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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Sustainable Energy

Thirty-first session

Geneva, 21-23 September 2022

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the thirty-first session*

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, and online starting at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 21 September 2022

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda.
2. High-level segment: Building resilient energy systems in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region: achieving greater energy security, affordability, and net-zero.
3. Delivering on sustainable energy: subprogramme accomplishments since the thirtieth session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy.
4. Achieving high performance in buildings.
5. Modernizing resource management.
6. Enabling a hydrogen ecosystem.
7. Addressing methane management.
8. Understanding subsidies and carbon pricing.
9. Technical assistance, regional outreach and collaboration activities.
 - (a) Regional advisory services and collaboration activities;
 - (b) Extrabudgetary and United Nations Development Account projects.
10. Preparing for the 70th session of the Economic Commission for Europe.

* Delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations are requested to register online at <https://unece.org/info/Sustainable-Energy/Committee-on-Sustainable-Energy/events/368601>, if possible at least three weeks prior to the session. On the day of the meeting, delegates are requested to present themselves at least 45 minutes prior to the start time at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix opposite the Red Cross Building (see the map on the Sustainable Energy Division's website) for the issuance of an identification badge. Registration is open every work day at the Pregny Gate from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.



11. Looking ahead: Future work of the Committee on Sustainable Energy.
 - (a) Review of subprogramme performance and planning;
 - (b) Approval of documents.
12. Election of officers.
13. Any other business.
14. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting.

II. Annotations

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/142 – Annotated provisional agenda for the thirty-first session

The theme of the thirty-first session is “Energy Security, Resilience and Net Zero: Tangible Actions to Deliver a Sustainable Energy Future”. The provisional agenda is based on decisions taken by the Committee on Sustainable Energy (the Committee) at its thirtieth session, decisions taken by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) at its sixty-ninth session and on developments since those sessions.¹

2. High-level segment: Building resilient energy systems in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region: achieving greater energy security, affordability, and net-zero

Documentation: CSE-31/2022/INF.2 – Building Resilient Energy Systems in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Region: Achieving Greater Energy Security, Affordability, and Net-zero

The ECE region is facing a number of economic, geopolitical, supply chain, climate and environmental challenges that pose a significant challenge to the current energy system, exposing its vulnerabilities, and that may divert attention from the longer-term objectives of meeting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in general, and of the 1.5-2°C target set by the Paris Agreement, in particular. It is essential to focus efforts, resources and expertise on addressing the range of crises in an integrated way, considering both the short- and long-term. The current challenges that the region is facing provide a unique opportunity for member States to re-examine the existing energy infrastructure and design more resilient energy systems that deliver on energy security, economic and climate goals.

This plenary session will begin with identifying the main challenges of energy security, economic recovery/affordability, and environmental sustainability that the ECE region is currently facing in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world and the importance of addressing them quickly, strategically and with a vision for the long-term.

Member States will be invited to present their (i) priorities, (ii) greatest needs and opportunities, as well as (iii) the concrete actions that they are taking to increase security, affordability, and sustainability of their respective energy systems. Member States and experts from the six subsidiary bodies of the Committee will then be invited to engage in a discussion on resiliency-related opportunities and priorities for action at the ECE regional and sub-regional levels and to recommend actions that the Committee can take to (i) respond to priorities and needs of member States, and (ii) collectively promote specific actions,

¹ The ECE Subprogramme on Sustainable Energy assists member States in integrating the objectives of Sustainable Development Goals 7 and 13 by reducing the environmental footprint of energy, accelerating deep transformation of the energy sector to meet future needs, ensuring the sustainable management of resources and assessing options to ensure energy for sustainable development.

speeding up the achievement of resilient energy systems that deliver a secure, affordable and sustainable energy future.

An unofficial room document (Building Resilient Energy Systems in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Region: Achieving Greater Energy Security, Affordability, and Net-zero (CSE-31/2022/INF.2) has been prepared by the Bureaux of the six subsidiary bodies of the Committee as background to facilitate the discussions. This document also contains a number of technical recommendations that the Committee could consider.

