

UN chief calls for redoubling green energy push to avert climate emergency

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Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, speaks during a meeting of the United Nations Security Council, held during the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2021 in New York. (Via AFP)

United Nations, September 24 (RHC)-- The United Nations chief called Friday for the world to redouble its renewable energy efforts to avert a climate emergency and address global energy poverty.

"Today, we face a moment of truth," said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who described the mandate as a "double imperative — to end energy poverty and to limit climate change. "And we have an answer that will fulfill both imperatives," Guterres said. "Affordable, renewable and sustainable energy for all."

The comments came as governments and the private sector pledged to spend more than \$400 billion at a high-level summit that called for an acceleration of efforts to avert catastrophic climate change.

The spending commitments, many of which have been announced previously, include projects to expand electricity access in developing countries, boost clean cooking technologies, and improve energy efficiency as part of a drive to decarbonize the energy system.

The UN says some 760 million people around the world currently lack access to electricity. Guterres said the world should aim to cut that number in half by 2025. Guterres noted there has been some progress, with renewable energy now comprising 29 percent of global electricity generation.

"But it's not nearly fast enough," Guterres said. "We are still a long way from being able to provide affordable and clean energy for all."

Guterres said the world must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent in 2030 from 2010 levels to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees. He called for a quadrupling of solar and wind capacity by that time, part of a push to triple investments on renewable energy and energy efficiency to \$5 trillion per year.

And Guterres called on authorities to phase out subsidies on fossil fuel production and "put a price on carbon."

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