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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Renewable Energy**Third session**

Baku, 20-21 October 2016

Report of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy on its third session**I. Introduction**

1. The third session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (GERE) was held on 20–21 October 2016¹.

II. Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by 270 experts from the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States: Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United States of America, Uzbekistan.

3. Experts from Angola, China, India, Iran, Japan and Morocco participated under Article 11 of the Commission's Terms of Reference.

4. Representatives of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), European Bank for Reconstruction and

¹ Official documents of the session are available at <http://documents.un.org/>. Room documents and presentations delivered at the meeting will be available on the ECE Renewable Energy website: <http://www.unece.org/energy/se/gere.html>.

Development (EBRD), World Bank, Global Environment Facility (GEF), International Energy Agency (IEA), International Energy Charter, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), League of Arab States (LAS), and Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) also participated.

5. The meeting was also attended by representatives of non-governmental organizations, private sector and academia, as well as independent experts.

III. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/1

6. The provisional agenda as contained in ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/1 was adopted without amendment.

IV. Election of officers (agenda item 2)

7. The Group of Experts elected Mr. Nazir Ramazanov (Azerbaijan) as its chair, Mr. Andrei Miniankou (Belarus), Mr. Laszlo Horvath (Croatia), Ms. Margalita Arabidze (Georgia), Mr. Oliver Frank (Germany), Mr. Ramazan Zhampiissov (Kazakhstan), and Mr. Valeriy Pysarenko (Ukraine) as vice chairs for two years. Mr. Miloš Banjac (Serbia) was elected as vice chair in 2015 for two years. The Group of Experts invited other stakeholders who previously served on the Bureau to join the Bureau for the next two years to strengthen its activities: Mr. Paolo Frankl (International Energy Agency), Mr. Gurbuz Gonul (International Renewable Energy Agency), Ms. Christine Lins (Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century), and Ms. Maria Michela Morese (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

8. The Group of Experts expressed appreciation to Mr. Ulrich Benterbusch for serving as chair of the Group of Experts since its first session and for his contribution to the work of the Group of Experts.

9. The Bureau of the Group of Experts has the following members: Mr. Nazir Ramazanov (Azerbaijan) as chair, and Mr. Andrei Miniankou (Belarus), Mr. Laszlo Horvath (Croatia), Ms. Margalita Arabidze (Georgia), Mr. Oliver Frank (Germany), Mr. Ramazan Zhampiissov (Kazakhstan), Mr. Miloš Banjac (Serbia), Mr. Valeriy Pysarenko (Ukraine), Mr. Paolo Frankl (International Energy Agency), Mr. Gurbuz Gonul (International Renewable Energy Agency), Ms. Christine Lins, (Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century), and Ms. Maria Michela Morese (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) as vice chairs.

V. International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (agenda item 3)

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.

10. The Group of Experts expressed its appreciation to the Government of Azerbaijan for hosting the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development and the third session of the ECE Group of Experts on Renewable Energy in Baku.

11. The Group of Experts expressed the importance of the document ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2016/3-ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/3 “Concept Note of the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development”.

12. The Group of Experts agreed to support for the draft Outcome Document of the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development and for the Concept Note and draft Outcome Document of the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development and Energy Ministerial with proposed modifications. The Outcome Document of the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development is attached to this report in Annex.

13. The Group of Experts invited the secretariat to continue to closely collaborate with other bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy as a way to enhance its contribution to achieving energy-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG7 “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”.

14. The Group of Experts called to deepen collaboration with the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency on promoting energy efficiency measures in the deployment of renewable energy sources, and to a closer cooperation with the Group of Experts on Gas.

VI. Tracking progress of renewable energy uptake and synergies with energy efficiency (agenda item 4)

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

15. The Group of Experts took note of outreach activities related to the ECE Status report issued at COP21 and presented in several countries, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Russian Federation and Serbia, including in international venues.

16. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the results achieved to close data and information gaps through the issuing of the ECE Renewable Energy Status Report jointly prepared with the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), in close cooperation with the International Energy Agency (IEA), and from disseminating key findings through specific outreach activities.

17. The Group of Experts expressed gratitude to Government of Germany, notably the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) for supporting the issuing and dissemination of the ECE Renewable Energy Status report and encouraged future engagement with key partners along these lines.

18. The Group of Experts agreed to continue the work of tracking the renewable energy progress as part of its future work and to work with the Committee on Sustainable Energy on the Global Tracking Framework activities related to renewable energy as requested.

VII. Best practices on how to increase the uptake of renewable energy (agenda item 5)

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.

19. The Group of Experts recognized with appreciation the work done in the implementation of the work plan 2016–2017 to facilitate the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned, in particular on renewable energy policies.

20. The Group of Experts took note of the document ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2016/5 – Key drivers for renewable energy within future energy systems - case studies.

21. The Group of Experts expressed appreciation on the findings of the report “Status and Perspectives for Renewable Energy Development in the ECE Region”, prepared by dena, the German Energy Agency.

22. The Group of Experts pointed out the need to strengthen the dissemination of best practices for the identification and preparation of an economically feasible and well prepared renewable energy project concept to attract investors and secure project financing.

