



New york electric grid cambodia

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Less than eight years are left to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Noticing much of the world was behind schedule, the world leaders met two years ago at the United Nations in New York, and called for a "Decade of Action," pledging to mobilize financing, enhance national implementation and strengthen institutions to achieve the Goals by the target date of 2030

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is responding to the call. Its strategic plan 2022-25 includes a bold commitment to support 500 million people globally with access to clean energy by 2025 "leaving no one behind". More donors and development partners are needed to support this momentum and promote an approach that ensures affordable and reliable energy access:

Work closely with local NGOs and institutions who are familiar with off-grid communities to help win the trust of communities and understand the socio-economic landscape. Local NGOs and institutions play an important role in the productive applications of energy and livelihoods improvement. UNDP partnered with International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC), a local NGO in Ratanakiri Province, which helped build the trust of communities and expedited project implementation.

Engage with private sector entities such as Rural Electrification Enterprises (REEs). REEs provide electricity supply to 39 percent of the households in Cambodia. They have also played an important role in the expansion of electricity distribution networks to remote areas. REEs include electrification of off-grid villages as part of their business model using mini-grids. There is a need to revisit the Rural Electrification Fund for expanding its scope to financing off-grid electrification as it was originally created for increased electrification that has largely been achieved.

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Energy poverty is the "lack of adequate, affordable, reliable, quality, safe and environmentally sound energy services to support development." Energy poverty and normal poverty are strongly interwoven. Furthermore, inadequate access to energy exacerbates malnutrition, unsanitary living environments and lack of access to jobs and education. Recognizing this, every member of the U.N. came together in 2015 and adopted 17 SDGs to be completed by 2030.

The seventh of these (SDG 7) was directed at ending energy poverty worldwide. This does not only mean providing energy to communities off the grid but also upgrading current grids to increase reliability and reduce cost. Indeed, implementing green energy into the mix and improving the rate of energy efficiency, are also part of the goal. From 2010 to 2021, the global number of people without electricity declined from more than



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a billion to around 675 million. Asia saw the greatest change, with 425 million people gaining access to power.

Cambodia's progress has been remarkable. Since the creation of SDG 7, the Kingdom has increased energy access by 30%, bringing electricity to more than five million people. Between 2010 and 2017, "Cambodia electrified at a rate of 8.3% annually," making it one of the fastest in the world. The U.N. has worked closely with communities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector to end energy poverty in Cambodia.

Additionally, in cities, 97% of this power comes from the national grid instead of imported electricity from neighboring countries or independent mini-grids. In rural areas, 67% comes from the national grid. In hard-to-reach areas that cannot be connected to the main grid, the U.N. implemented solar-powered mini-grids. The grids are self-sustaining and easy to maintain.

As of 2022, the Electric Authority of Cambodia reported that 350 Cambodian villages are still without power. The government plans to bring electricity to 170 of them before the 2030 SDG deadline. Reaching the remaining 180 towns and eradicating energy poverty is the most difficult task. Many of these communities are beyond distribution networks; reach, lack roads, are in flood zones or are floating in the sea. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of homes connected to the grid experience power outages.

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