
Economic Commission for Europe
Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Gas

Fifth session

Geneva, 22–23 March 2018

Item 14 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of Conclusions and Recommendations

Draft Conclusions and Recommendations
arising from the fifth session of the Group of Experts on Gas¹

Draft for discussion

Agenda Item 3: Election of Officers

1. The Group of Experts elected a new Bureau to serve for a term of two years.

Agenda Item 4: The role of gas in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals

2. The Group of Experts concluded that use of gas could enable ECE member States to attain selected Sustainable Development Goals, such as those related to energy, poverty, hunger, health, gender, water quality, job creation, innovations, infrastructure, sustainable cities, sustainable consumption and production patterns, and climate action. Gas and LNG are particularly relevant to the three objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 7 – access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, uptake of renewable energy, and improvement of energy efficiency of the electricity system.

Agenda Item 7: Best practices in managing methane emissions along the gas value chain

3. After being informed of the activities of the extrabudgetary project: “Methane Management in Extractive Industries (Upstream Oil and Gas/Downstream Gas)”, funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the Group of Experts noted the progress thus far in the project’s implementation.
4. The Group of Experts invited ECE member States, gas companies, and the gas industry associations to complement this work by (i) contributing case studies on best practices for measurement, reporting, verification, and reduction of methane emissions from the gas value chain, and (ii) providing comments on draft documents related to the project as they become available.
5. Welcoming collaboration with the Global Methane Initiative (GMI), the Group of Experts encouraged gas experts to attend the Global Methane Forum that will be held in April 2018 in

¹ The draft conclusions and recommendations will be reviewed by the Group of Experts after each agenda item and updated as needed.

Toronto, Canada. The Group of Experts invited the GMI Oil and Gas Subcommittee to hold its next meeting in conjunction with the sixth session of the Group of Experts in 2019.

Agenda Item 8: The role of gas in improving urban and indoor air quality

6. The Group of Experts concluded that an increased use of gas in electricity generation, instead of coal and other solid fuels, could significantly reduce concentrations of airborne pollutants – nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, methane, volatile organic compounds, sulphur dioxide, and particulate matter – and hence improve urban air quality.

7. After the presentation of the IGU's Urban Air Quality reports, featuring case studies from cities from around the world, the Group of Experts concluded that fuel switch from solid fuels to natural gas is a highly effective measure for improving local and regional ambient air quality. As demonstrated by the cases, deliberate policy action plays an important role in enabling effective transitions, especially when it comes to infrastructure development. Many nations that fall under the umbrella of sustainable development goals have limited means to finance the needed infrastructure to enable fuel switch and take advantage of the immediate benefit of reduced pollution. Providing support for such initiatives is critical to enabling air quality improvements in the developing world and making progress toward the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

8. The Group of Experts recommended that, wherever practically possible, member States consider policy measures that would restrict the use of kerosene, biomass, and other solid or traditional fuels for cooking, and replace them with gas. This would mitigate indoor air pollution and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty, gender equality, and good health and well-being.

Agenda Item 9: Activities and priorities of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and its Executive Committee and the Committee on Sustainable Energy

9. Discussing the possible upgrade of the Group of Experts into a Working Party, the Group of Experts concluded that more visibility is important. In this regard, the Group of Experts agreed to develop guidelines and suggestions on how to improve its visibility under the current organisational structure as an expert group. Upgrading to a Working Party would be beneficial if: (a) a strong and broad support from ECE member States could be received and (b) such an upgrade would not undermine the cooperation with key stakeholders, such as the gas industry, needed to implement the Group of Expert's work plan. Ultimately, the Group of Experts recognized that the decision on any possible upgrade rests with the ECE member States.

10. The project "Pathways to Sustainable Energy" under the leadership of the Committee on Sustainable Energy represents a unique opportunity for the Group of Experts to explore the role of gas in sustainable energy. The Group of Experts requested direct involvement in the project as it develops over the biennium. In particular, the Group of Experts would like to contribute with technology experience and know-how to the development of the scenarios to be modelled. To this end, the Group of Experts decided to nominate a focal point/group. Further, the Group of Experts proposed to hold a multi-stakeholder workshop/open-ended dialogue in Q2 2019 to develop policy messages on gas resulting from the modelling and scenario building exercises and asks other Groups of Experts to do likewise.

Agenda Item 10: Exploring synergies between gas, renewable energy and energy efficiency

11. The Group of Experts encouraged ECE member States to share experiences in harnessing the synergies between renewable energy and gas that increase the efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of the electricity system.

Agenda Item 11: Emerging issues

12. The Group of Experts recommended to ECE member States to leverage the existing conventional natural gas infrastructure as a cost-effective entry point for developing low- or zero-emission alternatives, such as biogas, synthetic gas, power-to-gas, or hydrogen.

Agenda Item 12: Preparations for the sixth session of the Group of Experts

13. The Group of Experts recommended the following topics for the substantive portion of its sixth session: (to be decided at the meeting).

14. The sixth session of the Group of Experts will be held in March 2019 in Geneva, together with the Oil and Gas subcommittee of the Global Methane Initiative.

Agenda Item 13: Other business

15. tbd

Agenda Item 15: Adoption of the report and close of the meeting

16. The report of the meeting was adopted, including the conclusions and recommendations, subject to any necessary editing and formatting.
