding and re-launch both internally and externally. Endorsement from an external body such as the G20 would be useful but maybe not essential.

Scenario 2: UN-Energy Coherence and Advisory Coalition

This model proposes a bolder approach to the future of UN-Energy with the creation of an additional advisory board to capitalize on the emerging consensus on key energy issues and to provide increased external advocacy and involvement in United Nations work in the energy area. This board should be made up to of around 10 influential figures in the energy area that bring a cross-section of expertise, political access and practical experience to the area. They should be supported by the secretariat which will need to be expanded in part to manage this additional responsibility. Their role is to develop engagement in particular with national governments but also facilitate partnerships and programmes between governments, donors, private sector and United Nations agencies. They might also help to develop “knowledge products” around “lesson learning”, financing mechanisms and energy assessment tools and approaches.

It is envisaged that this board would be created by the Secretary-General and endorsed by the CEB. For it to work there needs to be an agreed “United Nations way forward”. This would include greater integration between energy objectives and MDG targets (or future targets). For this change to happen successfully members of UN-Energy will have to spend time undertaking joint planning processes to enhance coherence and share lessons, though there would be no attempt to manage agency programmes or initiatives through UN-Energy.

The UN-Energy annual budget should, in this case, be expanded to around \$5-7 million to cover an enlarged secretariat (probably 6-8 staff) and increased travel and meeting costs. It is also envisaged that UN-Energy would expand the proactive nature of its work on the back of the advocacy work undertaken by the advisory board. The secretariat would need to include the requisite technical expertise to undertake energy assessments at national level and provide on-the-ground support to United Nations

Member State governments and/or UN-country teams on energy programme design and monitoring and evaluation where required. The knowledge management function envisaged in Scenario 1 would be expanded and the secretariat would play a more proactive role in working with agencies and member governments to generate lessons learnt and document new innovations.

An expanded programme budget would be made available to members who undertake joint “catalytic” activities in line within an agreed work plan. This would be additional to the funding to support the secretariat. There would be an expectation that members would make a small contribution to this fund but that primarily it would be an enlarged version of the multi-trust fund suggested for Scenario 1. The criteria for catalytic activities would need to be clearly laid out, but they might include pilot programmes for innovative technologies, or capacity-building in institutions which could lead to impact which can be scaled up.

In this option UN-Energy should look to develop an institutionalized monitoring and evaluation role and develop common indicators which might be applied across agencies. This should cover UN-Energy workplan activities but also aim to map on the activities of all United Nations agencies in the energy area so that United Nations impact in this area can be monitored, lessons learnt and coherent planning and programme design undertaken. This could also be expanded to monitor and report on global “energy for development” related targets or goals.

This option requires a revised, documented governance framework and clear endorsement from the CEB and/or the High Level Committee for Programmes. The advisory board could report to the Secretary-General and to the chair of UN-Energy (though one configuration could include the chair being part of the advisory board).

Scenario 3: Global Energy Platform

This option suggests a considerably more substantial UN-Energy and one which includes involvement and support from United Nations Member States. In this model UN-Energy's role changes quite dramatically as it becomes a vehicle for both coordinating United Nations activities but also has greater oversight over activities in a defined area and more explicitly looks to assist in global coordination amongst Member States, the private sector and other energy stakeholders. For it to be successful it is likely to require either a General Assembly resolution or a resolution from the United Nations Economic and Social Board. It will also need to be endorsed by influential external partners such as the G8, the G20, the Group of 77 and representatives from the private sector.

In this scenario UN-Energy is given a mandate to take a lead role in the strategic development of a workplan in a clearly defined but narrow number of areas. It will require a considerable programme budget in the region of \$15-20 million. Member agencies will therefore need to agree to relinquish some oversight in the development of their work in those specific areas in order to create this unified workplan. In this option members become "sponsors" of UN-Energy. With UN-Energy having greater weight and global presence it is expected that members will benefit by increased investment

