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Item 4(a)

Informal Document 2021/6

**Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy
Report by the Chair**

Report by the Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy

I. Achievements over the past twelve months

1. The Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (the Committee), Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst, is pleased to submit his report to the 115th meeting of the Executive Committee (EXCOM) on 5 March 2021. At its 102nd meeting (Geneva, 14 December 2018), EXCOM approved the programme of work of the sustainable energy subprogramme for 2019–2020. This report outlines the main achievements of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (the Committee) in implementing its programme of work. More information is contained in the report of the twenty-ninth session of the Committee (ECE/ENERGY/133).

2. Since its twenty-eighth session (25–27 September 2019), the Committee has worked to accelerate and deepen the transition to sustainable energy in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region in support of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). The gaps between commitments that countries have made and what is needed to achieve sustainable energy remain substantial.

3. The activities of the sustainable energy subprogramme fall into four broad categories: (i) sustainable resource management; (ii) deep transformation of the energy system; (iii) reducing the environmental footprint of the energy sector; and (iv) support to member States in attaining energy for sustainable development (including regional cooperation, projects, the pathways programme, and engagement with UN Energy processes). The Committee oversees implementation of the following flagship projects and activities (supported by extrabudgetary funding): Pathways to Sustainable Energy; Methane Management in Extractive Industries; High-Performance Buildings Initiative; and the International Fora on Energy for Sustainable Development.

4. Key achievements since October 2019 include:

a. Delivery under conditions of liquidity and COVID-19 constraints

5. In the space of a few months, the COVID-19 pandemic grew from a health crisis to a once-in-a-lifetime global economic and development emergency. It has wreaked havoc across the world, leaving no country, population or sector unharmed. Operations at the United Nations have been disrupted as well. At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings of three of the Groups of Experts of the sustainable energy subprogramme – on Coal Mine Methane, on Gas, and on Resource Management – were postponed. Much of the substantive work of the Groups was delivered through webinars and online workshops, and the formal segments of the postponed meetings in March and April 2020 were merged into the limited capacity available for previously scheduled physical meetings of two other Groups of Experts – Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy – in September 2020. Of the available meeting capacity, three of the meeting slots were limited to two hours with online interpretation and the others had no interpretation because of resource limitations of the United Nations Office in Geneva. Two major events, the Global Methane Forum and the annual International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, were postponed indefinitely though they had been prepared fully. Because of the additional burdens of preparing the online alternatives to in-person meetings and because experts were less able to contribute as they had been previously, the full slate of 60 parliamentary documents could not be produced. The Committee approved a reduction in the number of parliamentary documents from 60 to 55. In addition, institution of additional centres of excellence, notably on high-performance buildings, was delayed.

6. The webinars and virtual workshops that were conducted were a steep but informative learning curve on how to conduct UN business online. Not all the work of the sustainable energy subprogramme lends itself to online approaches, but for those topics that did there were significantly higher rates of participation by experts, better control of agendas, and more cross-cutting themes. The delivery overall involved significantly greater levels of effort.

7. Regarding the continuing liquidity crisis, the Sustainable Energy Division currently has an effective vacancy rate of 42%. The subprogramme was able to conduct activities under

the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy, which was missing a programme officer from 1 July – 31 December 2020, through topics that overlapped with other Groups of Experts. It was not possible to prepare the annual status report on renewable energy.

8. It is anticipated that the liquidity crisis will persist and the subprogramme will need to pursue other avenues to deliver on its commitments.

b. Rules of Procedure for the Committee on Sustainable Energy

9. The Committee at its twenty-ninth session (Geneva, 25-27 November 2020) endorsed Rules of Procedure as contained in Annex I to ECE/ENERGY/133 and requested the Bureaux and the Groups of Experts to apply them henceforth.

10. The Rules of Procedure were prepared in accordance with the Guidelines on procedures and practices for UNECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, annex III, appendix III).

11. 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, provide a basis for accelerated delivery of the sustainable energy subprogramme, and solidify UNECE's reputation as a partner.

c. Strategic review of the sustainable energy subprogramme

12. The objective of UNECE's sustainable energy subprogramme is to help member States ensure that energy makes an optimal, enduring contribution to countries' economies, their peoples' quality of life, and to make concrete, measurable progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement.

