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Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Renewable Energy

Third session

Baku, 20–21 October 2016

Item 1 of the Provisional Agenda

Adoption of the Agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the third session

to be held at JW Marriott Absheron Hotel, Baku, Azerbaijan
starting at 09:00 on Thursday, 20 October 2016

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of officers.
3. International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development.
4. Tracking progress of renewable energy uptake and synergies with energy efficiency.
5. Best practices on how to increase the uptake of renewable energy.
6. Seminar on policy reforms for renewable energy investments.
7. Consultation meeting on renewable energy potential in Central Asia.
8. Integration of renewable energy in future sustainable energy systems.
9. The interplay between renewable energy and fossil fuels: the post-Paris agenda.
10. Developing a common assessment methodology for renewable energy projects.
11. Workshop on the role of Strategic Environmental Assessment in renewable energy planning.
12. Key messages for the Committee on Sustainable Energy.
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15. Report of the meeting.

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II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/1 – Annotated provisional agenda.

1. The provisional agenda is presented to the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (the Group of Experts) for adoption.

2. Election of officers

2. The Bureau of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy is chaired by a representative of Germany. Elected Vice-Chairs are representatives from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, the International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21).

3. The Group of Experts will be invited to elect members of the Bureau as appropriate. At the time this document was prepared the following member State nominated a candidate as member of the Bureau of the Group of Experts: Georgia – Ms. Margalita Arabidze.

3. International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2016/3-ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/3 – Concept Note of the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development.

ECE/ENERGY/2016/8 – Draft outcome document of the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development.

ECE/ENERGY/2016/9 – Concept note and draft outcome document of the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development and Energy Ministerial.

4. The Government of Azerbaijan, the five United Nations Regional Commissions, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office in Azerbaijan, IEA, IRENA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office in Azerbaijan, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Copenhagen Centre for Energy Efficiency (C2E2), and REN21 are jointly organizing the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (the Seventh Forum) in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 18 – 21 October 2016. At the request of the Government of Azerbaijan, the International Renewable Energy Conference and the annual sessions of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Groups of Experts on Renewable Energy and on Energy Efficiency are taking place within the Seventh Forum for the first time.

5. The Seventh Forum will focus on the implementation of the energy-related Sustainable Development Goals and other aspirational pledges such as the Paris Climate Agreement. Potential recommendations and solutions are expected to be agreed at an Energy Ministerial to be held at the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (the Eighth Forum) in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 11 June 2017. Thus, the Seventh Forum provides an important stepping stone for the Energy Ministerial. It allows the beginning of a comprehensive consultations process. Delegates are invited to comment.

6. Substantive agenda items of the session of the Group of Experts will be held as special sessions during the International Renewable Energy Conference and Seventh Forum. They cover topics related to the implementation of the Work Plan 2016–2017 or in consideration of the mandate renewal and draft Work Plan for 2018–2019, which will need

to be presented to the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on 26–28 September 2017.

4. Tracking progress of renewable energy uptake and synergies with energy efficiency

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/4 – Reviewing the state of renewable energy development: key findings, barriers and options.

7. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Renewable Energy Status Report, prepared together with REN21 and in close collaboration with the IEA, was launched during the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015 as a tool for tracking the uptake of renewable energy in 17 ECE countries¹. Key findings from the report confirm that renewable energy investments have shown a marked decrease in many of these ECE countries in recent years.

8. At the session, the IEA will lead a discussion to explore how to support future renewable energy deployment in the best way. Experience has shown that renewable energy needs to be considered as integral part of a future energy system and not in isolation for optimal uptake. Its linkages to energy efficiency also play a key role for the planning of future systems and for industry. In this context, the session will be held jointly with the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency. The discussion will focus on policy experiences and “enabling” factors that can help set the basis towards enabling markets for renewable energy and energy efficiency for future holistic policy making and try to make a link with other sessions about increasing investor confidence in the region.

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

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/5 – Key drivers for renewable energy within future energy systems - case studies.

ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/6 – Good practices and policies for intersectoral synergies to deploy renewable energy: the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus approach to support the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. The session will focus on possible ways to support the uptake of renewable energy in the ECE region through selected case studies. Best practices must also be considered for the identification and preparation of an economically feasible and well prepared renewable energy project concept - a crucial requirement to attract investors and secure project financing. Best practices in project proposal development, followed by matchmaking among project developer and owners, investors and financial institutions, could be a future activity of the Group of Experts and its network in support of this process.

10. The discussion will be based on the findings of the report “Status and Perspectives for Renewable Energy Development in the ECE Region”, prepared by dena, the German Energy Agency for the Group of Experts².

¹ The full report is available at <http://www.unece.org/energy/welcome/areas-of-work/renewable-energy/unece-renewable-energy-status-report.html>

² The full report is available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43327>.

