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Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Renewable Energy

Sixth session

Bangkok, 7-8 October 2019

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the sixth session

to be held in Bangkok, starting at 9:00 on Monday, 7 October 2019

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II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2019/1 – Annotated provisional agenda.

In accordance with the rules of procedure of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the first item of the provisional agenda is the adoption of the agenda.

2. Election of officers

During its fifth session in 2018, the Group of Experts elected the representative of Azerbaijan as its chair and representatives of Albania, Belarus, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, and invited representatives from the International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to participate in the Bureau for two years. Previously, at its fourth session in 2017, the Group of Experts elected representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Portugal, Russian Federation, and Serbia.

The Group of Experts will be invited to elect members of the Bureau according to submitted nominations.

3. National sustainable energy action plans – from commitments to actions (workshop)

Documentation: ECE-ENERGY/GE.6/2019/3-ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2019/3 – Workshop on the national sustainable energy action plans – from commitments to actions. Background paper on Sustainable Energy for All in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The workshop is a joint session of the Groups of Experts on Energy Efficiency and on Renewable Energy organized in partnership with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

ECE, jointly with ESCAP, is implementing the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project “Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia”. The goal of the project is to strengthen capacities of beneficiary countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan) for the preparation of National Action Plans to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to energy. Under the project, national reports that include a baseline review of sustainable energy data in each beneficiary country have been prepared to assess the existing gaps in data collection. National case studies have been developed, and a synthesis report has been prepared to provide an analysis of these case studies and give the assessment of existing policies and practices in sustainable energy, focusing on existing regulatory and institutional frameworks and pointing out gaps and challenges that governments face in implementing these policies.

Based on the reports and other activities under the project, the project countries are developing draft National Sustainable Energy Action Plans. Representatives of the project countries will present these documents. Delegates will be invited to exchange experiences, good practices and discuss possible recommendations for policymakers that would assist them in reforming and adjusting policies aimed at achieving targets of SDG7 and at fostering favourable climate for investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

4. Tracking progress and exchange of experiences on how to increase the uptake of renewable energy

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2018/3 – Perspectives for renewable energy in the ECE region.

ECE/ENERGY/2019/1 – Pathways to sustainable energy – Status Report.

Providing affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy remains a key challenge for the whole world, and the ECE region is no exception. While the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia, Europe and North America are united in their goal of accelerating the development and implementation of renewable energy projects, the status and progress of market development is not homogenous across the region.

Despite the fact that a number of promotion schemes are in place across the region, ultimately the uptake of renewable energy depends on market access and the effective implementation of these schemes.

Within this context, delegates will be invited to exchange experiences, good practices and discuss key findings and implications for the Group of Experts and the ECE region.

The International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21) the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the German Energy Agency (dena) and other relevant organizations are invited to contribute directly or indirectly with their work to dedicated discussions on the progress made in the renewable energy development of the ECE region.

Within the ECE project “Pathways to Sustainable Energy”, the delegates will consider the results and implications of various sustainable energy scenarios and subsequent policy options from the perspective of renewable energy (for more details about the project, please refer to unece.org/energy/pathwaystose.html). Following the recommendation of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, delegates will discuss how to engage, within the scope of the expertise of the Group of Experts, in the joint work with other subsidiary bodies on transition of the energy sector in line with international agreements and in support to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

5. Hard Talks and opportunities to support renewable energy investments

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2019/4 – Hard Talks in ECE countries on how to increase renewable energy uptake

ECE member States have defined quantitative goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, many countries lag behind in terms of reaching specific targets, including those for renewable energy, within the agreed timeframes. In particular, attracting investment is a major challenge in many countries of the region, even with the existence of support schemes and policies aimed at the advancement of renewable energy.

The Group of Experts has been paying special attention to key issues and prioritizes discussions focusing on overcoming obstacles to renewable energy uptake and boosting renewable energy investment in the region. Towards this aim, an open multi-stakeholder exchange – “Hard Talks” - among political decision makers, governmental officials, project developers, investors and technology providers is facilitated to promote dialogue between the public and private sector and to identify solutions to improve the investment climate in the renewable energy sector and cooperation opportunities.

A series of “Renewable Energy Hard-Talks” took place in a number of countries, namely Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, and Ukraine, between 2016-2019, while further Hard-Talks are foreseen to be organised in other countries.

Delegates will be invited to discuss the relationship between policy measures and market conditions in the process of increasing renewable energy investments, while also sharing successful experiences stemming from previous ECE Hard Talks (see more at: <https://www.unece.org/energy/welcome/areas-of-work/renewable-energy/unece-ren21-hard-talks.html>).

In this context, delegates will be invited to share successful practices to develop and implement policies and measures to overcome political, legal, regulatory and technical barriers while taking advantage of untapped renewable energy potential. Delegates may also convey preliminary expressions of interest to organize Hard Talks in their countries.

6. Cross-cutting and inter-sectoral cooperation to integrate renewable energy into energy systems

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2019/5 – ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2019/5
Sustainable renewable energy investments and development: accounting for water resources and the environment with a nexus approach.

The target of increasing the renewable energy uptake for ECE countries requires an integrated approach and multi-stakeholder dialogue to achieve higher renewable energy shares within future energy systems. This includes an improved understanding of renewable energy resource characteristics and availability as well as the strengthening of policy, institutional, normative and regulatory frameworks.

Renewable energy plays a strong role in helping to achieve better management of resources within the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus. The role of renewable energy in promoting the nexus approach will be specifically considered, as well as links to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implications for climate change mitigation.

Delegates will be requested to present their experience and views on how to better integrate renewable energy into energy systems, in particular on the interlinkages and synergies between renewable energy and natural gas and cleaner electricity production.

Delegates will be invited to consider an integrated and holistic approach in the deployment of renewable energy and to discuss the implementation of possible joint inter-sectoral work. This will include future project development and how to benefit from the Renewable Energy Hard Talks and other discussions held in the riparian countries of the Drina River Basin, (namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) focused on a water-energy nexus perspective. In particular, delegates will discuss solutions to barriers and linkages of renewable energy to the water resources, land and the environment, including opportunities for intersectoral synergies as well as an initial check-list for developing renewable energy project proposals from an environment and nexus angle.

7. Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2020-2021

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/2019/9 – Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2020-2021.

Since the end of 2014, the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy has been implementing concrete activities to help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy in the region.

According to its Terms of Reference, the Group of Experts focuses on activities related to a) regulatory and policy dialogue and b) sharing of best practices on various renewable energy sources with a view to increasing the share of renewables in the global energy mix.

The Committee on Sustainable Energy expressed its support for the activities of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy and endorsed confirmation of its mandate by the Committee at the twenty-seventh sessions - ECE/ENERGY/119 - Report of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on its twenty-seventh session.

Following the development of a draft Work Plan of the Group of Experts for 2020-2021 by its Bureau, review and approval by the Group of Experts for 2020-2021 by written procedure and subsequent consideration for renewal of mandate and endorsement of the work plan by the Committee on Sustainable Energy, delegates will discuss how to implement planned activities and how to strengthen its role to accelerating and deepening the transition to sustainable energy systems.

8. Other business

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

9. Dates of the next meeting

The seventh session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy is scheduled to take place in Geneva on 24-25 September 2020.

10. 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.