13. The Chairs of the six subsidiary bodies of the Committee submitted a review of the strategy of the energy subprogramme to the Committee on Sustainable Energy for its consideration (ECE/ENERGY/2020/12)^a. The Committee has agreed to take up the strategic review with an intergovernmental dialogue among member States with a view to adopting an updated strategy at its thirtieth session, 22-24 September 2021. The secretariat has reached out to member States to nominate focal points in capitals to engage in the strategic review with support from the secretariat and from the Geneva permanent missions.

d. Application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources

14. The subprogramme, through its Expert Group on Resource Management, has developed the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC). In 2020, ten virtual/hybrid technical workshops/webinars and two annual sessions were organized to develop and disseminate UNFC. These events had a cumulative participation of over 1,500 experts.

15. UNFC was updated and the final text of the UNFC Update 2019 (ECE/ENERGY/125) was published in 2020 and endorsed by the Committee at its twenty-ninth session. In view of this update, the Committee invited EXCOM to submit a 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 UNECE for consideration. The Committee also called on UNECE and non-UNECE member States, international organizations, industry and the regional commissions to further deploy and develop UNFC and its derivative United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS).

16. UNRMS development continued with the publication of the "United Nations Resource Management System: An overview of concepts, objectives and requirements" (ECE/ENERGY/134).

17. The UNECE Nexus publication "Natural Resource Nexuses in the ECE region" (ECE/INF/2020/2), was prepared by the interdivisional Nexus team under the leadership of the Sustainable Energy Division, for launch at the sixty-ninth session of the Commission.

^a https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pdfs/CSE/comm29_Nov.20/ECE_ENERGY_2020_12_final_for_submission.pdf

18. Work has progressed on institution of International Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Resource Management (ICE-SRM). In order to ensure the required level of oversight and governance of ICE-SRMs, the Expert Group developed “Criteria for Designation of ICE-SRM and Terms of Reference for ICE-SRM”. These were noted by the Committee at its twenty-ninth session. Interest in establishing ICE-SRMs has been expressed by the European Union, the Russian Federation, and other countries outside the UNECE region. An extrabudgetary project funded by the European Commission (EC) “Supporting UNECE member States in the development and implementation of UNFC and UNRMS” (2020-2024) (ECE-E357) was initiated in July 2020.

19. Additionally, in October 2020, the Geological Survey of Finland (GTK) decided to include UNFC categories in the Mineral Deposit Database of Finland and published practical guidelines for consistent use of UNFC nationally. Finland expects to benefit from the UNFC guidelines by improving its natural resource management, which also will be harmonized with EU requirements. GTK offers training on implementation of UNFC to experts in Finland and other interested countries.

e. Update of the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings and progress on the high-performance buildings initiative

20. The UNECE Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings (ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/4) were updated, and the update was endorsed by the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency in Buildings, the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency, and the Committee.^b

21. UNECE’s High-Performance Buildings Initiative (HPBI) to deploy the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings comprises three pillars: international centres of excellence, a network of academic institutions, and case studies. The COVID-19 pandemic slowed progress on the initiative in 2020, though extended discussions with partners regarding all three pillars have set the stage for rapid progress in 2021 as described in the next section of this document.

22. In mid-2020, the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency and the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings started implementation of a new extrabudgetary project funded by the Russian Federation on enhancing national capacities to develop and implement energy efficiency standards for buildings in the UNECE region. The project is assessing the gaps between the performance objectives set forth in the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings and application of current energy efficiency standards in the countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and in the Russian Federation. Three focus countries (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and the Republic of Moldova) have been identified for developing national studies with a more detailed gap analysis.

f. Industrial Energy Efficiency

23. The Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency developed and endorsed the Industrial Energy Efficiency Action Plan (ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3) to enhance energy productivity in the industrial sector^c. Implementation of the action plan is expected to be an important part of the work plan of the Group of Experts for 2022–2023.

g. Gases

24. The Group of Experts on Gas finalized the Best Practice Guidance for methane management in the oil and gas sector, through an extrabudgetary project funded by the United States.