3. Delivering on sustainable energy: subprogramme accomplishments since the thirtieth session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy

This segment will provide an overview of the activities, accomplishments and priorities of the Committee and its six subsidiary bodies since the thirtieth session of the Committee.

4. Achieving high performance in buildings

Buildings consume over 70 percent of electric power generated and 40 percent of primary energy; the energy services they require are responsible for 40 percent of carbon dioxide emissions. The energy requirements of buildings, however, could be reduced to a point at which needs can be met by no or low-carbon energy sources. Rather than addressing efficiency on a component-by-component basis, ECE takes a holistic approach to building design, delivery and operation, and therefore develops and maintains principles-based Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings (ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/4), with an outcomes-based vision of building performance and recognition that buildings are complex systems embedded in a community within a city.

To disseminate and deploy the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, ECE launched a High-Performance Buildings Initiative (HPBI) that focuses on capacity development and impact in the field, developing the intellectual, material and financial resources to educate, advocate and advise for transformation to high performance buildings, and on the outreach required to create a worldwide urban shift to sustainable buildings. The ultimate objective is to improve health and quality of life within the built environment, while simultaneously decarbonizing building-related energy requirements, thus breaking the historic link between improved health, quality of life and atmospheric carbonization.

This segment will include presentations on relevant activities implemented by ECE in the member States and will feature a discussion on ongoing and future regional cooperation in the area of high-performance buildings.

5. Modernizing resource management

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/2022/6 – Sustainable management of critical raw materials required for the low-carbon energy transition

ECE/ENERGY/2022/7 – Resources as a Service: A catalyst to accelerate the energy transition, safeguarding climate action targets within the circular economy

To deliver on climate change and sustainable development, the ECE region must optimize the management of endowments of natural resources, including critical raw materials (CRMs). A resilient, sustainable and ethical supply of CRMs is essential for clean energy, mobility transitions, and digital transformation. Resiliency in resource supply requires careful attention to several important environmental, economic and social considerations. Governments, the financial sector, and civil society must cooperate to share relevant social and environmental information and knowledge.

Historically, extractive industries have also been a major driver of economic growth, particularly for now-advanced economies that benefitted during and after the Industrial Revolution. Transforming extractive industries must be part of the solution. This will require giving equal weight to the management of the impact of extractives on societies and the environment, as has been shown in economic considerations in the past. Also needed is a shift in mindset from short-term economic considerations to long-term financial risks and broader-based benefits associated with the transition to net-zero economies, including social, environmental and cultural externalities. The United Nations published a Policy Brief in 2021 on “Transforming Extractive Industries for Sustainable Development.”² The Policy Brief calls for multifaceted action on producing and responsibly consuming resources. The Policy Brief stresses the application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) and the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS). To operationalize the recommendations, a United Nations (UN) Working Group on Transforming the Extractive Industries for Sustainable Development was established to bring together all stakeholders on a common platform.

Panels will discuss regional cooperation on enhancing sustainable management of resources through enabling new approaches such as “Resources as a Service” to improve resource efficiency and help progress towards a more circular economy. ECE’s five-point action plan on sustainable resource management which includes (i) Social contract on natural resources; (ii) Sustainable investment guidelines; (iii) Sustainable resource management systems; (iv) Traceability and transparency of value chains; and (v) Strategic environmental assessments will be discussed by domain experts.

The UN Working Group on Transforming the Extractive Industries for Sustainable Development and its priorities and outputs to date will also be discussed.

6. Enabling a hydrogen ecosystem

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/2022/8 – A comprehensive and science-based terminology, classification and taxonomy for hydrogen

If business as usual continues, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are projected to rise, leading to a median global warming of 3.2°C by 2100. A deep and quick decarbonization is needed. Sustainable hydrogen could be the key ingredient.

Hydrogen is already strongly present in the mainstream media, coded by colour - such as green, blue, yellow, or grey - to refer to different production methods. Such colour coding, however, conveys little information about associated carbon dioxide emissions, let alone about other economic and social consequences of hydrogen production or trade. ECE member States and other stakeholders still disagree on how to quantify the sustainability of hydrogen.

