



Economic Commission for Europe**Committee on Sustainable Energy****Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition****Eighteenth session**

Geneva, 20-21 March 2023

Draft Report of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition**I. Introduction**

1. The eighteenth session of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane (CMM) and Just Transition was held on 20-21 March 2023 in Geneva.
2. This report summarizes the discussions on the work of the Group of Experts at its seventeenth session. All the documents and presentations of the session are available on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) website.¹

II. Attendance

3. The meeting was attended by experts from the following ECE member States:
4. Experts from participated under Article 11 of the ECE's Terms of Reference.
5. The International Energy Agency (IEA), the United Nations Environment Programme, were represented. Representatives from the European Union also participated.
6. The following international associations were represented:
7. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations participated:
8. The private sector was represented by experts from companies. Academia was also represented by experts from ... universities and scientific institutes.

III. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2023/1

¹ Official documents of the session are available at <http://documents.un.org/>. Unofficial room documents and presentations delivered at the meeting are available on the ECE website at: <https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/18th-session-group-experts-coal-mine-methane-and-just-transition>.

9. The provisional agenda as contained in document ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2023/1 was adopted without amendment.

IV. Election of officers (agenda item 2)

10. The Group of Experts elected a Bureau for two years to take over from the end of the eighteenth session until the end of the twentieth session. The elected members are: Mr Raymond Pilcher (Raven Ridge Resources, Inc.) as Chair, and Ms. Aida Haracic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mr. Jacek Skiba (Poland), Mr. Özgen Karacan (United States of America), Ms. Volha Roshchanka (United States of America), Mr. Yuriy Bobrov (Association of Donbass Mining Towns), Mr. Neil Butler (Independent expert), Mr. David Creedy (Sindicatum Sustainable Resources), Mr. Lukasz Kroplewski (Independent expert), Mr. Julien Moulin (Française de l'Énergie), Ms. Felicia Ruiz (Clean Air Task Force), Mr. Clark Talkington (Advanced Resources International), and Mr. Zhixin JIN (International Centre of Excellence on CMM China) as Vice-Chairs. The Chairs of the Group's task forces, i.e., Ms. Bobbie Foot (BHP) and Ms. Alicja Krzemien (Central Mining Institute of Poland) will also *ex-officio* serve as Vice-Chairs of the Bureau.

V. Opening remarks (agenda item 3)

11. In his opening remarks,

12. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the work of the Bureau and the secretariat and their efforts to manage and direct the Group's work plan between annual sessions despite human and financial resource constraints and the challenging situation caused by the multiple ongoing global crises.

VI. Activities and priorities of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and matters for consideration by the Group of Experts (agenda item 4)

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

13. Having been informed about the special focus that the Committee gives to building resilient energy systems in the ECE region, the Group of Experts agreed to contribute to that work from its own experience and within the scope of its mandate and expertise. In particular, the Group committed to leading the work on the social aspects of the process of building resiliency, noting that any changes to the existing energy systems should occur in compliance with the principles of just transition.

VII. Report on implementation of the work plan for 2022-2023 (agenda item 5)

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2021/3 - Work plan for the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition for 2022-2023

ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2023/4 - Assessment of coal demand in Tajikistan to 2050 and the alternative options for replacing coal in the country's energy mix

ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2023/5 - Coal mine closure in Albania and Serbia

ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2023/6 - Energy sector in Ukraine: challenges, current situation, perspectives for the future - Identifying opportunities for the involvement of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition

ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2023/7 - Just Transition - the check list

CMMJT-18/2023/INF.2 - Unofficial room document: The use of high-resolution satellite imagery to identify methane emissions from underground mines: A CMM case study of a mine within the Karaganda Coal Basin.

14. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the progress in implementation of its work plan for 2022-2023. The Chair and the secretariat thanked the members of the Group for their contributions to delivering on the mandated activities and asked for their further engagement to complete the remaining tasks.

15. The Group of Experts thanked the International Centres of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane (ICE-CMM) in Poland and in China for their efforts and initiatives supporting the Group's work on disseminating and promoting best practices in methane detection, monitoring, capture, and use, approved their annual reports for 2022, and approved their work plans for 2023.

16. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the development of the five thematic studies:

(a) The local geological and mining conditions in Albania and Serbia; principle-based guidelines for designing and implementing a programme for an efficient, safe, and environmentally conscious mine closure in those countries;

(b) Assessment of coal demand in Tajikistan to 2050 and the alternative options for replacing coal in the country's energy mix;

(c) Energy sector in Ukraine: the current situation and perspectives for the future, including the assessment of the expected socio-economic impacts of the upcoming transition;

(d) Just Transition – the check list; and

(e) The use of high-resolution satellite imagery to identify methane emissions from underground mines: A CMM case study of a mine in the Karaganda Coal Basin.

17. The Group of Experts thanked the Regional Advisor on Sustainable Energy for his help in developing the first three of the above-mentioned studies, and GHGSat for its authorship of the last document.

VIII. Just transition of the coal mining sector (agenda item 6)

18. The Group of Experts was presented with the UNDP's plans for work on just transition and requested the secretariat to explore opportunities for collaboration with UNDP in that field.