25. In mid-2020, the Group of Experts on Gas started implementation of a new extrabudgetary project funded by the Russian Federation on improving capacities of UNECE

^b https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/ECE_ENERGY_GE.6_2020_4e.pdf

^c <https://unece.org/sustainable-energyenergy-efficiency/energy-efficiency-industry-sector>

member States to decarbonize the transport sector by increasing the use of natural gas as a motor fuel. The inaugural workshop, held in December 2020, was opened by a Deputy Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation.

26. The Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane (CMM) developed Best Practice Guidance (BPG) for Effective Methane Recovery and Use from Abandoned Coal Mines (Abandoned Mine Methane (AMM)). The BPG was endorsed by the Group and by the Committee and was published in 2020 (ECE/ENERGY/128). The Committee invited EXCOM to submit a draft ECOSOC Decision on the AMM BPG recommending its application worldwide to the sixty-ninth session of UNECE for consideration.

27. The Groups of Experts on CMM and on Gas have worked with partners to develop the concepts and programme for an international decade of methane management. The Committee recommended that UNECE support calls for such an international decade at the General Assembly in 2021.

28. A Task Force on Hydrogen was launched under the auspices of the Groups of Experts on Gas and on Renewable Energy. The Task Force initiated a dialogue on the role of hydrogen to attain carbon neutrality in the UNECE region and to decarbonize hard-to-abate sectors such as energy intensive industries and long-haul transport (events were held in March 2020 and September 2020). Additional extrabudgetary resources are needed to advance the agenda and help countries to improve their understanding about the role of hydrogen in the future energy system. At the request of the Task Force the secretariat initiated fundraising activities to support the activities on hydrogen. Taking note of the document “Hydrogen – an innovative solution to carbon neutrality” (ECE/ENERGY/2020/8), the Committee encouraged UNECE member States to collaborate on developing a comprehensive and science-based terminology for hydrogen, on adopting a uniform methodology for calculating life cycle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from hydrogen, and on developing standards or best practices for deployment of hydrogen and derivative technologies. The Committee also invited UNECE member States to: (i) expand collaboration on hydrogen production across the UNECE region and beyond; and (ii) consider the development of a hydrogen market by developing market stimulation programmes.

h. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

29. A report on “Guidelines and best practices for MSMEs to assure resilience and progress towards a circular economy in sustainable resource management and critical raw material supply chain solutions”^d was issued with support of the Regional Advisory Services. The report recommends the creation of a platform for MSMEs, policymakers and financial institutions to support resilience of resource supply chains in the UNECE region. An online training course on the topic was conducted by the subprogramme and the Regional Adviser on 8 October 2020^e.

30. A report on “Guidelines and best practices for MSME in delivering energy-efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment” was issued in English and in Russian with support of the Regional Advisory Services.^f This report was used to develop an online training course and two training workshops were conducted by the subprogramme and the Regional Adviser; the report was considered by the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency at its seventh session (Geneva and online, 22 and 25 September 2020).^g This work provided the basis for a publication “Guidelines and Best Practices for Micro-, Small and Medium Enterprises in Delivering Energy-Efficient Products and in Providing Renewable Energy Equipment” (ECE/ENERGY/135).^h

^d https://unece.org/DAM/energy/se/pdfs/geee/MSME_circular_economy_report.pdf

^e <https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/online-training-workshop-guidelines-and-best-practices-msmes-assure>

^f <https://unece.org/sustainable-energyregional-advisory-services/un-development-account-project>

^g <https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/seventh-session-group-experts-energy-efficiency>

^h https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/ECE_ENERGY_135_Final.pdf

i. Challenges and opportunities for women-led MSMEs in the natural resource management sector in the post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery

31. A report on “Women entrepreneurship in natural resource management: Challenges and opportunities for the micro-, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) sector in the post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery”ⁱ was issued with support of the Regional Advisory Services. An online training workshop on the topic was conducted by the subprogramme and the Regional Adviser on 17 December 2020^j.

j. Contributions to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the SDG7 Technical Advisory Group, and UN Energy

