

EDITORIAL COMMENT

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We are pleased to present this Special Issue of the Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy. This edition focuses on Energy Access and Energy Security in the Global South.

Access to modern energy is central to the economic development of every country. The crucial role of energy access is emphasised in Goal 7 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 7). Despite the importance of Goal 7 in the achievement of all the other SDGs, reliable data shows that around 3 billion people (more than 40% of the world population), are still relying on polluting and unhealthy fuels for cooking.¹

There are various energy challenges faced by both developing and developed countries. Whereas countries in the Global North are mostly focused on Energy Security, the Global South especially developing countries in Africa for instance, the focus is on access to modern energy. This is because over 600 million people have no access to electricity, and around 900 million people lack access to clean cooking facilities.² These energy struggles have been exacerbated by the economic impacts of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Balancing the energy needs of the large number of people in the different parts of the globe post-COVID-19, therefore requires balanced strategies at the national, regional and international level, especially taking into consideration the need to tackle climate change.³

Considering the above, the Journal invited scholarly articles for publication in a special issue on the subject “Energy Access and Energy Security in the Global South: Pertinent issues post COVID 19”. This issue encouraged papers that addressed not only energy access and energy security but also the impact of the global energy transitions on the achievement of the UN SDG 7.

We received numerous submissions, each dealing with a different slant of the theme. After a rigorous peer-review process, six submissions were accepted for publication. This special issue starts with Victoria Nalule & Theophilus Acheampong’s submission, entitled, “Energy Transition Indicators in African Countries: Managing the Possible Decline of Fossil Fuels and Tackling Energy Access Challenges”. This article has contributions from ten energy experts/policymakers from different African countries including, Ishmael Acquah Ph.D., Mostafa Elshazly, PhD, Makuta Mara, Kennedy Chenge, Zach Kauraisa , Joel Byaruhanga, Tom Ayebare Rukundo, Nduta Njenga, Noreen Kidunduhu and Tamba Sangbah. In their submission, they develop tailored ‘Energy Transition Indicators’, which they argue should be used as a benchmark for measuring the progress of countries in the Global South with respect to tackling energy access challenges especially in this climate change era.

¹ United Nations Development Programme, ‘SDG 7 on Clean Energy’ < <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-7-affordable-and-clean-en-ergy.html>.> accessed on 20 October 2019.

² *ibid*

³ Important to note that the Global North also struggles with energy poverty, especially with respect to affordability. A household is said to be in fuel poverty if its income is below the poverty line and its energy costs are higher than typical for its household type. See, National Energy Foundation, <<http://www.nef.org.uk/knowledge-hub/energy-in-the-home/fuel-poverty>.> accessed 20 May 2021.

The second submission in the issue is by Damilola Olawuyi and Victoria R. Nalule. This paper examines the legal and governance aspects of designing and implementing disaster risk reduction and resilience (DRRR) frameworks to ensure the security of energy supply in times of pandemic related disruptions such as the current COVID-19. The third paper in this special issue is by Ailly P.G Sheehama. Her submission focuses on the impact of the Equator Principles 4 (EP4s), 'Climate Change Risk Assessment' (transition risk), on the energy sector. She analyses the effect of the EP4s transition risk to determine whether this new addition will support or inhibit oil and gas project financing in Africa amidst the ongoing energy transition.

The fourth paper in this special issue is authored by Oluwaseun Viyon Ojo, who examines the impact of renewable energy technologies on climate change mitigation. He does so, while analysing the role of Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) in unlocking the vast opportunities associated with renewable energy technologies/projects in Africa. The fifth paper by Daniel Olike, analyses the legal and economic perspectives to sustainable Sovereign Debt Management in Nigeria. He uniquely addresses how Sovereign Debt impacts the efforts to tackle the challenge of energy poverty in Nigeria.

The last paper although not focused on energy access and energy security, it adds flavour to the special issue by analysing China's policies with respect to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), a concept that has gained attention in the energy sector, in recent years. The paper is authored by Shu Li & Paul Appiah-Konadu, who distinguish the application of CRS in different countries.

The articles in this special issue address some of the pertinent issues with respect to the achievement of the UN SDG 7 on Energy Access in the Global South. Taking into cognisance the challenges of the current COVID-19 pandemic coupled with climate change, the contributors to the special issue discuss the various ways developing countries can tackle the challenges of energy poverty, energy access and energy security.

The publication of this special issue would not have been possible but for the efforts of members of the editorial team and our external reviewers who volunteered their time and intellect to enhance the quality of the articles selected. Their immense contribution is gratefully acknowledged. Furthermore, this special issue was developed during the current Covid-19 pandemic which impacted on the submission and publication process. We sincerely thank the various contributors who were able to submit their papers to this special issue in these unprecedented times.

Sincerely yours,

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