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**Economic Commission for Europe**
**Committee on Sustainable Energy**
**Twenty-ninth session**

Geneva, 25-27 November 2020

**Report of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on its  
 twenty-ninth session**
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## I. Introduction and attendance

1. The work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) on sustainable energy is designed to improve access to affordable and clean energy for all and help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector in the region. It promotes international policy dialogue and cooperation among governments, energy industries and other stakeholders. The current focus of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (the Committee) is on energy efficiency, renewable energy, cleaner electricity systems, coal mine methane, natural gas, and sustainable resource management through the work of its six subsidiary bodies.
2. At its twenty-ninth session, the Committee exchanged views on pursuing carbon neutrality to advance the energy transition and the role that the Committee and its six subsidiary bodies could play to accelerate and deepen the transition to sustainable energy systems. The session was held in Geneva on 25–27 November 2020. Due to the unprecedented circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the session was organized in a different and reduced format.
3. More than 40 experts from the following ECE member States participated: Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Monaco, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United States of America. Representatives of the European Union also participated. Experts from Brazil, Cameroon, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Lebanon participated under Article 11 of the Commission's Terms of Reference.
4. The following intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and academic institutions were in attendance: International Human Rights Council, Assocarboni General Association of Coal Operators, Fraunhofer Institute for Manufacturing Engineering and Automation, International Energy Agency (IEA) Clean Coal Centre (IEACCC), Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies e.V., Institute for Energy Efficiency in Production (EEP), Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE), International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), IPIECA, World Nuclear Association, Dalhousie University (Canada), European University at St.Petersburg (Russian Federation), Imperial College London (United Kingdom), London School of Economics and Political Science (United Kingdom), Novosibirsk State Technical University (Russian Federation), Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis (Sénégal), Université Jean Monnet de Saint-Étienne (France), University of Geneva (Switzerland), University of Leeds (United Kingdom), University of Oslo (Norway) and University of Surrey (United Kingdom).
5. Independent experts and representatives of the private sector also attended at the invitation of the secretariat.

## II. Opening and adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/132 – Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session

6. The Chair of the Committee, Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst, opened the meeting and presented the provisional agenda, which was adopted without change.
7. In his remarks, the Chair referred to analyses that show that countries are not on track to meet their collective objectives and commitments under either the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or the Paris Agreement on climate. He observed that the United Nations had launched a Decade for Action to mobilize getting on track. He then underlined how the sustainable energy subprogramme could contribute to events in 2021, including the sixty-ninth session of ECE to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, 20-21 April 2021, on the subject of circular economy; the high-level dialogue on energy that the UN Secretary-General is convening at the seventy-sixth session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, United States of America, 14-30 September 2021, to promote implementation of the energy-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that will take place in Glasgow, United Kingdom, 1-12 November 2021. ECE and the sustainable energy subprogramme have an important role to play in helping countries reduce the environmental footprint of energy, transform the energy system, and mobilize action in line with the world's sustainable development objectives.

8. The Chair informed the Committee that he would chair items 1 and 2 of the provisional agenda. Item 3 would be chaired by Mr. Ray Pilcher, Vice-Chair of the Committee and Chair of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane, item 4 would be chaired by Mr. Jarad Daniels, Vice-Chair of the Committee, and item 5 would be chaired by Mr. David MacDonald, Vice-Chair of the Committee and Chair of the Expert Group on Resource Management. Mr. Keinhorst would share the chairing of item 6 with Mr. Jean-Christophe Füg, Vice-Chair of the Committee.

9. The Committee agreed to consider recommendations and conclusions after each agenda item, followed by adoption of the report of the Committee at the end of the twenty-ninth session.

10. The Committee noted the sad loss of Mr. Barry Worthington, Vice-Chair of the Committee and Chair of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems from 2014 to 2020. During the memorial remarks, Mr. Worthington's invaluable and longstanding leadership and contribution to the work of the Committee and the Group of Experts were underlined.

### **III. Organisation of the Committee on Sustainable Energy twenty-ninth session (agenda item 2)**

#### **A. Election of officers**

11. The Committee elected Mr. Tigran Melkonyan (Armenia), Mr. Kairat Rakhimov (Kazakhstan), Ms. Jelena Simovic (Serbia), Mr. Yaroslav Demchenkov (Ukraine) and Mr. Jarad Daniels (United States of America), until the end of the thirty-first session of the Committee.

12. The term of office of already-elected officials, Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst (Germany) as Chair, and Mr. Admir Softić (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mr. David Tvalabeishvili (Georgia), Mr. James Gannon (Ireland), Mr. Gilberto Dialuce (Italy), Mr. Pawel Pikus (Poland), Mr. Alexander Tolparov (Russian Federation), Mr. Jean-Christophe Füg (Switzerland), and Ms. Nataliya Boyko (Ukraine) as Vice-Chairs, was for two years from the date of their election until the end of the thirtieth session of the Committee. The Committee underscored the desirability, for the sake of ensuring continuity of the Bureau, that not all officers be elected at the same time.

13. The Committee noted that Ms. Nataliya Boyko (Ukraine) and Mr. Talgat Karashev (Kazakhstan) were stepping down from the Bureau with effect from the end of the twenty-ninth session. The Committee thanked both for their contributions to the work of the Committee.