32. A policy brief on Accelerating Achievement of SDG7 in the time of COVID-19 was prepared for the High-Level Political Forum 2020 by the SDG7 Technical Advisory Group.^k The chapter on Achieving Access to Clean and Affordable Energy in the UNECE Region was prepared by the Sustainable Energy Division. A second, dedicated policy brief on the implications of COVID-19 for sustainable energy was prepared for the UNECE region.

k. Pathways Programme, including the Carbon Neutrality project

33. The project “Enhancing the understanding of the implications and opportunities of moving to carbon neutrality in the UNECE region across the power and energy intensive industries by 2050” (Carbon Neutrality project) was launched under the auspices of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems. The Group of Experts, which now comprises over 60 active members from 37 UNECE member States, created a task force to implement the project. During 2020, the task force developed a framework for attaining carbon neutrality by 2050 in the UNECE region (ECE/ENERGY/GE.5/2020/8 Rev.1) and prepared technology briefs on the role that carbon capture, use and storage (CCUS) technology and the role that nuclear energy could play to attain carbon neutrality (for those countries that have chosen to pursue these technology options). The nuclear energy brief was developed in cooperation with the Expert Group on Resource Management. In addition, as part of the project the task force conducted seven dialogues and capacity-building workshops.

II. Major activities planned for 2021 and beyond

34. As noted previously, the expert groups submitted a draft strategic review to the Committee for its consideration. The Committee decided to consider the strategic review with a dedicated appraisal and discussion among member States with a view to adoption at the thirtieth session of the Committee in 2021. The dialogue is to take place among designated focal points from capitals supported by the secretariat and the Geneva permanent missions.

35. The Pathways Programme has been overseen by the Committee and its Bureau for several years and has delivered its Phase 1 results. The Carbon Neutrality Project underway is managed by the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems and its activities and findings fall within the analytical perimeter of the pathways programme. Activities planned under the project for 2021 include the completion of technology briefs on hydrogen, CCS, and nuclear; a dialogue on technology interplay within the carbon neutrality concept of the power and energy intensive industries; and preparation of key outcomes and conclusions. A second phase of the pathways programme was discussed at length by the Bureau of the Committee in 2020 and will be brought to EXCOM for approval in 2021. Prior to submission to EXCOM, however, the Committee requested that there be an engaged dialogue among member States regarding the pathways programme to ensure clarity and cohesion among the disparate elements of the programme. As with the strategic review, the dialogue is to take

ⁱ <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Women%20Entrepreneurship.pdf>

^j <https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/online-training-workshop-women-entrepreneurship-natural-resource>

^k https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/HLPF2020_SDG7PolicyBrief.pdf

place among designated focal points from capitals supported by the secretariat and the Geneva permanent missions.

36. 2021 will feature events that will be supported by the sustainable energy subprogramme. These include the sixty-ninth session of UNECE, the High-Level Dialogue on Energy 2021 at summit level under the auspices of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) (during the 76th UNGA, September 2021), the thirtieth session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, the eleventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, and the twenty-sixth UN Climate Change Conference (COP26). The subprogramme's work on sustainable resource management, gases (methane, carbon dioxide, and hydrogen), and high-performance buildings can have a notable near-term benefit for both quality of life and climate and will feature prominently in UNECE's contributions to those events.

37. The subprogramme's work on sustainable resource management will continue in 2021 under the auspices of the Expert Group on Resource Management, including: development of UNRMS; further development of UNFC (harmonizing renewable energy resource classification and management based on UNFC; broadening UNFC's application to groundwater); establishment of International Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Resource Management (ICE-SRMs) in the UNECE region and beyond; studying the practical implications of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in the UNECE region and expanding the range of available policy solutions on resource management at national and local levels; and, exploring creation of a platform for MSMEs, policymakers and financial institutions to support resilience of resource supply chains in the UNECE region. Implementation of the extrabudgetary project funded by EC "Supporting UNECE member States in the development and implementation of UNFC and UNRMS" will be a key pillar of the work. The Expert Group contributed to the UN High-level Roundtable on Extractive Industries and Sustainable Development in the UNECE region convened by the UN Deputy Secretary-General and hosted by UNECE on 20 January 2021 and will contribute to the global roundtable on Extractive Industries that will be convened in April 2021.