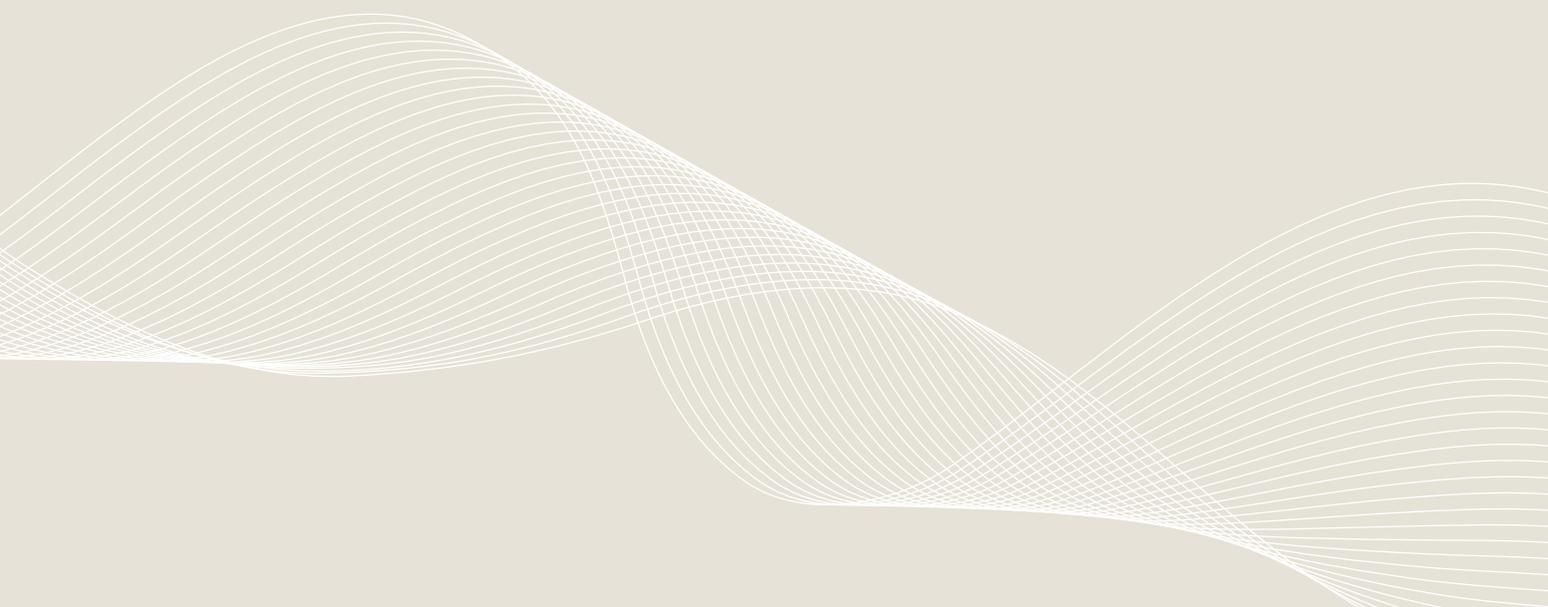
from an enlarged trust fund in these areas as well as recognition of supporting a more explicitly joined up approach.

It will require UN-Energy to have a bigger staff base, likely over 20, and it is suggested that a considerable number of secondments would be required from sponsors as well as external appointments. To encourage and support a global effort an additional "Global Energy Assembly" will be created which would include representatives from national governments and other stakeholder groups. Their role (likely to be based on a voting system weighted towards national States) will be to approve the annual workplan and they will also vote in a "management committee" to sign off the annual report. Members (or sponsors) of UN-Energy would become the "board" and need to appoint a chief executive or director, who would then have responsibility for delivering against agreed objectives. The secretariat, managed by the chief executive would become independent of an individual agency. The chair would now play primarily an advocacy role but would chair the Global Assembly and the board.

Engagement with non-UN stakeholders would be facilitated by the CEO and the secretariat and it is hoped would become far more substantive and strategic.

8 Looking forward

UN-Energy is at a crossroads—energy has emerged as a key priority for governments, businesses, and civil society around the world. The United Nations has the opportunity to help shape the global discussion, provide thought leadership, and implement concrete solutions.



There is no global energy agency. While the institutional space has strong players such as the International Energy Agency (IEA), as well as the nascent International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the evolution of UN-Energy could provide powerful synergies and add further value to these organizations.

Several options were presented that outline the type of new roles that an evolving UN-Energy could take on. Those might include:

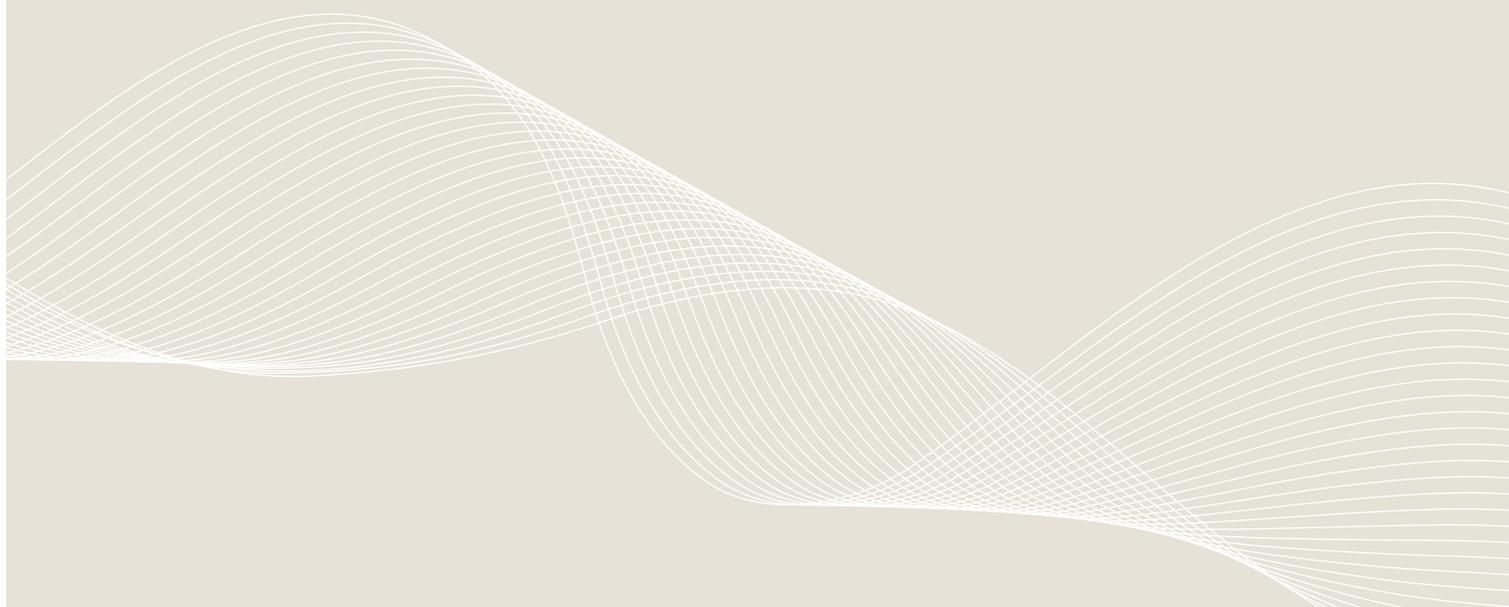
- Monitoring and reporting on global targets/goals
- Providing a “one-stop-shop” for various stakeholders, including the private sector, into the work of the United Nations in the energy sector
- Coordinating and augmenting existing capacity development infrastructure
- Helping to ensure coherence between the goals of the UNFCCC, MDGs, and energy access

- Acting as a source of experts support for development of national energy development plans and policies

The United Nations has taken the issue of energy seriously and has dedicated significant resources towards moving the world onto a sustainable energy pathway. That engagement is only growing. This makes the need for a strong, coherent, and effective inter-agency mechanism even more necessary. If we sharpen the vision for UN-Energy it could be an impartial and influential group that can do much more than influencing a global “conceptual” agenda. It can and should provide advice and guidance on the energy work of the United Nations and the multilateral system more broadly speaking (including the development banks). By configuring UN-Energy better, it can support new steps towards greater “energy synergy” in the United Nations, and also establish parameters for more effective and forward-looking resource mobilization.

This review has provided some criticism and options for consideration by the United Nations, its Member States, and external stakeholders. The first steps seem clear, and the timing appears right for an evolution.

Annexes



Annex I: List of UN-Energy members

CEB: United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination Secretariat

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

GEF: Global Environment Facility

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UN DESA: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNESCAP: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UNESCWA: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNECE: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

UNECLAC: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNHABITAT: United Nations Human Settlements Programme

UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UN-INSTRAW: United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

WB: World Bank

WHO: World Health Organization

WMO: World Meteorological Organization

Annex II: List of United Nations coordinating/coherence enhancing bodies

- United Nations Development Group and subsidiary bodies
- UNCT/RC System/CCA/UNDAF
- United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force
- United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)
- United Nations Communications Group (UNCG)
- United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANGWE)
- UN-Water
- UN-Energy
- UN-Oceans
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- EDUCAIDS: The Global Initiative on Education and HIV/AIDS
- Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC—humanitarian assistance)
- High-Level Group and Working Group on Education for All
- World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)
- Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)
- UNDG Multi Donor Trust Fund for Iraq
- Interagency Consultative Group on Secondary Education Reform and Youth Affairs
- Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)
- Focusing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH)
- Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART)
- UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
- Secretariat to the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol—“the Ozone Secretariat”

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