14. The Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies are Vice-Chairs of the Committee *ex officio* (currently Mr. Aleksandar Dukovski, Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency, Mr. Jim Robb, Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems, Mr. Raymond Pilcher, Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane, Mr. Francisco de la Flor, Group of Experts on Gas, Mr. Kostiantyn Gura, Group of Experts on Renewable Energy, and Mr. David MacDonald, Expert Group on Resource Management).

#### **B. Implications of COVID-19 for future meetings**

15. The Director of the Sustainable Energy Division of ECE explained the implications of COVID-19 for future meetings and outlined the special procedures put in place by the

ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) and how they might be applied to the Committee on Sustainable Energy and its subsidiary bodies.

16. The Committee:

(a) Noted with appreciation the efforts by the secretariat to ensure effective functioning of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies and preparation of mandated deliverables despite constraints and limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic;

(b) In light of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and in anticipation of possible future exceptional circumstances, approved the convening of informal consultations of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies to allow for discussion of matters of crucial importance for the continuity of work during periods where special procedures put in place by EXCOM apply;

(c) Authorized the Chair of the Committee to circulate recommendations on business-critical issues resulting from the informal consultations, through the Permanent Missions in Geneva, under a silence procedure of at least 72 hours and in accordance with Rule 44 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of ECE as contained in E/ECE/778/Rev.5.

(d) Noted that, if the silence is not broken, the recommendations shall be considered adopted and will be submitted to the subsequent sessions of the relevant body for consideration, as appropriate.

#### **IV. Strategic review of the sustainable energy subprogramme (agenda item 3)**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2020/12 – Strategic review of the ECE sustainable energy subprogramme  
 ECE/ENERGY/2020/5 – Draft rules of procedure for the Committee on Sustainable Energy  
 ECE/ENERGY/GE.3/2020/2 – Report of the eleventh session of the Expert Group on Resource Management  
 ECE/ENERGY/GE.5/2020/2 – Report of the sixteenth session of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems  
 ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2020/2 – Report of the fifteenth session of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane  
 ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/2 – Report of the seventh session of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency  
 ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2020/2 – Report of the seventh session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy  
 ECE/ENERGY/GE.8/2020/2 – Report of the seventh session of the Group of Experts on Gas

##### **A. Rethinking energy: Considerations from the six subsidiary bodies**

17. A moderated discussion was held with presentations from the Chairs of the six subsidiary bodies.

18. The Committee:

(a) Noted with appreciation the progress that the groups of experts have made on delivering on their mandated activities and work plans for 2020-2021;

(b) Requested its expert groups to consider in their work the changing social, environmental, and economic contexts for their activities and the principles of a just transition;

(c) Took note of the reports of the groups of experts (Expert Group on Resource Management: ECE/ENERGY/GE.3/2020/2; Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane: ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2020/2; Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems: ECE/ENERGY/GE.5/2020/2; Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency: ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/2; Group of Experts on Renewable Energy: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2020/2; Group of Experts on Gas: ECE/ENERGY/GE.8/2020/2) and requested that they prepare their work plans for 2022-2023 for approval by the Committee at its thirtieth session;

(d) Reiterated its request for closer cooperation among the expert groups to address cross-cutting issues, notably related to the project on “Enhancing the understanding of the implications and opportunities of moving to carbon neutrality in the ECE region across the power and energy intensive industries by 2050” (Carbon Neutrality project).” (Carbon Neutrality Project). Noted the need to address achieving carbon neutrality across the broader energy system and beyond.

## 1. Expert Group on Resource Management

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/125 – United Nations Framework Classification for Resources Update 2019

ECE/ENERGY/2020/7 – Draft revised United Nations Economic and Social Council Decision regarding the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources

EGRM-11/2020/INF.3 – Criteria for Designation of International Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Resource Management (ICE-SRM) and Terms of Reference for ICE-SRM

19. The Committee:

(a) Endorsed the updated United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) Update 2019 contained in document ECE/ENERGY/125 and invited the Executive Committee to consider submitting the draft revised United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Decision on UNFC (as contained in ECE/ENERGY/2020/7) to the sixty-ninth session of ECE for consideration;

(b) Requested the secretariat to publish the updated UNFC in the six UN languages to facilitate its application worldwide and invited members States to take appropriate measures to ensure broad dissemination and application of UNFC;

(c) Noting that sustainable management of natural resources is fundamental to attainment of the 2030 Agenda, is at the heart of the cross-cutting theme of the sixty-ninth session of ECE, and is crucial for supporting inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 socio-economic crisis, requested the Expert Group to accelerate development of the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS). Requested the secretariat to publish the UNRMS when ready in the six UN languages to facilitate its application worldwide;

(d) Requested the Expert Group to collaborate closely with the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy, in view of the benefits of harmonizing renewable energy resource classification and management as offered by UNFC, including: tracking of common milestones by project developers; harmonized monitoring of project pipelines by portfolio managers in utilities and integrated energy companies; improving information on project maturities and risks for investors, banks and regulators; and, offering directly comparable information on resource potentials for policymakers;

(e) Noted with appreciation the extrabudgetary project funded by the European Commission “Supporting UNECE member States in the development and implementation of UNFC and UNRMS” (2020-2024), implementation of which has just started, and encouraged member States to participate;