38. The sustainable energy subprogramme, in cooperation with 13 implementing partners, submitted a successful project proposal to the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). The proposed project will support selected countries of the UNECE region in improving the energy performance of their buildings and reducing embodied carbon and energy to support their development and achievement of tightening of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) targets. The key impacts of the project will be setting standards for building performance and enhanced coordination across the range of building and industry sectors to deliver systemic performance improvements in building construction, operation and throughout the building sector supply chain. Work under this project in 2021 will involve detailed planning of activities and deliverables and coordination of partners' contributions, as well as confirmation of the project's coherence by BMU.

39. The High-Performance Buildings Initiative will work to expand its network of centres of excellence and its research and education consortium. Specific events targeted by the initiative include the thirtieth meeting of the Committee and COP26 in Glasgow.

40. The Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane (CMM) established a Task Force dedicated to monitoring, reporting and abatement of methane emissions in the coal sector (in coordination with EC DG ENER). In 2021, the Task Force will work on developing a review (in the form of a short report) of existing practices in selected countries.

41. The subprogramme is supporting work in cooperation with the United States Department of Energy on lowering emissions from the coal sector through application of high efficiency, low emission (HELE) technologies with a special focus on the feasibility of deploying CCUS infrastructure. In 2021, the Group of Experts on CMM will work to identify UNECE member States interested in obtaining a techno-economic analysis for CCUS opportunities at their coal-fired power plants.

42. The Group of Experts on CMM continues its work on transition of the industries along the coal value chain with special focus on just transition and mine closure and repurposing.

The Group will organize meetings dedicated to transition of the coal sector providing interested UNECE member States with a platform for exchange of knowledge and experience. The Group also will engage with stakeholders from industries that depend on coal to help them design and deliver emission-reduction projects. Finally, the Group will deliver interest-driven capacity-building workshops on proper management of methane from abandoned mines.

43. The Global Methane Forum is the premier global event for discussing methane issues across the energy-related extractive industries. Two prior sessions of the Forum were held respectively in Washington D.C., US, in 2016 and in Toronto, Canada, in 2018 and succeeded in attracting stakeholders from over 50 countries representing both the public and private sectors. The 2020 Forum was due to have been hosted by UNECE from 23-27 March 2020 in Geneva but was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions are ongoing with partner organizations, including the Global Methane Initiative, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and the UN Environment Programme, to reschedule the Forum in 2021, the pandemic permitting. Discussions are also ongoing with these partners regarding declaration of an international decade for methane management.

44. The sustainable energy subprogramme is working with partners and member States to obtain a UNGA declaration for an International Decade for Methane Management at its September 2021 meetings.

45. The project to improve capacities of UNECE member States to decarbonize their transport sectors by increasing the use of natural gas as a motor fuel will be a key focus of the work of the Group of Experts on Gas. Activities in 2021 will include an assessment of the state of development of compressed (CNG) and liquefied (LNG) natural gas refuelling and storage infrastructure, development of case studies of overcoming barriers to increasing the share on CNG/LNG vehicles, life cycle analysis of competing fuelling options, comparative analysis of safety requirements for refuelling stations, and development of recommendations/policy guidelines on removing regulatory, legal, economic, technical and public perception barriers.

46. The Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency established a Task Force on Digitalization in Energy. All the groups of experts are asked to participate in the task force that will explore the opportunities that digitalisation can offer for improving integration, efficiency, and operation of the energy system.

47. The Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency, through its Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency, also will start implementation of its Industrial Energy Efficiency Action Plan.

48. Preparations were made to organize the eleventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Tbilisi, Georgia, in autumn 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic the event was postponed. The subprogramme is engaged with partners to organize and conduct the eleventh forum in 2021.

