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**Economic Commission for Europe****Committee on Sustainable Energy****Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency****Seventh session**

Geneva, 22 and 25 September 2020

**Report of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency  
on its seventh session****I. Introduction**

1. The seventh session of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency (the Group of Experts) was held for one day and a half during the period 22-25 September 2020 amid unprecedented circumstances caused by COVID-19, including travel restrictions.
2. This report summarizes the proceedings of the Group of Experts at its seventh session. All the documents related to the session are available on the website of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).<sup>1</sup>

**II. Attendance**

3. The meetings of the Groups of Experts reporting to the Committee on Sustainable Energy held during the period 22-25 September 2020 were attended by more than 350 experts from the following ECE member States: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and Uzbekistan.
4. Experts from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Chad, the People's Republic of China, Colombia, Comoros, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, United Arab Emirates,

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<sup>1</sup> Official documents and room documents and presentations delivered at the meeting are available on the ECE website (see <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=54636>). Official documents of the session are also available at Official Document System of the United Nations (see <http://documents.un.org/>).



United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen participated under Article 11 of the Terms of Reference of the Commission (E/ECE/778/Rev.5).

5. Representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and UNEP-DTU Partnership, Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency attended the meeting. The European Union was represented. Representatives from the European Commission (EC), from the EC Directorate-General (D.G.) for Energy, D.G. for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, and D.G. Joint Research Centre, and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) RawMaterials also participated.

6. Representatives of the following organizations participated: Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (CCOP), EuroGeoSurveys (EGS), International Energy Agency (IEA), and International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

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

### **III. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/1 – Annotated provisional agenda

8. In accordance with the Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission (E/ECE/778/Rev.5), the first item of the provisional agenda is the adoption of the agenda.

9. The provisional agenda as contained in ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/1 was adopted, provided interchange of item 4 and item 5 to reduce a hold time between the joint meetings with the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy.

### **IV. Election of officers (agenda item 2)**

10. The Group of Experts reappointed Mr. Aleksandar Dukovski (Macedonian Centre for Energy Efficiency) as Chair. The Group of Experts also reappointed Mr. Andrei Miniankou (Belarus), Mrs. Natalia Jamburia (Georgia) and Mr. Kostiantyn Gura (Ukraine), and elected Mr. Vahagn Atayan (Armenia), Ms. Sanja Kapetina (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Mr. Mikhail Sonin (Russian Federation) as Vice-Chairs. The Group of Experts further reappointed Prof. Martin K. Patel (University of Geneva) and Mr. Zlatko Pavicic (Croatian Innovators Network) as Vice-Chairs, and Mr. Stefan M. Buettner (Institute for Energy Efficiency in Production) as Co-Chair of the Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency and Vice-Chair *ex officio*. The Group of Experts invited Mr. Benoit Lebot (Senior Policy Advisor at Ministry of Environment, France) and Dr. Alisa Freyre (independent expert) to join the Bureau to strengthen its activities, and also invited Mr. Hannes Mac Nulty (Mac Nulty Consulting) to continue serve as Co-Chair of the Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency and Vice-Chair *ex officio*, and Mr. Vahram Jalalyan (United Nations Development Programme in Armenia) to co-chair the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings and serve on the Bureau as Vice-Chair *ex officio*. The term of office for the elected Chair and members of the Bureau is two years.

11. The Group of Experts has the following members to serve on its Bureau:

(a) Until the conclusion of the eight session: Ms. Antonela Solujic (Serbia), Dr. Romanas Savickas (UNEP-DTU Partnership, Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency) and Dr. Piyush Verma (International Energy Research Centre) as Vice-Chairs.

(b) Until the conclusion of the ninth session: Mr. Aleksandar Dukovski as Chair, and Mr. Vahagn Atayan (Armenia), Mr. Andrei Miniankou (Belarus), Ms. Sanja Kapetina (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mrs. Natalia Jamburia (Georgia), Mr. Mikhail Sonin (Russian Federation), Mr. Kostiantyn Gura (Ukraine), Dr. Alisa Freyre, Mr. Benoit Lebot, Prof. Martin K. Patel, and Mr. Zlatko Pavicic as Vice-Chairs, and, as Vice-Chairs *ex officio*, Mr. Stefan

M. Buettner and Mr. Hannes Mac Nulty (Co-Chairs of the Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency) and Mr. Vahram Jalalyan and Mr. Andres Jaadla (Co-Chairs of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings).

