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Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Renewable Energy

Fourth session

Geneva, 2-3 November 2017

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the fourth session

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 10:00 on Thursday, 2 November 2017

I. Provisional agenda

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3. Best practices on how to increase the uptake of renewable energy.
4. Integration of renewable energy in future sustainable energy systems and cross-cutting collaboration.
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7. Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2018–2019.
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II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2017/1 – Annotated provisional agenda.

In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure, the first item of the provisional agenda is the adoption of the agenda.

2. Tracking progress of renewable energy development

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2017/3 – Renewable Energy Status Report 2017 – Key findings: from bottlenecks to opportunities.

ECE/ENERGY/2016/7 – Pathways to sustainable energy

The second edition of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Renewable Energy Status Report 2017 was prepared in partnership with the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) and launched at the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 12 June 2017.¹ Data from the report also contributed to other tracking processes, in particular the Sustainable Energy for All Global Tracking Framework (GTF), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Regional GTF Report, as well as for the Committee on Sustainable Energy overseen project “Pathways to Sustainable Energy.”²

South East and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Russian Federation still lag behind the considerable success achieved globally by renewable energy, and that despite the high potential for deployment of any kind of renewable energy technology in the region and the increase in the number of countries with renewable energy policies and specific renewable energy targets.

Based on the findings in the report, delegates will be invited to discuss the implications for the Group of Experts and the ECE region, in particular related to how to tackle obstacles and bottlenecks and take advantage of existing opportunities. The discussion will include insights about revised renewable energy indicators, as progress on Sustainable Development Goal on Energy (SDG 7) is due to be reviewed in 2018 (see more at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>). Delegates will be invited to review trends in renewable energy development in specific ECE sub-regions compared to overall global trends and envisage follow-up activities and next steps.

¹ The first edition of the REN21 ECE Renewable Energy Status Report was launched at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2015 to fill data gaps and thus establish a more accurate baseline and the most up-to-date summary on the uptake of renewable energy in the region. Both 2015 and 2017 editions are available at: <https://www.unece.org/energy/welcome/areas-of-work/renewable-energy/unece-renewable-energy-status-report.html>

² “Pathways to Sustainable Energy” is one of the flagship projects overseen by the Bureau of the Committee on Sustainable Energy. It examines the options that countries have to attain sustainable energy, both through a technical and political approach. It is based on scenarios and modelling and has just begun work with three modelling institutions.

3. Best practices on how to increase the uptake of renewable energy

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2017/4 – Policy dialogue addressing barriers to increase renewable energy uptake.

Most of ECE member States have defined quantitative goals to reduce greenhouse gases emissions. However, many countries lag behind in terms of reaching specific targets, including on renewable energy within the agreed timeframes.

Delegates will be invited to discuss the link between policy measures and market conditions to boost renewable energy investments and share the successful experience of ad hoc ECE “Hard Talks” undertaken or foreseen directly in countries of region to strengthen the dialogue among major players on what is needed to change to invest in sustainable energy (see more at: <https://www.unece.org/energy/welcome/areas-of-work/renewable-energy/unece-ren21-hard-talks.html>). The “Hard Talks” offer the opportunity to discuss key recommendations for policy changes needed to overcome political, legal, regulatory, technical barriers and take advantage of untapped renewable energy potential. In this context, delegates will be invited to share successful practices to develop and implement policies and measures.

4. Integration of renewable energy in future sustainable energy systems and cross-cutting collaboration

Documentation:

ECE/ENERGY/2017/15 – Specifications for the application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources 2009 (UNFC-2009) to Bioenergy Resources

ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2017/5 – Benefits of transboundary cooperation in water-energy nexus for renewable energy development.

Delegates will discuss the need to engage in cross-cutting activities on transition of the energy sector with a focus on renewable energy to be implemented in cooperation with the other five Groups of Experts overseen by the Committee on Sustainable Energy, as well as other intergovernmental bodies of ECE, e.g. on water, environment, forestry, and public-private partnerships.

Estimating and classifying renewable energy resources in a representative, coherent and consistent manner is becoming increasingly important for the renewable energy industry and its stakeholders and investors. Precise definitions and guidelines are essential for investors, regulators, governments and consumers in assessing the value of resources in a transparent manner, and in determining the outlook for the world’s energy supply. This process includes the application of United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) to bioenergy incorporating specifications for its application.

Delegates will be invited to exchange information and discuss the potential of bioenergy to increase the uptake of renewable energy (See more at: <https://www.unece.org/energy/welcome/unfc-and-resource-classification.html>).

Renewable energy could play a strong role in helping to achieve better management of resources within the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus. The potential role of renewable energy in addressing the nexus could be specifically explored and the links to 2030 Agenda and climate change considerations could be further highlighted. The nexus approach presents an opportunity to strengthen the actions aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Delegates will be invited to consider the integrated and

holistic approach in the deployment of renewable energy and to discuss the implementation of possible joint interdivisional work, including the development of future possible projects.