(f) Recognizing the current activities conducted in relation to the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, recommended to continue studying the practical implications in the region and expand the range of available policy solutions on resource management at national and local levels;

(g) Recommended creation of a platform for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), policymakers and financial institutions to support resilience of resource supply chains in the ECE region;

(h) Noted with appreciation the activities of the Expert Group to promote gender parity in resource management, including establishment of a subgroup on Women in Resource Management;

(i) Noted the interest in establishing centres of excellence on sustainable resource management based on UNFC and UNRMS under development, with technical support from ECE. Further noted the document “Criteria for Designation of International Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Resource Management (ICE-SRM) and Terms of Reference for ICE-SRM (EGRM-11/2020/INF.3) as approved by the Expert Group at its eleventh session. Mandated the secretariat to seek extrabudgetary funding to support activities in this area, including notably coordination and technical support.

## 2. Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane

20. The Committee:

(a) Endorsed the “Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Recovery and Use from Abandoned Coal Mines” (ECE/ENERGY/128 and ECE Energy Series No. 64);

(b) Requested the secretariat and invited member States to take appropriate measures to ensure broad dissemination and application of the Best Practice Guidance;

(c) Invited the Economic Commission for Europe to propose to ECOSOC that it endorse the Best Practice Guidance and recommend its application worldwide;

(d) Recognizing the difficulty in implementing the extrabudgetary projects E281 (Methane Management in Extractive Industries (Upstream Oil and Gas / Downstream Gas)) and E276 (Dissemination of best practices in the abatement, recovery, and use of methane. Phase II) in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, welcomed the request made by the project donor (United States Environmental Protection Agency) to extend their duration at no additional cost until 31 December 2021;

(e) Requested the Group of Experts to address, where possible, methane emission issues in the broader context of the whole coal life cycle along the entire value chain;

(f) Noted with appreciation the progress in instituting International Centres of Excellence to disseminate and deploy the family of methane-related Best Practice Guidance documents. Encouraged the Groups of Experts on Coal Mine Methane to develop additional centres and requested the secretariat to seek additional extrabudgetary resources to support the activity.

## 3. Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems

21. The Committee:

(a) Noted the ongoing work on carbon neutrality, including the Carbon Neutrality project ongoing under the auspices of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems. Noted that an assessment should include not only environmental implications but also the economic, social, and resource dimensions of the technologies. Noted also that carbon neutrality refers to the whole energy system including transport, industry, and buildings. Also noted that any extension of the Carbon Neutrality project is subject to adoption of the Pathways to Sustainable Energy programme concept note;

(b) Recommended the Group of Experts explore the implications for technology and policy options of differences across the ECE subregions, namely the Caucasus, Central Asia, East and South-East Europe, when deploying low and zero carbon technologies and alternative solutions to attaining carbon neutrality;

(c) Recommended the Group of Experts to continue its multistakeholder dialogue and pursue development of financial guidelines for modernizing the power and energy intensive industries involving financial institutions.

#### 4. Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3 – Draft Industrial Energy Efficiency Action Plan and assessment of the role of ECE in delivering on it  
ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/4 – Updated Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings  
ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/INF.3 – Digitalization: enabling the new phase of energy efficiency

22. The Committee:

(a) Took note of the draft Industrial Energy Efficiency Action Plan (ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3) and supported the role set forth therein for ECE to deliver on it;

(b) Approved extension of the mandate of the Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency for 2021-2022 to implement the action plan;

(c) Took note of the Updated Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings (ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/4). Invited the High-Performance Buildings Initiative to deploy and disseminate the Framework Guidelines and called on member States to support the initiative;

(d) Following the recommendation of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency (ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/INF.3), invited the secretariat to organize a Joint Task Force on Digitalization in Energy under the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency with participation of all expert groups and called on member States to provide extrabudgetary funding to support the activities of the Task force.

#### 5. Group of Experts on Renewable Energy

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/127 – Towards sustainable renewable energy investment and deployment: Trade-offs and opportunities with water resources and the environment

23. The Committee:

(a) Requested the Group of Experts to continue leading the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus activities and to cooperate with the ECE Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus;

(b) Requested the Group of Experts to extend its activities in the area of hydroelectricity, notably large hydropower, to ensure full appreciation of the multiple economic, social and environmental implications as countries consider pursuing development of hydroelectric infrastructure as part of their sustainable energy plans;

(c) Requested the Group of Experts to continue cooperating closely with the Group of Experts on Gas and the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems on synergies between renewable energy and gas and to assess the role of decarbonized gases, including hydrogen, across ECE subregions.

#### 6. Group of Experts on Gas

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2020/8 – Hydrogen – an innovative solution to carbon neutrality  
ECE/ENERGY/2020/9 – Carbon neutrality through synergies between gas and renewable energy

24. The Committee noted that the Group of Experts on Gas has started the extrabudgetary project “Improving capacities of the ECE member States to decarbonize the transport sector”.



The Committee further noted that the project would enhance the capacity of interested ECE member States to develop infrastructure to use gases in transportation as a low-carbon alternative fueling option.

