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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane

Seventeenth session

Geneva, 21-22 March 2022

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the seventeenth session

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 11 a.m. on Monday 21 March 2022¹

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Opening remarks.
3. Activities and priorities of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and matters for consideration by the Group of Experts.
4. Report on implementation of the work plan for 2020-2021.
5. Work plan for 2022-2023.
6. Methane emissions from coal mines.
7. Transition of the coal mining sector.
8. Explosion risk reduction.
9. Future work of the Group of Experts.
10. Twelfth joint meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and the Global Methane Initiative Coal Subcommittee.
11. Preparations for the eighteenth session of the Group of Experts.
12. Any other business.

¹ Delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations need to register at least two weeks prior to the session online (<https://unece.org/info/Sustainable-Energy/Coal-Mine-Methane/events/363735>) or by e-mail (cmm.energy@un.org). Delegates are requested to present themselves at least 45 minutes prior to the meeting's start time at the entrance located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the Sustainable Energy Division's website) to obtain an entrance badge. Registration at the Pregny Gate is open every workday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The secretariat can be contacted by telephone (extension 73966 or 74140).

13. Adoption of conclusions and recommendations.
14. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting.

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda

In accordance with the rules of procedure of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the first item on the provisional agenda is adoption of the agenda. The documents for the session will be published on the ECE Sustainable Energy Division coal mine methane website² as they become available. A detailed timetable for the session also will be posted. The Group of Experts will be invited to adopt conclusions and recommendations as each agenda item is concluded.

2. Opening remarks

Opening remarks will be delivered covering recent achievements of the Group, as well as its goals for the future, taking into account the recent expansion of the Group's mandate to encompass just transition issues agreed by the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its thirtieth session, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the strategic review of the ECE sustainable energy subprogramme. The activities of the Group will be presented in the context of the most important developments in methane management in the coal sector.

3. Activities and priorities of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and matters for consideration by the Group of Experts

The secretariat will provide an overview of recent activities of the Committee on Sustainable Energy following its thirtieth session, 22-24 September 2021, as well as any decisions taken related to the work of the Group of Experts including by the Executive Committee of ECE. Amongst other issues, the Committee requested that the Group of Experts consider the suggested clarifications in its mandate and terms of reference and submit a revised version to the thirty-first session of the Committee.

4. Report on implementation of the work plan for 2020-2021

The Bureau and the secretariat will report on implementation of the Group of Experts' work plan for 2020-2021.

5. Work plan for 2022-2023

The Committee on Sustainable Energy at its thirtieth session, 22-24 September 2021, approved the work plan for 2022-2023 adopted by the Group of Experts at its sixteenth session in March 2021. The Group of Experts will discuss the steps necessary for the efficient and effective implementation of the work plan and will identify the priorities requiring the Group's attention in the coming months.

6. Methane emissions from coal mines

Reducing methane emissions is one of the most cost-effective options for limiting the impact of the energy sector on climate. However, only with reliable emissions data, can policymakers design effective greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions policies, evaluate mitigation opportunities, and comply with their international climate commitments. There is therefore

² <http://www.unece.org/energy/se/cmm.html>

an immediate need for national emissions monitoring and reporting schemes that are effective and based on comparable methodologies. National monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) programmes can not only help countries better understand the contribution of coal mining to their overall methane and other GHG emissions, but also identify opportunities for mitigation. The Group of Experts will discuss these matters, explore the most relevant international initiatives focused on methane emissions monitoring and mitigation, evaluate its recent MRV-related activities, and outline a strategy for promoting best practices in this field.

7. Transition of the coal mining sector

The commitment to keep global warming to well below two degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels requires decarbonization in all economic sectors. While it can be expected that decarbonization efforts will create new opportunities, it will surely have also certain disruptive effects on high-carbon regions and energy-intensive industries. To address those problems the decarbonization process should be carried out in accordance with the principles of the “just transition”.

Mine closure is one of the most challenging parts of transition. Apart from social matters related to loss of employment by thousands of people whose lives are directly or indirectly linked with coal extraction activities, there are also numerous environmental issues that need to be addressed to ensure that not only actions required by existing laws and regulations are taken, but also those that are necessary to prepare for eventual mined-land repurposing. Therefore, closure of each mine needs to be carefully planned and executed in accordance with the most rigorous standards. Since cessation of coal production does not halt methane emission, majority of which are released within a few first years after closure, abandoned mine methane (AMM) recovery and utilization plans should be developed well ahead of time to exploit resource potential to the fullest, or at least prevent the unimpeded flow of methane to the atmosphere.

The Group of Experts will discuss best strategies for incorporating into its work the challenges related to just transition of the coal mining regions and will determine the desired scope and focus of its activities in that field. It will explore what contribution to the development and implementation of the just transition concept in the ECE region it can make from its own experience and expertise, and how it can help the member States to go through the transition process in the most effective way. The Group will also address the issue of expanding its membership to include experts specializing in just transition matters. The discussions will be facilitated by Concept note: principles for consideration during closure of coal mines (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2022/3) and Cultural issues: managing the social aspects of the transition of industries along the coal value chain and coal-dependent regions (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2022/4).

8. Explosion risk reduction

Despite the strong environmental focus of the recent increased worldwide interest in methane, the continuing health and safety threat that it causes during coal mining must be recognized. Methane still creates unsafe working conditions in many underground mines around the world, causing many oftentimes deadly methane-related accidents each year. The Group of Experts will discuss the most recent accidents and how to prevent them. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and other relevant stakeholders will be invited to join this discussion.

9. Future work of the Group of Experts

The Group of Experts will discuss the technical aspects of its activities taking into account the continued public health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing popularity of the new modes of communication. It will strive to identify the best available options for outreach to the widest possible range of stakeholders.

10. Twelfth joint meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and the Global Methane Initiative Coal Subcommittee

The Coal Subcommittee of the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) is one of the Group of Experts' key stakeholders. The thirty-first meeting of the GMI Coal Subcommittee will be held within the framework of the seventeenth session of the ECE Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and will discuss, amongst other issues, joint activities.

11. Preparations for the eighteenth session of the Group of Experts

The Group of Experts will discuss the preparations for its eighteenth session. Possible key topics for the substantive portion of the session will be proposed and discussed. The eighteenth session of the Group of Experts will be held in 2023 in Geneva.

12. Any other business

The Group of Experts may discuss any other pertinent issues that arise before or during the session and that fall within the scope of the Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts. To the extent possible, delegates are encouraged to notify the Chair and the secretariat in advance if they wish to raise any issues under this agenda item.

13. Adoption of conclusions and recommendations

The Group of Experts will be invited to adopt conclusions and recommendations as may be agreed.

Draft conclusions and recommendations will be circulated to participants and Geneva Permanent Representations at least ten days before the start of the meeting.

14. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting

The Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, will summarize the agreed conclusions and recommendations. The Group of Experts will be invited to adopt its report based on a draft prepared by the secretariat in cooperation with the Bureau, following which the Chair will close the meeting.