III. Any proposed change to the subsidiary structure of the Committee

49. There are no proposed changes to the subsidiary structure of the Committee to report.

IV. Follow-up to the 2019 session of the Economic Commission for Europe

50. The Commission recommended that the ECE Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings and their derivative High-Performance Buildings Initiative be deployed and disseminated widely. The Commission transmitted the Framework Guidelines to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration and, possibly, endorsement. At its 38th plenary meeting, on 24 July 2019, in its decision 2019/254, the

Economic and Social Council took note of decision H (68) of 10 April 2019 of the Economic Commission for Europe on the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings (E/2019/15/Add.2, draft resolution V). [see E/2019/15/Add.2, chap. I, draft resolution V and E/2019/SR.38].

(a) A project was undertaken on Enhancing national capacities for development and implementation of the Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings in the UNECE region. The project aimed to improve energy efficiency in buildings and reduce global GHG emissions into the atmosphere in the UNECE region through mapping of energy efficiency standards in buildings in the UNECE region; creation of an online database of experts on energy efficiency in buildings; and conduct of a workshop for stakeholders from energy and housing sector to validate the results of the mapping.

(b) UNECE's High-Performance Buildings Initiative to deploy the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, and thereby reduce the carbon footprint of buildings and improve health and quality of life, comprises international centres of excellence to provide implementation-oriented education and assistance to building developers, contractors, architects, and engineers, as well as regulatory and planning officials; an academic consortium to undertake research and advanced education in building materials, design, and construction for architects, engineers, policymakers and other stakeholders; and case studies that illustrate application of the Framework Guidelines.

51. The Commission recommended to the Economic and Social Council that, recognizing the role that growing atmospheric concentrations of methane play in climate change and the imperative for near-term remediation, 2020 be declared the International Year of Methane in support of the Global Methane Challenge and its partner organizations. The Commission decided to transmit the recommendations to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration and, possibly, endorsement. The issue was brought to the attention of ECOSOC at its 38th plenary meeting, on 24 July 2019. The discussion on methane has since moved to pursuit of an international decade of methane management and that consideration for such a declaration are to be brought before UNGA by member States and partner organizations.

52. At its twenty-ninth session, the Committee requested the Economic Commission for Europe at its sixty-ninth session consider decisions on resource management, near-term acceleration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through action on gases and buildings, and study of the impact of subsidies as well as carbon pricing options. The matter has been brought to the Executive Committee for consideration.

V. Intersectoral activities: new activities and/or progress in existing intersectoral activities

a. Nexus activities

53. By taking a nexus approach to bring expertise from across its areas of work to high-impact areas where multiple SDGs converge, UNECE developed a publication "Measuring and Monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals" to help countries establish a more robust monitoring and measuring system to achieve SDGs. The broader concept of "energy for sustainable development" applies to measuring progress towards all energy-related SDGs thus reflecting cross-cutting interconnections. The sustainable energy subprogramme will continue to provide support both within UNECE and in collaboration with other intergovernmental organizations on proper monitoring and measuring attainment of the 2030 Agenda.

54. Water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus activities will continue, including cooperation with the UNECE Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus.

b. Sustainable Energy and Gender

55. The Committee at its twenty-ninth session 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. Work will continue on a number of fronts, in particular

on the subregional aspect of gender activities in energy. The Committee will increase its efforts to promote the gender perspective throughout its system, including by raising awareness on gender mainstreaming in energy-related activities; promoting the incorporation of a gender perspective in meeting agendas and presentations; and, creating a supportive environment for expert participation, policies, regulations and innovative development that consider both women's and men's needs in the energy sector.

c. Possible project on decarbonization options for transport

56. Building on the current project on the use of natural gas in transport and continuing programmes in member States to accelerate the penetration of electric vehicles and noting observations of experts that the current Carbon Neutrality Project does not provide a comprehensive view of countries' options, discussions are underway with the transport and environment subprogrammes, partner organizations, and member States on the possibility of working on "well-to-wheel" analyses of decarbonization options for transportation. The intent would be to conceive a project that covers all primary fuels and energy carriers, transport modes, demand for transport including urban organisation and new ways of working, and sub-regional differences.

d. Proposal to amend the Programme of Work approval process

57. At its twenty-ninth session, the Committee noted that changes that member States had envisaged to the draft programme of work for the Committee for 2022 could not be reflected and 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.

58. The Committee invited the Executive Committee to consider proposing changes to the programme of work approval process such that the sectoral committees have the opportunity to make substantive changes to the draft programme of work when it is presented for adoption.