## V. Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency (agenda item 3)

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3 – Draft Industrial Energy Efficiency Action Plan, and assessment of the role of ECE in delivering on it

GEEE-7/2020/INF.2 – Framing the ambition of carbon neutrality

12. In accordance with the Work Plan of the Group of Experts for 2020-2021 (the 2020-2021 Work Plan), the Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency in the ECE region (the Task Force) developed the document ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3, which also includes assessment of the role of ECE in delivering on it. It tentatively outlines the general direction for the Task Force for the period of up to 2022 and lays out a range of its activities associated with their resource requirements.

13. The Co-Chair of the Task Force presented to the Group of Experts the basic framework as set forth in ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3 and invited the experts to discuss the proposed activities and the role of ECE in their implementation.

14. The Group of Experts:

(a) Supported the approach of the Task Force to addressing the issues in the subject area, as envisioned in ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3. In the context of improving the overall performance of operations of businesses, reiterated the importance of better interaction between governments, industry and supporting organizations to overcome many known, new and emerging challenges, and expressed appreciation to the Task Force as a platform for supporting such a type of cooperation;

(b) Taking note of the document being premised on the strong links ECE has to its member States and a network of supporting organizations, stressed an opportunity to widely communicate, through the Task Force, the evidence-based business case for industrial energy efficiency. Encouraged the experts to serve as active links to their constituencies in mainstreaming and dissemination of work of the Task Force;

(c) Having reviewed ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3, welcomed the proposed activities of the Task Force. Recognized, nevertheless, that these largely depend on availability of extrabudgetary resources and in-kind contributions, and requested interested members of the Group of Experts and its Bureau and the secretariat to explore opportunities for securing financial support through developing new project proposals and/or engaging in relevant ongoing and/or planned projects to support activities of the Task Force. Supported enhanced cooperation in implementation of these activities with the other international organizations, academia, and private sector;

(d) Recommended to submit ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3, subject to its necessary editing, to the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-ninth session to seek endorsement of the role of ECE;

(e) Thereby requested extension of the mandate of the Task Force for 2021–2022 (with possibility of extension) to implement the activities as contained in ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3. The Terms of Reference for the Task Force for 2021–2022, the text of which is annexed to ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3, were reviewed and adopted.

15. Under this agenda item, the delegates were also presented with an information document GEEE-7/2020/INF.2, which provides a concise concept of carbon neutrality and its possible implications on energy and heavy industry sectors in the ECE region.

16. The Group of Experts:

(a) Discussed the benchmarks as contained in GEEE-7/2020/INF.2 with regard to a carbon neutrality, as well as possible ways to achieve them through policies that address various developmental aspects of the energy system. Took note of the document and

requested the Task Force to further elaborate on related steps towards carbon neutrality based on sector-specific requirements and report on its findings at the eight session of the Group of Experts;

(b) Owing to domain-specific knowledge of the Task Force, welcomed its engagement with the project “Enhancing understanding of the implications and opportunities of moving to carbon neutrality in the UNECE region across the power and energy intensive industries by 2050” of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems. Reiterated its stand on the need for closer cooperation between the subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on cross-cutting issues (with systemic efficiency being among those); in this respect, offered to further contribute to the project within the scope of its expertise.

## **VI. Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings (agenda item 4)**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/4 – Updated Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings

ECE/ENERGY/121 – Promoting Energy Efficiency Standards and Technologies to Enhance Energy Efficiency in Buildings (ECE Energy Series No. 60)

17. With its renewed mandate for the period 2020-2021, the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings continued its efforts to help accelerate transformation of the world’s building stock through dissemination of the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings (ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2017/4). As the 2020-2021 Work Plan set the objective to further review ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2017/4 as deemed necessary to keep it updated, the document ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/4 was developed and presented to the Group of Experts during its joint meeting under this agenda item with the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy.

18. The Group of Experts:

(a) Welcomed the improvements to the United Nations Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, specifically those related to taking account of the buildings’ value chain for more accurate calculation of energy efficiency (*i.a.*, the amount of energy consumed to produce building materials); orientation on low-carbon technologies to encourage utilization of clean and potentially renewable energy-based technologies to lower greenhouse gas emissions, and; recognition of the impact that buildings have on human health;

(b) Recognized the potential for its collaboration with the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy on buildings’ energy supply, with a view to apply a holistic, systems approach to building design, delivery and operation and thereby align buildings with the highest standards of health, comfort, well-being and sustainability (including improving energy productivity and reducing emissions);

(c) Requested the secretariat to facilitate coordination between the two Groups of Experts.