## **B. Implications for work of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and the sustainable energy subprogramme**

25. The Committee:

(a) Expressed appreciation to the Committee's expert groups for finalizing the strategic review of the ECE sustainable energy subprogramme (ECE/ENERGY/2020/12), and agreed to have consultations with member States, including through the Permanent Missions in Geneva, on the draft with a view to having the text approved and adopted at its thirtieth session;

(b) Noted in particular the calls for the work of the Committee to reflect the scale, scope, role, and values of the United Nations in making concrete, measurable progress on energy:

(i) Encouraged closer cooperation among the subsidiary bodies on cross-cutting issues;

(ii) Encouraged collaboration with the Environment and Transport subprogrammes to explore in some detail the range of opportunities for reducing the carbon intensity and environmental impacts of transport;

(iii) Requested the secretariat to take appropriate steps to increase organization of cross-sectoral activities among the expert groups, with other ECE subprogrammes, the other UN regional commissions, and other organizations, undertaking a broad resource mobilization effort, and modern methods of working, and;

(iv) Called on member States to provide needed extrabudgetary and in-kind resources to the subprogramme to achieve its objectives.

## **C. Ways of working**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2020/5 – Draft rules of procedure of the Committee on Sustainable Energy

26. The Committee:

(a) Noted that the draft Rules of Procedure (ECE/ENERGY/2020/5) have been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, annex III, appendix III);

(b) Noted that the objective of instituting Rules of Procedure for the Committee on Sustainable Energy is to streamline the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, to provide a basis for accelerated delivery of the sustainable energy subprogramme, and to solidify ECE's reputation as a credible, relevant, and responsive partner;

(c) Endorsed the Rules of Procedure as contained in ECE/ENERGY/2020/5 and as revised by the Committee (Annex I), and requested the Bureaux and Groups of Experts to apply them henceforth.

## **V. Carbon neutrality as a pathway to sustainable energy (agenda item 4)**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2019/1 – Pathways to Sustainable Energy: Accelerating Energy Transition in the ECE Region

ECE/ENERGY/2020/1 – Policy recommendations from Pathways to Sustainable Energy

ECE/ENERGY/2020/8 – Hydrogen – an innovative solution to carbon neutrality

ECE/ENERGY/2020/9 – Carbon neutrality through synergies between gas and renewable energy

ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/5 – Pathways to Sustainable Energy – policy recommendations from the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency

ECE/ENERGY/2020/10 – Pathways to Sustainable Energy – policy recommendations from the Expert Group on Resource Management

ECE/ENERGY/GE.5/2020/8 – Framework for attaining carbon-neutrality in the ECE region by 2050

ECE/ENERGY/GE.5/2020/7 – Technology brief: Carbon capture, utilization and storage

27. The outgoing Acting Chair of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems introduced the objectives and status of the project “Enhancing the understanding of the implications and opportunities of moving to carbon neutrality in the ECE region across the power and energy intensive industries by 2050” (Carbon Neutrality project) that is implemented under the auspices of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems.

28. “Carbon neutrality” refers to achieving net zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal or simply by eliminating carbon emissions altogether (the transition to a “post-carbon economy”). Many countries have started to shift efforts towards carbon neutrality. As fossil fuels are likely to continue to play an important role for ECE member States in the short and medium term, achieving carbon neutrality will require deployment of carbon capture and storage technologies (CCS) and other compensating technologies and measures, such as increasing the absorptive capacity of forests and peatlands.

## **A. Pathways to sustainable energy**

29. The Committee:

(a) Took note of the outcomes of Phase 1 of the project “Pathways to Sustainable Energy”;

(b) Requested the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat and in consultation with the member States’ focal points, to complete its considerations of the “Pathways to Sustainable Energy” programme and to submit the concept note to EXCOM to provide needed contextual framework for future project funding proposals submitted for approval;

(c) Requested the secretariat to continue implementing the Pathways to Sustainable Energy programme if additional funding can be secured once the concept note has been agreed.

## **B. Framework on carbon neutrality**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.5/2020/8 – Framework for attaining carbon neutrality in the ECE region by 2050

30. The Committee:

(a) Noted the progress of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems on implementing the Carbon Neutrality project, noted the ongoing work of the Task Force on Carbon Neutrality and the ongoing work on the Framework for attaining carbon neutrality in the ECE region by 2050;

(b) Requested the secretariat, with the support of the Expert Groups, to consolidate the analyses conducted by the Expert Groups to continue drafting a position paper of the ECE on carbon neutrality to be considered at the thirtieth session of the Committee,

(c) Requested the Groups of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems and on Resource Management to carry out in-depth studies, including modelling high-case scenarios, life cycle management, policies and strategies, business models and financing and investment, and to develop technology and policy briefs;

(d) Welcomed the further engagement of all Groups of Experts in the Carbon Neutrality project led by the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems;

(e) Invited ECE member States to consider:

(i) Recognizing the value of flexibility for energy systems operations;

(ii) Deploying a regulatory framework to integrate variable renewable energy technology; and

(iii) Promoting sectoral integration.

(f) Invited ECE member States to exchange best practices in achieving an interlinked gas-electricity model. The Committee requested that the Groups of Experts on Gas and on Renewable Energy support interested ECE member States in developing effective policies that accelerate a transition to carbon neutrality;

(g) Recognizing the drive towards carbon neutrality and electrification of end-uses:

(i) noted the possibility that biogas/biomethane and hydrogen could make a significant contribution;

(ii) requested that the groups of experts facilitate international and cross-sectoral collaboration on hydrogen issues in the ECE region and beyond.