VIII. Technical cooperation activities

59. The Committee at its twenty-ninth session stressed the importance of regional advisory services and capacity-building activities for its work and to respond to the needs of UNECE member States, in particular in the current circumstances.

60. The Regional Adviser continued to work closely with colleagues in the Sustainable Energy Division, other UNECE Divisions, other UN Regional Commissions, UN Resident Coordinator Offices (RCO), organizations of the UN system, and international and national organizations in support of needs of countries eligible for technical cooperation activities based on demand expressed by countries. The activities undertaken in the region are described in detail in document ECE/ENERGY/2020/6.

61. Since document ECE/ENERGY/2020/6 was issued, the following activities were completed by the Regional Adviser with other members of the Sustainable Energy Division:

(a) Online Capacity-building Workshop on Sustainable Renewable Energy Investment and Deployment. Peer-learning dialogue on Water-Energy Nexus - Focus on the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (19 October 2020^l).

(b) Subregional workshop on attaining carbon neutrality in Central Asia and other countries of the UNECE region (Geneva, 24 November 2020^m).

^l <https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/online-capacity-building-workshop-sustainable-renewable-energy-investment>

^m https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pp/ces/ge16_2020/Subregional.pdf

(c) Online training workshop on Women entrepreneurship in natural resource management: Challenges and opportunities for the MSME sector in the post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery (17 December 2020ⁿ).

62. The following activities with the support of the Regional Adviser are planned for 2021:

(a) IKI project on Improving the energy efficiency of the global building supply chain industry and its products to deliver high-performance buildings (selection of the proposal for further development has been confirmed) – led by UNECE, with 13 implementing partners.

(b) IKI project on Regional mechanisms for the low-carbon, climate-resilient transformation of the energy-water-land nexus in Central Asia – led by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with the UNECE Environment Division.

(c) SDG Fund project proposal on Green financing facility to improve air quality and combat climate change in North Macedonia – led by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in North Macedonia.

(d) United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project proposal on Strengthening the capacity of selected Countries with special needs to align their energy policies with SDG7 and the Paris Agreement targets and to build back better from COVID-19 – led by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

(e) UNDA project on Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the MSMEs sector – led by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

(f) Extrabudgetary project on enhancing national capacities to develop and implement energy efficiency standards for buildings in the UNECE region, with the Housing and Land Management Unit.

VIII. Cooperation with other organizations

63. An external evaluator conducted an evaluation from March–July 2020^o of the collaboration among UNECE, other UN entities, and other partners in delivering on energy for sustainable development. The cooperation and partnership practices of the Sustainable Energy Division with internal and external entities were found to be coherent with Resolution 67/215 (Decade of Sustainable Energy for All) and highly relevant to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, as well as for delivering on the expected accomplishments and outputs of the sustainable energy subprogramme.

64. UNECE has applied, and continues to follow, a decentralized resource mobilization approach to reduce its dependency on the regular budget and to attract extrabudgetary sources of funding. While the status of the Division's extrabudgetary funding significantly improved in 2020, more efforts will be required in 2021. The sustainability of UNECE's partnership with its member States and external parties depends on the value added by UNECE and its recognition by stakeholders as a leader in sustainable energy.

65. As noted previously, the subprogramme has several successful activities ongoing with partners. Beyond the engagement of the expert groups with the full spectrum of stakeholders in each area of work, these include notably the International Fora on Energy for Sustainable Development, the Global Methane Forum, the Pathways Programme, the High-Performance Buildings Initiative, and the IKI project proposal on Improving the energy efficiency of the

ⁿ <https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/online-training-workshop-women-entrepreneurship-natural-resource>

^o http://staging2.unece.org.net4all.ch/fileadmin/DAM/OPEN_UNECE/03_Evaluation_and_Audit/Evaluation_Reports-with_SPs/05-SustainableEnergy/SP5_2020_Eval_Report.pdf

global building supply chain industry and its products to deliver high-performance buildings that has been selected for further development. In addition, the subprogramme remains active in many multi-organizational pursuits including UN Energy and the Technical Advisory Group on SDG7.