19. The Group of Experts expressed its interest in engaging, in cooperation with other Groups of Experts reporting to the Committee on Sustainable Energy, in the work on greening Kazakhstan's energy sector through development of a local hydrogen economy. The Group of Experts noted that it stands ready to contribute to that work drawing from its expertise on methane, coal mining, mine closure, and just transition.

20. Following an update on a potential project to map the transition efforts across the ECE region, the Group of Experts endorsed the initiative and requested the secretariat to develop, in cooperation with the Bureau, a more detailed project proposal that could be presented to potential donors. The Group further requested the secretariat to identify entities that might be ready to provide funds for implementation of such a project.

IX. Work Plan for 2024-2025 (agenda item 7)

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2023/3 - Draft Work plan for the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition for 2024-2025

21. The Group of Experts approved its draft work plan for 2024-2025. The Group of Experts requested the secretariat to submit the draft work plan for 2024-2025 to the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its thirty second session.

22. The Chair of the Group of Experts encouraged all members to actively engage in the work of the Group to assure timely and effective delivery of the tasks indicated in the 2024-2025 Work Plan.

X. Future work of the Group of Experts (agenda item 8)

23. The Group of Experts established three ad hoc Task Forces on (i) Methane Emissions Reduction, (ii) Just Transition, and (iii) Safe Operations and Closure of Coal Mines to manage better the knowledge and skills of its members and thus improve efficiency of the Group's work in those subject areas, which constitute the core of the Group's mandate and activities.

24. The Chairs of the Task Forces are nominated by the Chair of the Group of Experts, in cooperation with the Bureau, to serve for a period of two years, with the possibility of extension, starting upon completion of the session at which they were selected until the end of the session two years later.

25. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the three nominations and agreed to them serving until the end of the twentieth session: Ms. Volha Roshchanka (U.S. EPA) as the Chair of the Task Force on Methane Emissions Reduction; Ms. Bibbie Foot (BHP) as the Chair of the Task Force on Just Transition; and Ms. Alicja Krzemien (Central Mining institute) as the Chair of the Task Force on Safe Operations and Closure of Coal Mines.

26. The Group of Experts agreed that the Chairs of the Task Forces will report to the Group on the activities and accomplishments of the Task Forces at the Group's annual meeting and to the Bureau between annual sessions.

27. The Group of Experts agreed that the Chairs of the Task Forces will join the Bureau as Vice-Chairs *ex officio*.

28. The Chair of the Group of Experts requested interested members of the Group to indicate to the Chair of the relevant Task Force and to the secretariat, to which stream of work they would like to contribute to. The secretariat was requested to facilitate and manage the process of identifying members for each Task Force.

XI. Partnerships (agenda item 9)

29. The Group of Experts thanked EMBER for the successful cooperation in delivering events within the framework of the Methane Mondays series. The Group requested the secretariat to ensure the continuity of the partnership.

30. The Group of Experts decided to contribute, within the scope of its mandate and expertise, to the International Methane Emissions Observatory's (IMEO) work on the Metcoal Methane Partnership (MMP). The Group requested the secretariat to coordinate with IMEO to facilitate the Group's engagement in MMP. The Group also encouraged the ICE-CMMs in Poland and China to support MMP and undertake actions promoting the initiative among coking coal producers operating in their regions.

31. The Group of Experts requested the secretariat to explore opportunities for cooperation on monitoring and mitigation of methane emissions from coal mines with IEA. The Group further requested the secretariat to develop, in cooperation with the Bureau, CMM-related project proposals and undertake efforts to secure funds for their implementation.

XII. Thirteenth joint meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and the Global Methane Initiative Coal Subcommittee (agenda item 10)

32. The Group of Experts thanked the secretariat of the Coal Subcommittee of the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) and its members for their continued support and collaboration.

33. The Group of Experts expressed its interest to continue to develop and implement joint projects with GMI and requested the secretariat to ensure, facilitate, and coordinate continued cooperation between the two entities.

XIII. Preparations for the nineteenth session of the Group of Experts (agenda item 11)

34. The nineteenth session is to be held in March 2024 in Geneva.

35. The Group of Experts supported the proposal to hold the 2024 Global Methane Forum in Geneva at the time of the nineteenth session. The Group requested the secretariat to coordinate with GMI and the Group of Experts on Gas thereon. The Group further requested the secretariat to keep the Bureau updated on progress to organize the Forum, and to seek the Bureau's advice on the content of the Forum to ensure that topics related to the work of the Group are featured in the event's agenda to the extent possible.

XIV. Any other business (agenda item 12)

36. The Group of Experts noted that the delivery of a number of activities in the 2024-2025 Work Plan is dependent on the availability of extrabudgetary resources, and deemed securing such resources critical for attainment of the Group's objectives. The Group was invited to suggest potential sources of funding for the secretariat to explore.

XV. Adoption of conclusions and recommendations (agenda item 13)

Documentation: CMMJT-18/2023/INF.1 - Unofficial room document: Draft Conclusions and Recommendations arising from the Seventeenth Session of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane dated 9 March 2023.

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

XVI. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting (agenda item 14)

38. The report of the meeting was adopted, including the conclusions and recommendations, subject to any necessary editing and formatting.