To achieve higher renewable energy shares within future energy systems, additional integration efforts are required within an integrated approach and multi-stakeholder dialogue. These include improved understanding of the renewable energy resource characteristics and availability, investments in enabling infrastructure and strengthening policy, institutional, normative and regulatory frameworks. Delegates will be requested to present their experience and views on how to better integrate renewable energy in energy systems. Aspects of interlinkages with fossil fuels are important in this context, in particular natural gas and cleaner electricity production.

5. Promotion of renewable energy investments

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2017/3 – Renewable Energy Status Report 2017 – Key findings: from bottlenecks to opportunities.

Investments in renewable energy are still lacking in South East and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The 17 considered countries³ represented 0.2% or USD 0.4 billion of global renewable energy investment in 2015, despite comprising over 300 million inhabitants and representing 4.9% of the world's GDP. In 2014, investments were 0.5% or USD 0.7 billion of the global total, thus the investments show a downward trend and are in stark contrast to the global trends. Global new investment in renewable power and fuels (not including hydropower above 50 MW) grew in 2015 to USD 285.9 billion, a 5% increase compared to 2014. These are the critical findings of the REN21 ECE Renewable Energy Status Report 2017⁴.

Attracting investment represents a major challenge in these countries, even with numerous advanced support schemes and policies for renewable energy present, therefore the Group of Experts is invited to pay special attention to key issues and priorities to overcome obstacles and boost renewable energy investments in the region. Delegates will be invited to discuss obstacles, opportunities and priorities to support market conditions on one side and to build capacities to identify, develop and promote bankable renewable energy investments in ECE countries, in particular in South and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Delegates may convey preliminary expressions of interest to organize Hard Talks in their countries.

Specific activities to match project developers with investors and policy makers started at the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development and Third session of the Group of Experts (Baku, Azerbaijan, 20-21 October 2016), follow-up by dedicated sessions and bilateral meetings that were organized at the Eighth International

³ The REN21 ECE Renewable Energy Status Report 2017 draws on information from national and regional sources to present the most up-to-date summary of sustainable energy in: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

⁴ While investment data for 2016 were preliminary at the time of the report, they point to further reductions in investment globally as well as in the 17 countries. However, this needs to be seen in the view of declining technology costs, i.e. despite a decline in investment figures, 2016 marked a record in RE installed capacity (excluding large hydro), with 138.5GW compared to 127.5 GW in 2015.

Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (Astana, Kazakhstan, 13-14 June 2017) jointly organized by the ECE and the EU Technical Assistance Facility.

The Group of Experts has promoted the renewable energy integration and investment conditions in ECE Member States by supporting and participating in the assessment processes of the renewable energy potential made by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in South East Europe as well as in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

6. International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, follow-up actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Government of Kazakhstan and five United Nations Regional Commissions with support and participation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), IEA, IRENA, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency, REN21, and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) organized the Energy Ministerial Conference and the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Astana, Kazakhstan on 11-14 June 2017. Ministers and high-level officials sent a call to accelerate the transition towards sustainable energy systems in a statement adopted at the conference. Renewable energy has confirmed its role as it is now cost-competitive with conventional energy and has significant potential for further cost reductions. The Ministerial Statement points out that wider uptake of renewables requires addressing barriers to fair competition vis-à-vis conventional energy technology, implementing stable long-term energy policy frameworks, and deploying financial and risk mitigation mechanisms. New solutions are needed to deploy renewable energy in buildings, industry and transport.

Delegates will be invited to discuss the renewable energy component of the outcome of the Energy Ministerial Conference and the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, challenges and potential solutions for implementation of the decisions, and ways and partnerships to translate the declarations in concrete actions as they relate to renewable energy and its role in achieving energy-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular renewable energy target of SDG7. They will also have an opportunity to propose ideas for the Ninth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development to be held in Ukraine in 2018.

7. Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2018-2019

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/2017/4–ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2017/6 – Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2018-2019.

The Group of Experts is mandated to carry out activities that, in line with the Sustainable Energy for All initiative of the Secretary-General, help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy in the region and that help achieve the objective of access to energy for all in the ECE region.

The draft Work Plan has been sent to the Group of Experts for consideration by written procedure as stipulated in the Report of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy at its third session (ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/2, para. 40). It has then been submitted to the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy for endorsement and for renewal of mandate of the Group of Experts until 31 December 2019, with the possibility of extension. The delegates are invited to discuss the Work Plan and outline the practical ways for its implementation.

8. Election of officers

At its third session in 2016, the Group of Experts elected a representative of Azerbaijan as its Chair and representatives from Belarus, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan and Ukraine as Vice Chairs for two years. Also at the third session in 2016, the Group of Experts invited representatives from IEA, IRENA, REN21, and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to participate in the Bureau for two years. Representatives of Serbia was elected by the Group of Experts as Vice Chair for two years at its second session in 2015. The Group of Experts will be invited to elect members of the Bureau according to submitted nominations.

9. Other business

At the time the provisional agenda was prepared, there were no issues to be raised under this item.

10. Dates of the next meeting

The fifth session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy is scheduled to take place in Geneva on 30 October-1 November 2018.

11. Report of the meeting

The Chair of the Group of Experts and the secretariat will draft the report of the session, including conclusions and recommendations, for discussion and approval by the delegates.
