

GCEP Session at SEforALL Global Forum in Barbados

“Accelerating Clean Energy Transition Through Enhanced Energy Planning”

March 12, 2025

Overview

The discussion brought together senior government officials, international organizations, and energy experts to explore the Global Coalition for Energy Planning (GCEP) and how stronger planning can help mobilize much-needed investment—especially in developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). It was attended by over 30 participants. Presentations from Brazil, IRENA, and SEforALL helped frame the session, while a diverse panel featuring voices from Pakistan, Ghana, India, and the Caribbean offered grounded, regional perspectives.

Panelists



Muhammad Ali, *Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Power, Pakistan*



Eunice Biritwum, *Executive Secretary, Energy Commission Ghana*



Hari Kumar Ramadas, *Director, Energy Management Center Kerala, India*



Keisha Farnum, *Head of Partnerships and Programs, Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency*

Key Take Aways

- **Investment imbalance:** Despite global progress in deploying renewables, only 10% of energy investments are reaching developing countries, a disparity which ought to be addressed.
- **Connecting Planning to Finance:** Robust energy planning was emphasized as a foundation for reducing investment risk and attracting private capital.
- **Country-Driven approaches:** Effective planning must be nationally owned and context-specific, not imported as a one-size-fits-all model.
- **Broader Socioeconomic Goals:** Energy planning should support job creation, equitable transitions, and broader development goals in addition to the technical metrics traditionally used.
- **Regional collaboration:** Initiatives like GCEP are crucial for sharing knowledge, especially among countries in the Global South, and for creating economies of scale for smaller nations.

Opening Remarks

Anant Wadhwa (SEforALL) opened the session by underlining the urgency of aligning bold energy goals with inclusive, well-structured planning. For developing countries—especially those in the Global South and SIDS, he noted that strong planning is essential to unlock finance, attract investments, and deliver a just energy transition.

Francesco La Camera (IRENA) noted that while 2023 saw a record of new investment in renewable capacity, only a fraction of global investment flowed to the developing world. He emphasized that transparent, coordinated energy planning is a powerful tool to build investor confidence and scale up private capital.

Francesco recognized Brazil's leadership during its G20 presidency in 2024 for bringing energy planning to the forefront. He reaffirmed IRENA's commitment—as GCEP's Secretariat—to advancing the coalition's core values: transparency, collaboration, investment enablement, national ownership, and alignment with existing efforts.

Kanika Chawla (SEforALL) noted that energy planning answers the critical “how” question—how to turn ambition into action. She emphasized that SEforALL's goal is to equip governments with the tools and knowledge to take ownership of their transition plans, which must ultimately lead to real investments. She noted that, especially for developing countries, the clean energy shift represents one of the greatest economic opportunities of our time.

Scene Setting Presentations

Gustavo Naciff (Ministry of Mines and Energy, Brazil) outlined the origins and mission of the Global Coalition for Energy Planning. He noted that GCEP was announced under Brazil's G20 presidency and aims to raise political awareness around country-led energy planning; connect planning processes with financing to lower costs and risks; and improve global coordination across energy planning and investment efforts.

He noted that GCEP is built on five guiding principles: (i) transparency and effectiveness in planning; (ii) knowledge exchange and capacity building; (iii) investment mobilization through enabling environments; (iv) national ownership and inclusive participation; and (v) leveraging existing partnerships and

initiatives. To this end, he noted that Brazil will host the first Energy Planning Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 2025 and invited countries to engage in shaping the coalition's future direction.

Juan Jose Garcia (IRENA) presented insights from the IRENA Global Network on Long-Term Energy Scenarios (LTES) Network, which brings together 31 countries and 13 partners together to share best practices. He noted that 3 key aspects are necessary to turn energy plans into investment: (i) it is vital to create enabling conditions; (ii) governments need to develop investor ready plans; and (iii) it is vital to strengthen governance systems and build capacity. He noted that energy planning should build on existing efforts and be grounded in each country's context.

Panel Discussion

Muhammad Ali (Office of the Prime Minister, Pakistan) pointed out that not all countries face the same transition path. Those with unmet energy needs can leapfrog into renewables, while others must manage existing capacity, upgrade grids, and keep costs low. He emphasized two practical lessons: the importance of demand-side measures (like electrifying transport and cooking) and the need for shorter energy supply contracts to stay adaptable.

Eunice Biritwum (Energy Commission, Ghana) shared Ghana's structured and participatory planning process which is driven by a Technical Committee that brings together energy stakeholders. She noted that Ghana's integrated power system master plan, updated every two years, serves as a blueprint for renewable integration, infrastructure planning, and fuel supply.

Hari Kumar Ramadas (Energy Management Center Kerala, India) noted Kerala's long-standing commitment to decentralized and people-centered planning. It was noted that a third of the state's budget is managed by local governments, and their focus is on education and awareness, not penalties. He highlighted the need for more social scientists and economists in the planning space.

Keisha Farnum (Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency) brought a Caribbean lens to the conversation, stressing that the region's unique context is often overlooked. The diversity of economies, financing conditions, and regulatory frameworks makes it hard to aggregate projects. She highlighted how integrated planning in three Caribbean countries has been transformational but underscored the need for tailored solutions and catalytic financing, especially for fossil fuel-dependent nations navigating a just transition.

Q&A Session from the floor

Keisha Farnum (Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency) in response to a question from a representative from SEforALL about realistic timelines for planning and implementation. Ms. Farnum recommended a phased approach, with each stage producing a complete output that's investment-ready. She also suggested using "resilience cost gap" analysis to show the financial value of building climate-resilient infrastructure.

Muhammad Ali (Office of the Prime Minister, Pakistan) added that while detailed plans may take 6–18 months to develop, policy interventions can start sooner and help lay the groundwork.

Keisha Farnum (Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency) in response to a question from a graduate student from Yale about integrating non-market values into planning. It

emphasized the growing importance of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria in attracting finance.

Eunice Biritwum (Energy Commission, Ghana) noted that integrating non-market values needs cross-sector collaboration—especially with ministries like transport, environment, and science—and engagement at the grassroots level.

Key highlights for GCEP

1. **Include institutional continuity mechanisms in the dialogue agenda:** GCEP can highlight successful governance models like Ghana's Technical Committee that ensure planning continuity through political transitions and facilitate knowledge exchange on establishing such frameworks.
2. **Promote dialogue on climate resilience metrics:** GCEP can convene specialized discussions on quantifying resilience benefits in planning processes, showcasing innovations like the "resilience cost gap" methodology from the Caribbean region.
3. **Foster exchange on phased planning approaches:** GCEP could create platforms for sharing experiences on modular planning methodologies that produce actionable, investment-ready outputs at regular intervals, improving the planning-implementation connection.
4. **Facilitate regional cooperation on planning alignment:** GCEP should convene regional dialogues to explore harmonization opportunities that create investable market scales while respecting national planning sovereignty.
5. **Champion cross-sectoral planning integration:** GCEP should showcase successful models of inter-ministerial coordination from countries like Ghana and facilitate discussions on best practices for extending planning beyond energy agencies.
6. **Highlight balanced demand-supply planning approaches:** GCEP should elevate the importance of demand-side planning by featuring successful cases like Pakistan's focus on transport and cooking electrification alongside generation planning.
7. **Encourage inclusive planning processes:** GCEP could promote broader participation in planning by facilitating exchange on approaches like Kerala's decentralized model that brings social scientists, economists, and communities into technical planning processes.