

## Committee on Sustainable Energy

### *Minutes of the Bureau call from 18 May 2022*

The full recording and transcript are available and accessible to all participants in Teams.

If you accepted the original meeting invitation you can go there directly for additional details.

#### **Participants:**

**Chair (Acting):** Mr. David MacDonald

**Vice-Chairs:** Mr. James Gannon (Ireland), Dr. Chokan T. Laumulin (Kazakhstan), Mr. Jean-Christophe Füg (Switzerland), Mr. Emily Grubert (United States), Mr. Jim Robb (GECES), Mr. Raymond C. Pilcher (GECMM&JT), Mr. Francisco De la Flor Garcia (GEG), and Mr. Stefan M. Buettner (GEEE)

**Observers:** Ms Olga Yudina, Ms. Laura Wyss, Ms. Léa Bigot, Mr. Bogdana Galimuk, Ms Laura Martinez and Mr. Carlos Moreno Carrero

**UNECE Secretariat:** Mr. Scott Foster, Mrs. Denise Mulholland, Mrs. Charlotte Griffiths, Mr. Branko Milicevic, Mr. Michal Drabik, Mr. Merwan Paris, Mrs. Lisa Amend, Mr. Oleg Dzioubinsky, Mr. Gianluca Sambucini, Mr. Slavko Vekoslav Solar, Mr. Michal Jacek Drabik, Mr. Harikrishnan Tulsidas, Mrs. Laurence Rotta, Mrs. Nadejda Khamrakulova and Mr. Igor Litvinyuk

#### **Minutes of Meeting**

The Chair welcomed participants and invited a new nominee to the Bureau, Dr. Chokan T. Laumulin, to introduce himself. The Bureau adopted the agenda proposed and the Chair proceeded to lead discussion on each of the six agenda topics.

##### **1. Update on Russian/Ukraine situation and implications for ECE operations**

The Secretariat provided an update on the implications of the RUS/UKR conflict for ECE operations. Representatives from Russian Federation and Belarus are still welcome to participate in the Committee's activities as experts but are not given a high degree of visibility, such as being featured on panels at conferences. During the ninth session of the Group of Experts on Gas, on 25 March 2022, a roll call vote excluded representatives from the Russian Federation and Belarus from serving on the bureau.

The Secretariat informed that projects funded by the Russian Federation and Belarus have been put on hold per the L6 decision of the Executive Committee and this affects ECE operations; the next Executive Committee, scheduled for July 8<sup>th</sup>, is expected to produce additional guidance.

Mr. Foster noted the history of strong financial support and technical expertise from the Russian Federation in the UNECE context. He expressed concern about the risk of relationships being damaged, relationships that have been developed over a period of decades. He noted that the

EGRM meeting has been postponed in that vein and suggested that the Committee needs to think through how to work in today's world and once the conflict is over.

Mr. Foster suggested the need for the Committee to embark on a process of building trust and building bridges, and noted that the Committee on Sustainable Energy, in particular, could take a leading role in that process for the future.

## 2. Discuss progress on work plan implementation

The Secretariat walked the Bureau through the document *3. CSE Activity and Funding Matrix\_through 08 May 2022.pdf* that provided information about recent activities in support of each of the Committee's priority areas, available sources of funding, and showed where projects were proceeding as planned and where others are still awaiting funding for completion. It was noted that there is no funding currently available for the following projects, priorities and/or activities and the work would benefit from donor support:

- International Decade for Methane Management,
- Collaboration with key stakeholders on methane,
- Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition,
- Energy and mobility
- Electrons, photons, and molecules
- Carbon pricing and subsidies
- Market Design

Specific updates by priority area were as follows:

1) **Modernize resource management**: The annual session of the EGRM has been postponed but not the work from individual working groups. The EGRM Chair said that an EGRM bureau meeting will be scheduled in the next month to decide upon a process for rescheduling.