19. On the matters in relation thereof, which fall under the purview the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency, the Group of Experts:

(a) Approved the text as contained in ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/4 and recommended submission of the document to the Committee on Sustainable Energy for endorsement;

(b) Requested the secretariat to take appropriate measures to support further dissemination of the Framework Guidelines. In pursuing this target, encouraged collaboration with the other United Nations Regional Commissions for a broader outreach. Also encouraged the ECE member States to propose institutions to join the network of international centres of excellence for high-performance buildings, and to continue support the Joint Task Force through extrabudgetary funding;

(c) Recommended continued cooperation with the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management on the activities of the Joint Task Force and on the implementation of relevant extrabudgetary projects;

20. Under this agenda item, the Group of Experts was also informed of the activities of the Joint Task Force implemented during the intersessional period, including publication, project and capacity-building activities. The delegates reviewed the accomplishments of the Joint Task Force.

21. The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the publication entitled “Promoting Energy Efficiency Standards and Technologies to Enhance Energy Efficiency in Buildings” (ECE/ENERGY/121, ECE Energy Series No. 60), which maps the existing standards and technologies and outlines the best practices identified across the region based on the ECE studies conducted in the area of energy efficiency in buildings in 2017-2019 and suggests recommendations intended to support the ECE member States in ongoing efforts to increase buildings’ energy performance;

(b) Welcomed the new 2020-2022 extrabudgetary project “Enhancing national capacities to develop and implement energy efficiency standards for buildings in the UNECE region”, funded by the Russian Federation. Requested the preliminary results of the related gap analysis between the performance objectives as set forth in the Framework Guidelines and the current energy efficiency standards and their implementation in the countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and in the Russian Federation to be reported at the eighth session of the Group of Experts;

(c) Took note of the trainings on energy efficiency standards in buildings and on high-performance buildings for building sector practitioners and policymakers, held during the intersessional period both in-person and through means of telecommunication in the framework of implementation of the activities of the Joint Task Force, specifically: (i) Training Workshop on High Performance Buildings (Yerevan, Armenia; 21-22 November 2019); (ii) Online capacity-building workshop on data solutions for evidence-based policy and stakeholder collaboration (Yerevan, Armenia, online; 12 May 2020); (iii) Online capacity-building workshop on data solutions for evidence-based policy and stakeholder collaboration (Tbilisi, Georgia, online; 14 May 2020); (iv) Online training workshop on the Guidelines and Best Practices for MSMEs in delivering energy-efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment (14 September 2020, in the frames of the United Nations Development Account project “Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the MSME sector”, see section VIII). Recommended continuation of such trainings subject to availability of resources and provided the circumstances permit.

## VII. Regulatory and policy dialogue addressing barriers to improve energy efficiency (agenda item 5)

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/5 – Pathways to Sustainable Energy – Policy Recommendations from the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency

GEEE-7/2020/INF.3 – Digitalization: enabling the new phase of energy efficiency

22. The Group of Experts was presented with the document ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/5, which summarizes the input of the Group of Experts to implementation of the 2015-2020 project “Strengthening capacity of the ECE member States to achieve the energy-related Sustainable Development Goals” (“Pathways to Sustainable Energy”), and is designed to organize viable energy efficiency policies, which seem advisable based on the outcomes of this project to facilitate attainment of sustainable energy in the ECE region.

23. The Group of Experts:

(a) Reconfirmed its vision that energy efficiency shall be at the core of an energy system; relevant measures must be deployed as a priority in production, transmission, distribution and consumption of energy;

(b) Also reconfirmed that a nuanced approach to developing energy efficiency measures, accountable of features of the national energy systems, may ultimately lead to limiting the growth of, or even reducing total final energy consumption in the ECE region, where the share of fossil fuels in the energy mix equals to 80 percent at present and under no economically rational scenario could reduce below 50 percent before 2050. That is also thought to help protecting the populations from energy price volatility resulting from efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of the energy sector in the ECE region;

(c) Endorsed the conclusions on possible ways of accelerating transition to sustainable energy systems in the ECE region and the policy recommendations in relation to energy efficiency as contained in ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/5, paragraphs 17 and 18, and encouraged the Committee on Sustainable Energy to take note of these in its deliberations at the twenty-ninth session. Also called upon the Committee on Sustainable Energy to endorse the final document containing policy recommendations arising from that project.

24. The document GEEE-7/2020/INF.3, developed in accordance with the Work Plan of the Group of Experts for 2020-2021 that i.a. calls on the Group of Experts to explore the role of digitalization and increased use of big data and geo-spatial data in provision of energy services energy developed, was also presented.

25. The Group of Experts:

(a) Expressed appreciation to the Bureau for its efforts in addressing the issues of applying digital technologies in the energy sector, specifically for improving energy efficiency. Took note of the opportunities, thought to be enabled by digitalization, to improve the efficiency of the overall system through, *i.a.*, feedback loop and so that better policy decisions.