(h) Taking note of the document “Hydrogen – an innovative solution to carbon neutrality” (ECE/ENERGY/2020/8), encouraged ECE member States to collaborate on developing a comprehensive and science-based terminology for hydrogen, on adopting a uniform methodology for calculating life cycle GHG gas emissions from hydrogen, and on developing standards or best practices for deployment of hydrogen and derivative technologies;

(i) Invited ECE member States to:

(i) Expand collaboration on hydrogen production across the ECE region and beyond;

(ii) Encourage collaboration between ECE, other Regional Commissions, and other UN entities in promoting joint projects on inter- and intra-regional transport infrastructure, end uses, and related investment flows;

(iii) Consider the development of a hydrogen market by developing market stimulation programmes.

## C. Next steps and future phases

31. The Committee:

(a) Noted that the proposed Pathways to Sustainable Energy programme, as set forth in Annex I of ECE/ENERGY/2020/1, comprises multiple inter-related projects including:

- The completed Phase 1 project
- The ongoing Carbon Neutrality project being run under the auspices of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems
- Dialogues among member States within and across subregions

- Activities in innovation, capacity-building, and early warning.

(b) Requested the Bureau with support of the secretariat to hold consultations with member States' focal points, including through the Permanent Missions in Geneva, on a concept note for the overall Pathways to Sustainable Energy programme as set forth in Annex I of document ECE/ENERGY/2020/1, with a view to having the text agreed and submitted to EXCOM for approval to provide context for future funding proposals;

(c) Upon approval of the concept note by EXCOM, the stage will be set for resourcing the programme's various components, including:

(i) the Carbon Neutrality project (while proceeding with current levels of funding, the project requires additional resources to complete appraisals of technology and policy options and of additional economic sectors);

(ii) future phases of the Pathways to Sustainable Energy programme (these remain unfunded, though there is active interest in supporting a dialogue in Central Asia and discussions are underway with potential donors);

(iii) the need for extrabudgetary resources (called on member States to enable continuation of the Pathways to Sustainable Energy programme and invited the secretariat to continue raising funds).

## VI. Action agenda for the Economic Commission for Europe (agenda item 5)

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2020/12 – Strategic review of the ECE sustainable energy subprogramme, Annex

### A. International Centres of Excellence

32. The Committee noted the modalities for developing and managing international centres of excellence on sustainable resource management, coal mine methane, and high-performance buildings and encouraged the secretariat to accelerate its efforts to establish broad networks of the centres to disseminate and deploy ECE's normative instruments.

### B. International decade of methane management

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2020/11 – Effective actions to reduce methane emissions

33. The Committee requested member States to support calls by partners for the UN General Assembly to consider declaring an International Decade for Methane Management.

### C. High-performance buildings initiative

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.5/2020/6 – The role of Information and Communications Technology in enabling high-performance buildings and smart, sustainable cities

ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/4 – Updated framework guidelines for energy efficiency standards in buildings

34. Noting that the High-Performance Buildings Initiative, launched by ECE to disseminate and deploy the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, is conceived to improve significantly building performance, reduce GHG emissions and improve indoor air quality, transform the global supply chain for buildings, and extend the network of participating organizations, the Committee called on ECE member States to support the initiative both through extrabudgetary resources and through policies and support for local, grassroots actors. The Committee also invited member States to further develop and deploy normative instruments to improve energy efficiency in buildings.

## **D. United Nations Framework Classification for Resources and sustainable resource management**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2020/7 – Draft revised ECOSOC Decision regarding the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources

ECE/ENERGY/2020/10 – Pathways to Sustainable Energy – policy recommendations from the Expert Group on Resource Management

35. Noting that sustainable management of natural resources is fundamental to attainment of the 2030 Agenda, is at the heart of the cross-cutting theme of the sixty-ninth ECE session, and is crucial for supporting inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 socio-economic crisis, called on ECE and non-ECE member States, international organizations, industry and the regional commissions to further deploy and develop the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources and its derivative United Nations Resource Management System.

## **E. Key messages and policy recommendations for the Economic Commission for Europe**

36. Requested the Economic Commission for Europe consider decisions on resource management, near-term acceleration of the 2030 Agenda through action on gases and buildings, and study of the impact of subsidies as well as carbon pricing options:

### **1. Decision regarding resource management**

*Noting that sustainable management of natural resources is fundamental to attainment of the 2030 Agenda, is at the heart of the cross-cutting theme of the sixty-ninth ECE session, and is crucial for supporting inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 socio-economic crisis, the Economic Commission for Europe requests the Committee on Sustainable Energy to undertake further development, dissemination, education and research, consultation, and engagement among stakeholders on the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources and its derivative United Nations Resource Management System.*

### **2. Decision regarding near-term acceleration of the 2030 Agenda through action on gases and buildings**

*Noting that ECE's work on methane, CO<sub>2</sub>, and hydrogen and on high-performance buildings can have a notable near-term benefit for both climate and quality of life:*