This segment will explore the approaches currently used and provide recommendations, including but not limited to the development of a comprehensive classification for hydrogen, continued policy dialogue, the fostering of cooperation and development in the ECE region and/or through the establishment a task force/working group that would prepare the Specifications for the application of UNFC to hydrogen.

7. Addressing methane management

The Committee will turn its attention to methane emissions from the energy-related extractive industries. This topic has recently become one of the top priorities for many member States, as evidenced by the Global Methane Pledge – announced at the twenty-sixth UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in 2021 – which more than 30 ECE member States joined. During this segment, member States will share their strategies for reducing methane emissions, identify their successes, explain the main problems that they face, and identify the areas in which the Committee could assist them in meeting the set objectives.

² https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_extractives.pdf

The Committee will also explore the challenges and opportunities related to monitoring, reporting and mitigating methane emissions, building on the information shared by member States. This will include presentations on what experts view as the most effective monitoring practices and technologies, giving special focus to satellite methods, which create new opportunities for emissions quantification independent from the emitter but require understanding and corroboration to ensure accurate interpretation and appropriate use. The Committee will be invited to discuss solutions policymakers can adopt, including the possibility to unify the multiple existing reporting systems, to make it easier to secure the most comprehensive and accurate data from sources.

The session will conclude by turning towards methane emissions from the coal industry. The industry is under ever-increasing pressure to phase down its activities, and to continue to limit its negative impact on the environment. Such steps however, impose significant costs not only on the affected operators, but also on their personnel and the communities and regions, the well-being of which is closely interlinked with the industry. In that context, the Committee will discuss the importance of aligning methane mitigation efforts with just transition goals and processes, particularly in the coal sector.

8. Understanding subsidies and carbon pricing

The sixty-ninth session of the Commission (20-21 April 2021) requested the Committee 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 (E/2021/37 and E/ECE/1494, section E(69), para 6).

Energy subsidies and carbon (or other GHG) pricing mechanisms are critical instruments for the ECE region to use to ensure the appropriate market signals are sent to deliver on a secure, affordable and sustainable energy future. Without the proper economic signals that reflect both the costs and benefits of energy choices, the markets will not respond fast enough to ensure that the ECE region meets the longer-term objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in general, and of the 1.5-2°C target set by the Paris Agreement. The design of subsidies and carbon pricing mechanisms can heavily influence the success of the instrument. For example, the allocation structure for any revenue generated through a pricing mechanism can heavily influence and potentially mitigate much of the impact upon consumers.

This segment will explore which energy subsidies, including those that support end-use consumers, fossil fuels and/or renewables, and carbon (or other GHG) pricing mechanisms currently exist in the ECE region and the potential impacts associated with implementing new and/or reforming existing regulatory and economic instruments in the region. It will also examine examples from outside the region that could serve as models for replication and/or adaptation. The Committee will be invited to discuss the needs of member States for additional information to support the increased adoption of effective, transparent economic and regulatory approaches to convey the appropriate market signals. The Committee will then be invited to discuss what concrete activities it will undertake on this topic and with what resources.

9. Technical assistance, regional outreach and collaboration activities

(a) Regional advisory services and collaboration activities

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/2022/5 – Report on regional advisory services in sustainable energy

The Regional Advisor will report on regional advisory services in sustainable energy and on cooperation with other international organizations.

(b) Extrabudgetary and United Nations Development Account projects

The Committee will receive an update of extrabudgetary projects and projects under the United Nations Development Account as well as other stakeholders since its last session.

10. Preparing for the 70th session of the Economic Commission for Europe

The Committee will be invited to discuss next steps on sustainable energy subprogramme activities to operationalize decisions taken at the sixty-ninth session of the Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva, 20-21 April 2021) (E/ECE/14944) and discuss ways that the Committee can contribute to the upcoming 70th session, planned for April 2023.