(b) Recommended the Committee on Sustainable Energy to consider establishment of a dedicated Task Force on Digitalization in Energy, which shall help placing greater focus of the Group of Experts on the subject of digitalization, and, by involving experts from the other subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy to work on the issues of common concern, will aim to bring together a range of stakeholders and enhance the dialogue to shape the digitalization policy agenda. The proposed Task Force on Digitalization in Energy, subject to its establishment, will report to its parent body, the Committee on Sustainable Energy, and to the Group of Experts.

## **VIII. Guidelines and best practices for micro-, small and medium enterprises in delivering energy-efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment in the post-COVID-19 recovery phase (agenda item 6)**

*Documentation:* GEEE-7/2020/INF.4 – Guidelines and best practices for micro-, small and medium enterprises in delivering energy-efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment in the post-COVID-19 recovery phase

26. The Group of Experts was presented with the report GEEE-7/2020/INF.4, developed in the framework of implementation of the United Nations Development Account project “Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the MSME sector” to which ECE is one of the implementing partners. In its subject field, the report explores the environment that MSME face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, analyses the case studies from MSME in response to it, identifies best practices, and provides guidelines and recommendations on relevant measures.

27. A presentation was delivered on the findings of the research on the environment the clean energy MSME face as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and on examples of best practices in the energy efficiency sector and in the area of renewable energy relevant to a response of MSME to COVID-19 and post-crisis recovery, providing guidelines to MSME on access to financing, markets and advanced technologies, and recommendations to governments for developing policy guidelines and establishing financial incentives schemes. The results of

the online training session on the subject area, held 14 September 2020 in the frames of the project implementation, were also reported to the Group of Experts.

28. The Group of Experts

(a) Took note of the recommendations to governments for developing policy guidelines and establishing financial incentives schemes for MSMEs. The Group acknowledged that these recommendations, if tailored to the national contexts of ECE member States, could enable a more secure development environment for MSMEs to deliver energy-efficient products and provide renewable energy equipment;

(b) Welcomed development of a publication on this topic based on the findings of the study being undertaken by ECE;

(c) Expressed appreciation to the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for its participation in the discussions under this agenda item and reiterated the request to the secretariat to facilitate further cooperation between the two Groups of Experts.

## IX. Other business (agenda item 7)

*Documentation:* GEEE-7/2020/INF.5 – Strategy of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency: vision, mission, goals and objectives

29. The Chair presented the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the Group of Experts, elaborating on the Group of Experts' value added, relevance of work, common goals within the ECE Sustainable Energy Subprogramme and other issues.

30. The Group of Experts, having discussed the proposed strategy, embraced the idea of focusing on the three pillars designated in the document along with their narratives and messaging. Encouraged the ECE member States to give consideration to possible concrete and results-oriented activities in line with this vision, including specific projects aimed at improving regulatory and institutional frameworks for energy efficiency, which are within the mandate of the Group of Experts and which could shape its prospective Work Plan.

31. Requested the secretariat to work with the Bureau of the Group of Experts to develop a draft Work Plan of the Group of Experts for 2022-2023 taking account of the above considerations, 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 timely 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 to be taken as tacit approval.

32. Concerning other matters in relation to this agenda item, the Group of Experts also:

(a) Discussed a need for developing Rules of Procedure governing organization of work of the Group of Experts and its Bureau and agreed that such rules shall be developed and put in place. The Rules of Procedure were thought to be uniform for all the subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, and the Group of Experts hence offered to work on a common text that could eventually be presented to the Committee on Sustainable Energy for its consideration and approval;

(b) Noted the need to expand its membership and requested the secretariat to work with the Bureau of the Group of Experts to identify new members;

(c) Took note with satisfaction that implementation of the Work Plan of the Group of Experts for 2020–2021 was on track, and expressed appreciation to the Bureau and the secretariat for their efforts in managing and directing the current Work Plan between annual sessions amid unprecedented circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **X. Dates of the next meeting (agenda item 8)**

33. The eighth session of the Group of Experts is scheduled to take place in Geneva on 20-21 September 2021. The Group of Experts confirmed its proposal from the previous sessions that its meetings may take place in venues outside Geneva.

## **XI. Adoption of conclusions and recommendations (agenda item 9)**

*Documentation:* GEEE-7/2020/INF.1 – Draft Conclusions and Recommendations arising from the seventh session of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency

34. The conclusions and recommendations were adopted and are included under the relevant agenda items highlighted in this report.

35. The Group of Experts requested that the online discussion recorded in the chat and/or its summary be posted on the website.

## **XII. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting (agenda item 10)**

36. The report of the meeting was adopted, including conclusions and recommendations, subject to any necessary editing and formatting. Following that the Chair closed the meeting.

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