- The Economic Commission for Europe invites the Committee on Sustainable Energy to pursue diligently further work on the role of natural gas, hydrogen, carbon capture, use, and storage, and high-efficiency, low-emissions technology for those countries that choose to use it as well as on the management of anthropogenic methane emissions in the transition to a carbon neutral economy.
- *The Economic Commission for Europe requests its sectoral committees on Sustainable Energy and on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management to undertake dissemination, education and research, consultation, and engagement among stakeholders on high-performance buildings and to support member States further developing and deploying normative instruments to improve energy efficiency in buildings.*

### **3. Decision to study the impact of subsidies as well as carbon pricing options**

*The Economic Commission for Europe requests the Committee on Sustainable Energy to continue studying how best to address efficient use of energy resources, and in this regard the impact of subsidies as well as carbon pricing options.*

## **VII. Future work of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (agenda item 6)**

37. The Committee:

(a) Noted that the sustainable energy subprogramme is designed to improve access to affordable and clean energy for all and help reduce GHG gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector in the region. Further noted that the sustainable energy subprogramme, in support of member States' attainment of their 2030 Agenda objectives, works in support of Sustainable Development Goal 7 to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;

(b) Noted that all activities carried out under the sustainable energy subprogramme, irrespective of funding source, should be mandated in line with regulation 4.2 of ST/SGB/2018/3 and requested that the views of respective member States be taken into account in this regard;

(c) Noted the role that women can play towards sustainable energy and the need to promote gender parity in the programmes of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies;

(d) Recognized that key instruments to promote sustainable use of natural resources include the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) and the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS); ECE's High-Performance Buildings Initiative and its Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings; Best practice guidelines for management of methane in extractive industries; and Recommendations on carbon capture and storage;

(e) Noted the strategic review of the sustainable energy subprogramme (ECE/ENERGY/2020/12 – Strategic review of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe sustainable energy subprogramme) with a view to having the text adopted at its thirtieth session.

### **A. Preparations for the thirtieth anniversary of the Committee on Sustainable Energy**

38. The Committee:

(a) Noting that the meeting of the Committee in 2021 will be its thirtieth session and that 2021 will be significant for the UN's Decade of Action, the sixty-ninth session of ECE on circular economy and post-COVID recovery, the High-level Dialogue on Energy at the seventy-sixth session of the UN General Assembly, and COP26, invited the secretariat and member States to consider preparing possible voluntary commitments for consideration by member States on the path forward on sustainable energy;

(b) Requested the secretariat to proceed with preparations for the thirtieth session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy to be held 22-24 September 2021 in Geneva, including a draft agenda, draft report, and all supporting documents necessary for implementation of the programme of work for the ECE sustainable energy subprogramme for 2022-2023 and the work plans of its six subsidiary bodies.

### **B. Review of the subprogramme performance and planning**

39. The Committee:

(a) Recognizing the resource constraints imposed on the secretariat by COVID-19 and the continuing liquidity crisis in the United Nations system, approved the reduction in the number of parliamentary documents to have been produced by the Committee on Sustainable Energy and its subsidiary bodies in 2020 from 60 to 55;

(b) Recognizing the significance of 2020 and 2021 for sustainable energy in the ECE region and what has been achieved in the sustainable energy subprogramme, requested the secretariat to prepare 12 post-session documents on key activities as addenda to the report

of the twenty-ninth session to be able to share with targeted outreach in support of COP26, the Secretary-General's High-level Dialogue on Energy linked to the seventy-sixth session of the UN General Assembly, and the sixty-ninth session of ECE.

### C. Approval of documents

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2020/2 – Draft programme of work of the sustainable energy subprogramme for 2021  
ECE/ENERGY/2020/3 – Provisional calendar of meetings for 2021  
ECE/ENERGY/2020/4 – Revised publication plans for 2020 and 2021 and draft publication plan for 2022

40. The Committee:

(a) Endorsed the provisional calendar of meetings for 2021 (ECE/ENERGY/2020/3) and the revised publication plans for 2020 and 2021 and the draft publication plan for 2022 (ECE/ENERGY/2020/4) as indicated in Annex II, noting that the title of the publication “Hydrogen – an innovative solution for carbon neutrality” is now modified to “Achieving carbon neutrality through hydrogen”;

(b) Adopted the proposed draft programme of work of the sustainable energy subprogramme for 2021 (ECE/ENERGY/2020/2) and recommended submission to EXCOM for subsequent approval. Requested a draft programme of work of the sustainable energy subprogramme for 2022 be prepared for adoption at its next session;

(c) Noted that changes that member States had envisaged to the draft programme of work could not be reflected. Noting that with the transition to an annual budget cycle the Committee had lost the opportunity to make substantive changes to the draft programme of work presented for adoption, invited EXCOM to consider proposing changes to the programme of work approval process;

(d) Renewed its request to member States of ECE to nominate focal points to the secretariat for conduct of consultations on the Strategic Review and the concept note for the Pathways to Sustainable Energy programme. Emphasized the importance of ensuring transparent and continuous communication with both focal points and Permanent Missions.

