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For Immediate Release: International Youth Day 2020

“Youth Engagement for Global Action: SYND calls for active Youth inclusion in Ghana’s Renewable Energy development plan”

The role of young people in the fabric of the global development agenda has been accepted as essential by key actors particularly governments and development partners. Even though, the need for youth participation in decision-making is well intended, its implementation has often been very challenging especially in under-developed or developing economies. There ought to be clear indicators or measuring mechanisms to track the progress of how young people are engaged for action at local, national, regional and international levels.

As a youth-led organization, the Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND)¹ in Ghana wishes to remind world leaders and governments to commit to ensuring active youth engagement in the decision-making processes. To support the growth of Ghana’s renewable energy sector, we have initiated the Youth in Renewable Energy Movement campaign to build the capacity of young people as active agents in the sector and create the space for dialogues between the youth and state and non-state actors towards achieving a common goal. This we opine will feed into the on-going regional and global processes such as the Africa Agenda 2016, SDG 7 (Clean and Affordable Energy), Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) and Paris Climate Agreement.

As the population of Ghana grows, so is the demand for energy to support both domestic and industrial needs. The covid-19 crisis has further highlighted the importance of making energy accessible and affordable as coping mechanism particularly for the poor and vulnerable. Also, renewable energy development does not only provides energy solutions but also creates alternative job opportunities for young people who may have lost their jobs or source of livelihood as a result of the pandemic.

We believe that to achieve the vision of Ghana’s Renewable Energy Masterplan which is to *‘develop the renewable energy sector with the capacity to sustainably utilise resources and transform Ghana into a country with expertise in renewable energy research, production, and services’*, gender equality and social inclusion is

¹ SYND is a youth-oriented NGO advocating primarily for youth inclusion in the governance of natural resources and environmental sector particularly on climate change and renewable energy. SYND is the convener of the Youth in Natural Resources and Environmental Governance (Youth-NREG) Platform. The Platform provides space for learning and sharing among young people working on different environmental actions as well as create opportunity for joint advocacy. The ultimate aim is to promote youth inclusion in the governance of the Natural Resources and Environmental sector.

indispensable and for that matter youth must be at the centre of the conversation. Ghana has a vast potential of renewable energy sources that can be explored and developed to provide clean and affordable energy to Ghanaians especially those living in off-grid communities.

As we commemorate International Youth Day 2020, under the theme, "**Youth Engagement for Global Action**", we call on government of Ghana to be deliberate in involving the youth in the policy target of 10% renewable energy contribution into the country's energy mix by 2030.

Specifically, we call on government to:

1. Equip educational institutions with the appropriate tools and infrastructure to train students on renewable energy.
2. Provide financial support and other incentives for young innovators in renewable energy development.
3. Create a forum for periodic dialogue on Renewable Energy, which will provide opportunity for not only youth voices to be heard but also help shape and influence the country's efforts positively.
4. Enact policies and legislation that support or encourage youth participation in making processes on renewable energy at local level (district assemblies), regional and national levels with clear indicators for tracking and evaluation purposes.

Access and affordable energy are critical towards attaining poverty reduction programmes through industrialization and economic growth. While renewable energy has the tendency to help accelerate economic growth and help build a more resilient energy sector for a 'green recovery' post COVID 19, the active inclusion of young people in the processes at all levels should be a deliberate intention by governments and world leaders.

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