Key activities:

- A training on UNFC application for EU member states was held;
- a draft guidance document on how to apply UNFC to minerals and secondaries resources in Europe was developed and is out for public comments;
- a focused network of UNFC practitioners is being established in Europe.
- Four cases studies have been finalized to help apply UNFC to sand, gravel mines and graphite.
- A series of online seminars are currently being developed by the Secretariat as an assistance project for Uzbekistan on resources extraction;
- The project that would support the work of the international centre of excellence (ICE) in the Russian Federation is currently blocked; an ICE-SRM has been set up in Mexico and is looking for donors.
- three policy documents regarding sustainable resources management are under development;
- a regional ministerial roundtable on financing critical raw material necessary for decarbonation is expected to be held in July [As of 13 June 2022, it is expected that this

roundtable will now be held in Geneva on Tuesday 20 September 2022, the day before the start of the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Committee].

- The Working Group of Extractives Industries has been renamed The Working Group on Transforming the Extractive Industries for Sustainable Development to better depict its purpose. A survey regarding the key issues that this working group should address will be sent to the Bureau members in May.

## **2) Address methane management:**

- The Secretariat informed that the project “International Decade for Methane Management” is likely to be dropped since it is failing to identify a member state to champion the project.
- The Secretariat informed that “The Best Practice Guidance for Effective Management of Coal Mine Methane at National Level: Monitoring, Reporting, Verification and Mitigation,” developed together with the Global Methane Initiative, was completed and officially published but it had been omitted from previous updates.
- The Secretariat added that UNECE was invited to join the IMEO Advisory Council as one of two international organizations and participated in the first meeting of the CCAC Fossil Fuel Hub Leadership Group in recent weeks.
- The Secretariat gave an overview of an event organized in April within the framework of the biggest mining conference in Poland where the Committee was represented, including an event co-organized with GMI and with the International Center of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane in Poland. The main focus was on the EU’s new proposed methane legislation and the expected impact on the European and, in particular Polish, coal mining industry. The fifth meeting of the periodical series “Methane Mondays” organized under the Committee together with Ember, was held during the event.
- The Secretariat informed that it is currently preparing to develop three studies related to Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition:
  - a) Rebuilding the energy system in Ukraine under the carbon neutrality and just transition concept (as requested by the Member State).
  - b) Mine closure in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
  - c) Dynamics of coal demand in Tajikistan and available option for replacing it with available domestic energy sources (as requested by the Member State).

## **3) Achieve high performance in buildings:**

- The Secretariat informed that the extrabudgetary funds request for the German-funded project (IKI) entitled “Improving the energy efficiency of the global building supply chain industry and its products to deliver high performance buildings” is expected to be discussed at the Executive Committee meeting on 8 July 2022 or, at the latest, at the subsequent Executive Committee meeting on 30 September 2022.
- The Secretariats added that there are ongoing discussions with Kazakhstan about them possibly joining the above-mentioned IKI project.

#### 4) Achieve Carbon Neutrality:

- The Secretariat informed that the new project “Improving national capacity on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency technologies for small and medium enterprises and households in North Macedonia” was approved at the Executive Committee meeting on 3 May 2022.
- The Secretariat also announced the start of a new project “Strengthening energy policies of Countries with special Needs to build back better form Covid-19”.

#### 5) Enable a hydrogen ecosystem:

- The Secretariat informed Bureau members that a parliamentary document, “Development of a comprehensive and science-based terminology, classification and taxonomy for hydrogen” has been drafted and is under expert review with plans to go to the CSE Bureau for review afterward.

### 3. Forward-look at upcoming activities:

The Secretariat provided an overview of upcoming activities, deliverables and events (cf. to document 4. *SED Calendar of Activities and Events March - July 2022.pdf* for additional details).

## Agenda Item 4. Upcoming activities

### ENERGY



#### May

- 1<sup>st</sup> drafts of studies (late May):
  - *Addressing mental roadblocks to energy digitalization* (GEEE)
  - *Data Analytics in the Utility Sector* (GEEE)
  - *Digitalizing electricity systems* (GEEE, GECES)
- Publication :
  - (Late May) *Technology Interplay under Carbon Neutrality Concept* (TF on Carbon Neutrality)

#### June

- Online event:
  - 13 – 14: *Renewable Energy Hard Talk on Moldova* (GERE)
- Final studies:
  - (Mid-June) *Data Analytics in the Utility Sector*
  - (Late June) *REN21 UNECE Renewable Energy Status Report 2022* (GERE)
- Ongoing meeting
  - (Mid-June) *UNECE Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency: Driving Forward Industrial Energy Efficiency and Decarbonization (fourth meeting)* (GEEE)

