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Keynote: Multi-Level Low Carbon, Green Energy Future

***Volunteering Partnership Solutions
towards a Green Future for All***

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Venue and format: Hotel Koenigshof, Adenauerallee 9, 53111 Bonn| Keynote Speech (approx. 10 minutes)

Expected participants: max. 180

Your excellencies, Dear Ambassador Park, Dear Counsel General Keum, Minister-Counsellor Dr. Oh, Dr. Sach and Professor Dr. Pinkwart. Colleagues. Ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for the honour of having been invited to speak at the Global Renewable Energy Forum 2017 – it is a pleasure for me to be here.

I would like to acknowledge the Republic of Korea for its leadership in renewable energy –evidenced through its outstanding role in climate action. Additionally – for the

second year in a row – the Korea-Bonn Embassy has organized and spearheaded this meeting to engage climate action thinkers around solutions.

I would also like to thank the UNFCCC; the German Federal Environment Ministry; and, the North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry of Economic Affairs, Innovation, Digitalization and Energy – all of which are innovation hubs for creating a sustainable future for all and of course their great leadership in making COP23 happen, and hosting the UN in this beautiful city of Bonn.

The Paris climate agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals have signalled clearly that the future of energy is renewables - not only to curb emissions but also to provide clean affordable energy to all.

Energy solutions that allow both environmental protection and socio-economic opportunities are key for sustainable development. And just as overcoming climate change will be a testing collective action, transforming

our energy models will also be a challenge. To be successful in both, our actions must transcend boundaries of countries, institutions, and be cross-sectional.

This Forum should be a catalyst for that success –connecting public and private sector expertise around green energy solutions for sustainable development.

As you have heard from the Korean Government, they recognize that addressing climate change is not a burden – but in fact, is an opportunity to create future drivers of growth. As such, Korea has not only taken the lead in coordinating this Forum, but also is a role model in its climate ambition.

In June 2017, the new administration, led by President Moon Jae-in, announced that it would shut down ten existing coal-fired plants, build no new ones and not seek to extend the life of its nuclear plants.

President Moon also wants to increase the share of renewable electricity generation in 2030 to 20 per cent, building on the 10 per cent share by 2024 currently targeted by the renewable portfolio standard. If implemented, these announcements would lead to emission reductions of around 69 to 84 MtCO₂e moving South Korea close to their NDC target level to be achieved domestically.

And by 2030 – the government has committed to reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions by 37 per cent of the current level.

The municipality of Seoul, under the leadership of Mayor Park, is a key actor in these efforts. Korea is also showing its global commitment by hosting the Green Climate Fund and the Global Green Growth Institute.

Now you may be asking yourself: What does the United Nations Volunteers Programme have to do with Korea and green energy?

The first reason why I am speaking here today is that UNV advocates for the importance of volunteerism in development and peace worldwide. We have a longstanding partnership with Korea that has led to the mobilization of Korean UN Volunteers to work on green programmes for sustainable development.

The UN Volunteers have diverse profiles allowing them to support UN programming across the global renewable energy agenda. They are experts in areas such as energy access, technology transfer, biomass and solar energy.

In addition, UNV and Korea are working to create the Green Innovation Alliance: Breaking New Grounds for Volunteerism in the Renewable Energy Sector.

The aim of the Alliance is to create synergies around renewable energy solutions, and to enhance the resili-

ence of communities toward climate change. The Alliance will use volunteerism to help build the necessary momentum for the socio-economic transition toward low-carbon growth.

Through the Alliance, UNV will connect renewable energy stakeholders in the public, private and civil sectors – providing a link between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and international cooperation. UN Volunteers will be sponsored by companies and placed in support of ongoing (or planned) UN renewable energy projects – allowing for the achievement of CSR and other targets.

Minister-Counsellor Dr. Oh will elaborate further about the Alliance in the final session today, but I wanted to be sure to mention this important partnership initiative.

The Second reason for UNV's engagement in this forum is the fact that the global environmental movement started with volunteerism – and through volunteerism,



the momentum to tackle climate change continues to be built.

Through national and international UN Volunteer assignments for university students, youth and experts – as well as through volunteer schemes and projects – UN Volunteers help achieve the global and national policies on climate and energy. They also work across agencies to support sustainability, and help build capacity for environmentally friendly development.

As I speak, UN Volunteers are assigned across the UN and around the world to help ease the pressures of climate change on people and on the planet. In 2016, 6,590 UN Volunteers contributed to different aspects of the sustainable development agenda in 126 countries.

Let me give you one example:

One of these UN Volunteers is Sung-gil Lee – a Korean Environment Specialist who works with the UN Development Programme in Timor-Leste. In collaboration

with local authorities, Sung-gil and his team distribute fuel-efficient cook stoves while promoting the use of bio-briquettes made of wastepaper, coffee husks, and organic residue. This community-led, locally adopted rural energy solutions supports sustainable development.

The third reason UNV is associated to today's event is that volunteerism has not yet been fully recognized as a potential driver of social transformation for a green future for all.

Volunteerism promotes long-term processes that encourage empowerment at the grassroots-level and change in attitudes. It opens pathways for greater participation of people in the environmental sustainability of their communities. Let me give you a few examples from around the world that shows how people unite for climate action:

- Thousands of scientists contribute voluntarily to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the leading international body for the assessment of climate change that also informs changes in energy policies.
- When natural disasters threaten people, businesses and infrastructure, community volunteers are often the first responders.
- And volunteers mobilize communities, facilitate participation, promote public- civil partnerships and serve as conveyors of knowledge.

Volunteering maximizes opportunities for the people most affected by climate change to actively participate in achieving sustainable solutions.

By fostering south-south exchange and empowering people to act for the climate, volunteerism builds the

networks and learning needed for transformational change.

With over 80 per cent of our volunteers coming from the Global South, UNV promotes the transfer of knowledge and capacity among countries that face similar challenges.

In the spirit of “leaving no one behind”, the UNV Online Volunteering platform enables people with reduced mobility to contribute to sustainable development worldwide. Online Volunteers fulfil roles such as supporting data collection and communications campaigns to promote sustainable production and consumption, including for the private sector.

But no sector or organization can tackle the challenges we face on climate and energy alone. Given the magnitude of the required transformation of economies and societies for a green future, governments and the UN cannot do it alone.

It needs all of you: the public and private sector, academia and civil society.

While frameworks negotiated at Conference of Parties are global, progress on climate action and green energy will have to be measured at the local-level. Collective action and an all-society approach are required for combatting climate change.

Volunteerism enhances the scale, reach and impact of energy and climate policies by mobilizing the critical mass needed to put ambitious targets into action. It is a means to build capacities, ownership and connections between local communities, national authorities, businesses, civil society and the global climate agenda.

Protecting the planet while overcoming poverty requires new way of living, governing, producing and consuming. It needs partnerships and exchanges that overcome the divides of sectors, institutions and countries.

The Global Renewable Energy Forum connects the capacities and expertise of a diverse group organizations and backgrounds to drive partnerships for ambitious, measurable results.

I share the excitement that the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change – my colleague Patricia Espinosa – expressed in the COP23 opening about the search for solutions that apply to our practical lives. I am convinced that this Forum will be part of shaping partnership solutions towards a green future for all.

Thank you very much.