### D. Any other business

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2020/6 – Report on regional advisory services in sustainable energy

41. The Committee:

(a) Received an update on regional advisory services conducted since its last session. The report covered information on adjusting regional advisory services, including capacity-building and technical assistance activities, in light of the COVID-19 crisis. Field projects under implementation, including those that were developed as a rapid response to the crisis, and ongoing fundraising activities were reported;

(b) Took note of the Report on regional advisory services in sustainable energy (ECE/ENERGY/2020/6), stressed the importance of regional advisory services and capacity-building activities for its work, in particular in the current circumstances, and requested a report on regional advisory services at its thirtieth session;

(c) Thanked all non-government stakeholders for their continued contributions to the work of the sustainable energy subprogramme and renewed its wish to involve these stakeholders in its activities and meetings.

## **E. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/133 – Report of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on its twenty-ninth session

42. The Chair summarized the major decisions, conclusions and recommendations taken by the Committee.

43. The Committee adopted the report of its twenty-ninth session (ECE/ENERGY/133) subject to any necessary editing and formatting.

44. The twenty-ninth session was adjourned on 27 November 2020 at 16.00 hours.



## Annex I

### Rules of procedure of the Committee on Sustainable Energy

#### I. Introduction

1. This document contains the rules of procedure for the Committee on Sustainable Energy. The rules of procedure were prepared in accordance with the Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, annex III, appendix III<sup>1</sup>). They clarify amongst other issues the relationship between the Committee on Sustainable Energy and its subsidiary bodies and the role of the respective Bureaux and the nomination process.
2. The objective of having rules of procedure is to streamline the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, to provide a basis for accelerated delivery of the sustainable energy subprogramme, and to solidify ECE's reputation as a credible, relevant, and responsive partner.
3. These rules of procedure were endorsed by the Committee at its twenty-ninth session. The Committee requested the Bureaux and the Groups of Experts reporting to the Committee to apply them henceforth.

#### II. Organization of Committee sessions

4. Official sessions of the Committee shall be held annually, on dates fixed by the Committee at previous meetings. Changes in previously-agreed dates of sessions due to unforeseen circumstances can be made by the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat and subject to the availability of services in Geneva (e.g. meeting rooms, interpretation, document services etc.).
5. Committee sessions can be held outside Geneva if a host-country is identified, a host-country agreement signed and all meeting-related costs including interpretation, staff travel, and security are covered for the secretariat.
6. The provisional agenda for the annual sessions shall be drafted by the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat and shall be circulated to member States well in advance of the meeting.
7. The agenda of the sessions shall cover, *inter alia*, a review of programme performance and planning, including capacity-building and technical advisory activities, policy-relevant documents developed in the context of the Committee's programme of work and deliberations on future activities.
8. The Bureau shall choose important substantive issues within the mandate of the Committee to be addressed during the substantive segment of the sessions.
9. The Committee shall agree on its annual programme of work to be submitted to EXCOM for approval.

#### III. Representation and credentials

10. The terms of reference and rules of procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe (E/ECE/778/Rev.5<sup>2</sup>) and the Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe<sup>1</sup> shall apply.

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<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2013/ece/e.ece.1464.e.ECE2005ReformOutcomes.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://undocs.org/E/ECE/778/Rev.5>

11. Representatives of the business and academic communities and other stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the sessions of the Committee at the invitation of the secretariat.

#### **IV. Officers**

12. The Committee shall elect one Chair and as many Vice-Chairs as it deems appropriate. The Chairs of the subsidiary bodies are Vice-Chairs of the Committee *ex officio* and have the same status as elected Vice-Chairs.<sup>3</sup>

13. The term of office of a Bureau member shall be two years. Bureau members, including the Chair, can be re-elected for additional terms. Efforts shall be made to ensure both turnover and continuity within the Bureau. Not all officers need to be elected at the same time. The terms of office of elected officials will begin at the end of the session in which they are elected to allow Bureaux to preside over the sessions they have planned.

14. Candidates for the Bureau of the Committee shall be nominated by ECE member States based on the person's expertise, professionalism, and expected support from both the Committee and the person's institution(s). The expectation is that the Vice Chairs will lead one or more activities of the Sustainable Energy Subprogramme, thereby furthering implementation of the work plan or outreach of a subsidiary body. Candidates should be supported financially by the nominating country or institution, should attend the annual Committee session, and should participate in regular meetings of the Bureau. There is an expectation that Bureau members will participate in Bureau calls and meetings on a regular basis.

15. Candidates for the Bureaux of the subsidiary bodies shall be nominated by ECE member States where possible. The Bureaux of the subsidiary bodies can nominate additional Vice-Chairs from the expert community based on their expertise, professionalism, and support as appropriate.

16. Elections to Bureaux will take place in accordance with the Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe.<sup>1</sup>

17. If the Chair is absent from any meeting or part thereof, a Vice-Chair shall perform the functions of the Chair. If no Vice-Chair is present, the Committee shall elect an interim Chair for that meeting or that part of the meeting.

18. If the Chair can no longer perform the functions of the office, the Bureau of the Committee shall designate one of the Vice-Chairs as interim Chair to perform those functions, pending election of a new Chair. The interim Chair shall have the same powers and duties as the Chair.

19. The Chair and Vice-Chairs serve collectively in the interest of all member States and not as official representatives of their Governments.