#### TBD

- Hybrid event:
  - *UNECE Resource Management Week 2022, incorporating Expert Group on Resource Management 13th Session* (EGRM in cooperation with the GECMMJT, GECES, GEG, GERE)

#### July

- Final Studies :
  - (Mid-July) *Addressing mental roadblocks to energy digitalization*
  - (Mid-July) *Digitalizing electricity systems*
- UNECE Roundtable
  - (End of July) *Critical raw materials needed for energy, digital & transport/ electric vehicle transitions in the context of financing and adaptation* (EGRM)

#### September

- Hybrid events:
  - 19 – 20: *18<sup>th</sup> session of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems* (GECES)
  - 21 – 23: *31<sup>st</sup> Session of the CSE: Energy Security, Resilience and Net Zero: Tangible Actions to Deliver a Sustainable Energy Future*

#### October

- Hybrid event:
  - 3-4: *Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency*
  - 6-7: *Group of Experts on Renewable Energy*

Mr Francisco De la Flor Garcia, Chair of the Group of Experts on Gas (GEG), stated that the GEG finds the draft document “Technology Interplay under Carbon Neutrality Concept” too biased in favor of electricity since carbon neutrality can be achieved through other means that electrification, such as natural gas.

**4. Overview of the cross-expert group paper *Considerations for Building a Resilient Energy System in the United Nation Economic Commission for Europe Region: More Secure, More Affordable, More Environmentally Friendly***

Jim Robb, Chair of the Taskforce on Hydrogen, thanked the chairs of the other Group of Experts for the help in the development of the cross-expert group paper *Considerations for Building a Resilient Energy System in the United Nation Economic Commission for Europe Region: More Secure, More Affordable, More Environmentally Friendly* and walked the Bureau members through a summary of the document. He reminded the Expert Group Chairs to please share their feedback regarding the paper by 23 May 2022 and shared that it would go to the Committee Bureau soon after.

Olga Yudina highlighted that some experts pointed out a lack of consideration for the feedback of some UNECE countries. In this aspect, she reminded the bureau that requests were made to take into consideration the security of demand and transit under the scope of energy security and that parts from the document on the use of natural gas and coal seam unaligned with official UN decisions. Mr. Foster noted that Ms. Yudina would find many improvements in the revised draft that would be sent to the Bureau for their review.

**5. Preparations for 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the CSE**

The Secretariat presented the list of parliamentary documents, the proposed Bureau review schedule, and the latest draft version of the agenda for the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Committee (documents from the calendar invitation: *05. List of approved parliamentary documents.pdf CSE-31 List of Approved parliamentary documents 05 April 2022.pdf*; *Proposed Bureau Review Schedule for CSE31 Documents.pdf*; and *Overview\_UNECE Sustainable Energy Week 21-23 September 2022 CSE-31 2022 CLEAN DRAFT INF2.pdf*). The secretariat asked the Bureau members to send their feedback on the draft CSE meeting agenda before the end of June.

**6. Follow up on the Executive Secretary request for input to the April 2023 EXCOM meeting**

The Secretariat reminded the Bureau members about an Executive Secretary request regarding the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission (being planned for April 2023) which asks the Bureau how the CSE can contribute to digital and green transformation. The Executive Secretary specifically asked:

- a) What are the trends in the region related to energy and the green and digital transformation?
- b) What is it that CSE already does that is relevant?
- c) What are the gaps/opportunities that CSE can possibly scale up to advance Digital and Green Transformation in the energy sector if EXCOM invited us to do more?

The secretariat suggested energy security, hydrogen, methane, and carbon neutrality to Bureau members as a list of elements that could be included in the last point's answer. The bureau members accepted this list and decided to add "Just transition" and to substitute "Energy security and resilience" for just "Energy security."

## **7. Remarks from Scott as he leaves the UN**

Mr. Foster made closing remarks as it was his last Committee Bureau call before retirement from the UN. He thanked all Bureau members for their involvement and coordination over the years.

On behalf of the Bureau members, Acting Chair, Mr. MacDonald, thanked Mr. Foster for his hard work, devotion, and inspiration.