6. Seminar on policy reforms for renewable energy investments

11. Policy reforms for renewable energy investments are one of the main activities of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project “Promoting renewable energy investments for climate change mitigation and sustainable development”, which is implemented jointly by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA, lead agency) and ECE.

12. The seminar aims to strengthen the capacities of government officials, national financial institutions, national energy experts, and project developers and owners from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the ESCWA and ECE regions, to attract investments in renewable energy projects as a means of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. Key findings and recommendations will be presented together with case studies. Participants will be invited to share views and discuss possible follow-up activities to promote increased renewable energy investments in the ECE region.

7. Consultation meeting on renewable energy potential in Central Asia

13. Countries of Central Asia possess large and untapped renewable energy potential, which also provides opportunities to address energy security needs. However, further actions are still necessary to boost investment and, in this regard, overcome barriers for the active participation and involvement of the private sector in the region.

14. This session seeks to bring together government representatives, international and national energy experts and regional stakeholders to take a closer look at Central Asia as a target area for renewable energy deployment. IRENA has an increased interest to engage with Central Asia countries and in this session the Agency will present its experience and work relevant for the region.

8. Integration of renewable energy in future sustainable energy systems

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/2016/7 – Pathways to Sustainable Energy

15. This session will explore how the integration of renewable energy technologies can be strengthened in each industrial sector, i.e. electricity generation, heating and cooling, gas and liquid fuel distribution as well as autonomous energy supply systems. Of particular importance is the relationship between renewable energy and fossil fuel based systems and how they will evolve over the short- and medium term to meet the Sustainable Energy Goals. The Group of Experts could consider future activities in close cooperation with the Committee on Sustainable Energy and its subsidiary bodies, for example recommendations from the Group of Experts can feed into the project “Pathways to Sustainable Energy”, a member States’ activity exploring how the ECE region can attain sustainable energy in 2050.

9. The interplay between renewable energy and fossil fuels: the post-Paris agenda

16. Political support for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change is unprecedented. Meanwhile 2016 is set to be the warmest year ever recorded. Many scientific voices are advocating that, if we take factors such as ocean warming and melting permafrost into account, the 1.5-degree level has already been reached, and if 2 degrees is the target 14,000 of the estimated 15,000 Giga tonnes of CO₂ that are still in the ground in form of fossil fuels have to remain where they

are. This situation calls for profound changes in how energy is produced and consumed. The challenge is reconciling the tight emissions pathway with development aspirations and modernisation/diversification of fossil based economies in a strategic and forward-looking fashion.

17. This session seeks to discuss the needed paradigm shift that fossil based economies are faced with and the role that energy efficiency, renewable energy, big data, strategic investments and economic diversification can play to ease the tension between the climate goals and a sustainable exit strategy for fossil based economies. Participants are invited to share experiences and views on the outlook in the coming decades and discuss opportunities and synergies towards a future energy system.

10. Developing a common assessment methodology for renewable energy projects

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/2016/4 – Specifications for the application of UNFC-2009 to renewable energy resources

18. For renewable energy to play a significant role in future sustainable energy systems it requires, *inter alia*, a uniform approach to assess, classify and report renewable resources for energy generation. The session will inform delegates about recent ECE activities in developing specifications for geothermal, bioenergy, solar, hydro, and wind energy projects. Delegates are invited to engage in the work of the Expert Group on Resource Classification, in particular in the task force focusing on the application the United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources 2009 (UNFC-2009) to renewable energy resources.

19. The assessment and monitoring of bioenergy sustainability at the national level has been developed by the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations with the production of a set of twenty-four indicators. The indicators are intended to inform policymakers about the environmental, social and economic sustainability aspects of the bioenergy sector.

11. Workshop on the role of Strategic Environmental Assessment in renewable energy planning

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/6 – Good practices and policies for intersectoral synergies to deploy renewable energy: the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus approach to support the Sustainable Development Goals.

20. Environmental assessment i.e. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), can be seen as tools which help to maximise environmental and social benefits resulting from large-scale renewable energy development. This session will focus the discussion on SEA and EIA application and role in facilitating investments in renewable energy through identifying and mitigating potential risks early in planning cycle, streamlining project level development. Delegates are invited to provide recommendations on actions needed to further support efficient application of SEA in the renewable energy sector.

12. Key messages for the Committee on Sustainable Energy

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/2016/16 – Mapping of the Sustainable Energy subprogramme processes and activities that support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2015/2 – Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy 2016–2017 - Annex I to the Report of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy on its second session.

21. The Group of Experts will be invited to convey a set of conclusions and recommendations for consideration at twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on 26–28 September 2017. These have to cover mandate extensions and main directions of the future Work Plan of the Group of Experts for 2018-2019.

13. Dates of the next meeting

22. The fourth session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy is scheduled to take place in Geneva on 2 – 3 November 2017.

14. Other business

23. Member States may raise any issues under this agenda item.

15. Report of the meeting

24. 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.