20. The Bureau may invite observers to meetings or calls of the Bureau as appropriate.

#### **V. Functions of the Bureau**

21. The key functions of the Bureau are detailed in the Guidelines on procedures and practices or ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe.<sup>1</sup> The Bureau must approve programmes of work and draft agendas for Committee Sessions prior to their submission to member States.

22. At the beginning of its term, the new Bureau shall decide on frequency and means of its interactions (calls, in-person meetings etc.), supported by the secretariat. It is expected that meetings of the Bureau will be convened at least 6 times throughout each year, notably

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<sup>3</sup> The Committee determined the role of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies from 2014 [ECE/ENERGY/119, para. 13; ECE/ENERGY/99, para. 12].

in advance of the deadline for document submission and for final preparations for the Committee meeting. Additional Bureau meetings may be convened as the need arises.

23. Documentation for Bureau meetings will be determined by the Bureau members in each case. As a rule, the secretariat should make all proposals for resolutions with the associated documents (including bureau syntheses) available to all Bureau members at least two weeks prior to a meeting. The Secretariat shall prepare minutes of the meetings in consultation with the Chair within 14 days, to be approved in the subsequent bureau meeting.

24. Announcements for Bureau meetings should be issued by the secretariat not less than six weeks in advance.

## **VI. Procedures for the adoption of decisions and reports**

25. The Committee shall, whenever possible, take decisions on the basis of consensus.

26. The preparation and circulation of draft conclusions, recommendations or decisions, and their formal adoption at the end of the meeting, will take place in accordance with the Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe<sup>1</sup>.

27. A draft report of the meeting that reflects in a concise and factual manner the discussion and views expressed by participants shall be circulated before the end of the meeting for comments and adoption by member States at the end of the meeting.

28. If a draft report cannot be circulated at or adopted during the meeting for technical reasons, the Bureau of the Committee will be tasked with taking the necessary steps for subsequent approval no later than ten days after the conclusion of the meeting. Under such circumstances, the Bureau will be authorised to circulate the draft report to the Committee members through the Permanent Missions in Geneva, under a silence procedure of at least 72 hours and in accordance with Rule 44 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of UNECE as contained in E/ECE/778/Rev.5<sup>2</sup>. If the silence is not broken, the reports shall be considered approved.

## **VII. Subsidiary bodies**

29. The Committee may establish Teams of Specialists or other subsidiary bodies in accordance with the existing Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of Teams of Specialists within ECE,<sup>4</sup> to fulfil particular objectives in accordance with the terms of reference created for them, subject to approval by EXCOM.

30. Subsidiary bodies report to the Committee on an annual basis. The Committee approves the mandates and workplans of the subsidiary bodies every two years when in session.

31. Subsidiary bodies play lead roles in the implementation of the mandate and programme of work of the Committee. Subsidiary bodies are invited to make recommendations on the effectiveness and efficiency of current approaches and whether the current structure and work plans adequately support them in the implementation of their respective work plans.

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<sup>4</sup> ECE/EX/2/Rev.1

## Annex II

### Revised publication plans for 2020 and 2021 and publication plan for 2022

#### Revised publication plan for 2020

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Publication title</i>	<i>Planned date of issue</i>	<i>Issue format (print and/or electronic)</i>	<i>Number of pages in original language</i>	<i>Original language</i>	<i>Language for translation</i>	<i>Number of copies and languages for reproduction</i>
<b>Non-recurrent publications</b>							
1	United Nations Resource Management System: An overview of concepts, objectives and requirements	2020	Electronic	100	E	F, R	
2	Promoting policies and measures for energy efficiency implementation	2020	Print and electronic	90	E	F, R	500E, 100F, 400R

#### Revised publication plan for 2021

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Publication title</i>	<i>Planned date of issue</i>	<i>Issue format (print and/or electronic)</i>	<i>Number of pages in original language</i>	<i>Original language</i>	<i>Language for translation</i>	<i>Number of copies and languages for reproduction</i>
<b>Non-recurrent publications</b>							
1	Application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources and the United Nations Resource Management System	2021	Print and electronic	150	E	F, R	500E, 100F, 300R
2	Enhancing the role of technology and innovation to attain sustainable energy	2021	Print and electronic	90	E	F, R	500E, 100F, 400R
3	Carbon neutrality through synergies between gas and renewable energy	2021	Electronic	100	E	F, R	

#### Publication plan for 2022

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Publication title</i>	<i>Planned date of issue</i>	<i>Issue format (print and/or electronic)</i>	<i>Number of pages in original language</i>	<i>Original language</i>	<i>Language for translation</i>	<i>Number of copies and languages for reproduction</i>
<b>Non-recurrent publications</b>							
1	Attaining carbon neutrality in the ECE region	2022	Print and electronic	150	E	F, R	500E, 100F, 400R
2	Achieving carbon neutrality through hydrogen	2022	Print and electronic	150	E	F, R	500E, 100F, 400R

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3	Carbon neutrality in the ECE region: Integrated life cycle management of electricity sources	2022	Print and electronic	150	E	F, R	500E, 100F, 400R
4	United Nations Resource Management System	2022	Print and electronic	150	E	A,C,F,R,S	100A, 100C, 500E, 300F, 400R, 300S
5	Renewable Energy Status Report in the ECE Region	2022	Print and electronic	120	E	F, R	500E, 100F, 400R

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