23. The Group of Experts requested the Secretariat to explore the possibility create a renewable energy facility to promote renewable energy projects, providing technical assistance and training programmes, and the establishment of sub-regional Centres of Excellence in collaboration with other partners in member States at their request and upon the availability of resources.

24. The Group of Experts requested the Secretariat to explore with relevant partners how to integrate into energy policies and investment plans intersectoral links and synergies between developing renewable energy generation as well as use and protection of water resources and the environment.

VIII. Seminar on policy reforms for renewable energy investments (agenda item 6)

25. The delegates discussed the outcome of the seminar on policy reforms for renewable energy investments which was concluded with summary presentations of lessons learned from ESCWA and ECE case studies and a panel discussion on the role of policy reforms in promoting renewable energy investments.

26. The Group of Experts expressed appreciation on discussions held within the policy reforms seminar in Baku, aiming to strengthen the capacities of government officials, national financial institutions, national energy experts, and project developers and owners to attract investments in the ESCWA and ECE regions, and, overall, on the results of the 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.

IX. Consultation meeting on renewable energy potential in Central Asia (agenda item 7)

27. The delegates exchanged views on the needs, opportunities and challenges for the development of renewable energy in Central Asia and explored possible areas of priority action, taking into consideration the existing and planned initiatives to support renewables deployment in the region.

28. The experts highlighted that despite its vast potential for wind, solar, hydro and bioenergy, Central Asia is facing a number of challenges of technology, policy, regulatory, administrative and financial nature that hinder an accelerated deployment of renewables. The experts also emphasized that the region could greatly profit from enhanced information sharing and awareness raising on the technologies, policies as well as socio-economic benefits of renewable energy.

29. The Group of Experts expressed appreciation to the speakers and panellists of the Consultation on renewable energy potential in Central Asia and emphasized the value of strengthening cooperation with IRENA to enhance the renewable energy potential in the region.

X. Integration of renewable energy in future sustainable energy systems (agenda item 8)

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

30. The Group of Experts expressed its support to consider future activities of the Group of Experts in close cooperation with the Committee on Sustainable Energy and its subsidiary bodies, to contribute to the project “Pathways to Sustainable Energy”, a member States’ activity exploring how the ECE region can attain sustainable energy in 2050.

31. The Group of Experts recommended to consider constraints, explore opportunities and share information on good practices for the deployment of renewable energy within future energy system.

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

32. The Group of Experts expressed appreciation on the dialogue promoted by ESCWA and ECE to consider the interplay between renewable energy and fossil fuels as a mean to help countries to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to strengthen the response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century as agreed by the 2015 Paris climate change agreement.

33. The Group of Experts called for a deeper collaboration with the Committee on Sustainable Energy and the other subsidiary bodies to work on possible pathways to achieve the objectives of the Paris climate change agreement.

XII. Developing a common assessment methodology for renewable energy projects (agenda item 10)

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

34. The Group of Experts called to deepen collaboration with 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.

35. The Group of Experts supported collaboration with the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the exchange of information on the developed indicators that are intended to inform

policymakers about the environmental, social and economic sustainability aspects of the bioenergy sector.

XIII. Workshop on the role of Strategic Environmental Assessment in renewable energy planning (agenda item 11)

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.

36. The delegates discussed case studies on the environmental and social benefits resulting from renewable energy deployment and the benefit of the application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in renewable energy.

37. The Group of Experts supported the promotion of using the Environmental assessment i.e. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in member countries, as tools which help to maximise environmental and social benefits resulting from large-scale renewable energy development and facilitate decisions on renewable energy investments.

XIV. Key messages for the Committee on Sustainable Energy (agenda item 12)

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.

38. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the progress made since its second session on delivering on its mandated activities and the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2016–2017.

39. The Group of Experts recommended that the Committee on Sustainable Energy approve its mandate extension until 31 December 2019 and a draft Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2018–2019 based on submission to its twenty-sixth session.

40. The Group of Experts requested the secretariat to work with the Bureau of the Group of Experts to develop a draft Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2018–2019 and submit it for review and approval by the Group of Experts by written procedure. The Group of Experts agreed that, in order to expedite submission of a draft Work Plan and other possible documentation for endorsement by the Committee on Sustainable Energy, it can work by written procedure subject to a minimum comment period of 21 days. No response or feedback is taken to be tacit approval.

41. The Group of Experts recognized that the work of the Group of Experts can feed into the project “Pathways to Sustainable Energy” and help member States to explore how the ECE region can attain sustainable energy in 2050.

42. The Group of Experts supported collaboration with the other United Nations Regional Commissions, the World Bank, IEA, IRENA and REN21 on the 2017 edition of

the Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) Global Tracking Framework and its follow-up activities, with a particular focus on indicators of progress in renewable energy.

XV. Dates of the next meeting (agenda item 13)

43. The fourth session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy is tentatively scheduled to take place on 2– 3 November 2017 in Geneva. The Group of Experts proposed that its meetings may take place in venues outside Geneva.

XVI. Other business (agenda item 14)

44. At the time the draft conclusions and recommendations were prepared there were no issues to be raised under this item.

XVII. Report of the meeting (agenda item 15)

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