11. Looking ahead: Future work of the Committee on Sustainable Energy

(a) Review of subprogramme performance and planning

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/2022/1 – Draft programme of work of the Sustainable energy subprogramme for 2023

ECE/ENERGY/31/2022/INF.1 – Outline of key components of the programme of work of the Sustainable energy subprogramme for 2024

The Committee will be invited to provide guidance on the future direction of its programme of work and an effective and streamlined role of the subsidiary bodies to support desired outcomes to accelerate the delivery of energy for sustainable development and concretize its reputation as a credible and relevant partner. The Committee will be invited to discuss new work areas that may have emerged as important topics since the thirtieth session of the Committee, including any new ones that arose during the thirty-first session.

The secretariat will present the draft programme of work of the Sustainable energy subprogramme for 2023 (ECE/ENERGY/2022/1). This document is consistent with the ECE proposed programme budget for 2023 (A/77/6 (Sect.20)) which was reviewed by the ECE Executive Committee in December 2021 and submitted for consideration by the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The programme of work document reflects the annual budget format presented in 2020 in line with General Assembly resolution 72/266, with enrichments reflecting General Assembly resolutions 74/251, 75/243 and 76/245. The Committee is requested to adopt the proposed Draft programme of work of the Sustainable energy subprogramme for 2023 and to recommend submission to the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) for subsequent approval.

The Committee will also be invited to consider the “Outline of key components of the programme of work of the Sustainable energy subprogramme for 2024” (ECE/ENERGY/31/2022/INF.1) and provide recommendations on these components, as necessary. Those recommendations which are agreed by the Committee and included in its decisions will be reflected in the proposed programme plan of the Sustainable energy subprogramme for 2024.

(b) Approval of documents

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/2022/2 – Provisional calendar of meetings of the sustainable energy subprogramme for 2023

ECE/ENERGY/2022/3 – Revised publication plan for 2022 and draft publication plans for 2023 and 2024

ECE/ENERGY/GE.8/2022/2 – Report of the Group of Experts on Gas on its ninth Session

ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2022/2 – Report of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine methane and Just Transition on its seventeenth session

ECE/ENERGY/2022/4 – Final mandate and terms of reference of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition

The Committee will be requested to note or approve a range of documents to support the implementation of mandated areas of work and to recommend their submission to EXCOM for subsequent approval if required.

The Committee will be invited to agree to the provisional calendar of meetings for 2023 and to document ECE/ENERGY/2022/3, which contains changes to the already approved 2022 and 2023 publication plans and the draft publication plan for 2024.

12. Election of officers

The Committee will be invited to elect its Chair and Vice-Chair(s) as appropriate.

13. Any other business

Member States may raise any other issues under this agenda item.

14. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/143 – Report of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on its thirty-first session

The Chair will summarize the significant decisions, conclusions and recommendations taken by the Committee.

The Committee will be invited to adopt its report based on a draft prepared by the secretariat.

III. Provisional timetable

Wednesday, 21 September 2022	
10.00-10.10	1. Opening and adoption of the agenda
10.10–12.00	2. High-level segment: Building resilient energy systems in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region: achieving greater energy security, affordability, and net-zero
12.00-15.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
15.00-16.00	2. High-level segment: Building resilient energy systems in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region: achieving greater energy security, affordability, and net-zero (continued) 3. Delivering on sustainable energy: subprogramme accomplishments since the thirty-first session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy
16.00-17.00	4. Achieving high performance in buildings
Thursday, 22 September 2022	
10.00-11.30	5. Modernizing resource management
11:30 - 12:00	6. Enabling a hydrogen ecosystem
12.00-15.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
15.00-17.00	7. Addressing methane management 8. Understanding subsidies and carbon pricing
Friday, 23 September 2022	
10.00-10.30	9. Technical assistance, regional outreach and collaboration activities. (a) Regional advisory services and collaboration activities (b) Extrabudgetary and UN Development Account projects
10.30-12.00	10. Preparing for the 70th session of the Economic Commission for Europe 11. Looking ahead: Future work of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (a) Review of subprogramme performance and planning
12.00-15.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
15.00-15.30	11. Looking ahead: Future work of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (continued) (b) Approval of documents
15.30-17.00	12. Election of officers 13. Any other business 14. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting