

Economic and Social CouncilADVANCE
COPYDistr.: General
28 August 2024

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe**Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the
Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents****Thirteenth meeting**

Geneva, 27-29 November 2024

Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda

Industrial safety of the energy transition:**Decision on work on the industrial safety of the
energy transition under the Convention****Draft decision on work on the industrial safety of the energy
transition under the Convention****Submitted by the Bureau***Summary*

At its twelfth meeting (Geneva (hybrid), 29 November–1 December 2022), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents recognized the need to address emerging issues of concern for industrial safety, including the energy transition and changes of energy sources, and the Convention's relation to those issues. At its fifty-third meeting (Helsinki (hybrid), 11-12 October 2023), the Bureau therefore established the Small Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition^b, which met twice (online) over the biennium 2023-2024 (11 December 2023 and 16 April 2024, respectively). To identify needs and priorities, the Small Group conducted a survey of member States on the industrial safety of the energy transition, including on policy and technical aspects. The present document has been prepared by the Bureau on the basis of the work and recommendations of the Small Group. It contains two alternative proposals for the Conference of the Parties' consideration on future work in this area: the text of the decision in option 1 foresees the establishment of a Working Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition, while option 2 entrusts the Bureau to continue its activities initiated in the biennium 2023-2024, under the auspices of an extended Small Group, in cooperation with the Working Group on Implementation and the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents.

Parties are invited to share any comments on the present document with the secretariat at least four weeks in advance of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (via email to ece-teia.conv@un.org), that is to say, by 30 October 2024.

The Conference of the Parties is invited to review the two options, also included in the draft workplan for 2025-2026 (ECE.CP.TEIA/2024/8) with the respective resources required, decide on the way forward, and adopt the decision with the selected option.

^b CP.TEIA/2023/B.4/Decisions Report, decision 35, available at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/378701>.

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling the central role of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in preventing and mitigating the effects of industrial accidents through preparedness and response measures, thereby protecting human life and the environment, and the stated objective of its long-term strategy until 2030 that: “The Convention will be a flexible and modern instrument capable of addressing new and emerging risks.”,¹

Recalling also its decision at its twelfth meeting (Geneva (hybrid), 29 November–1 December 2022) recognizing the need to address emerging issues of concern for industrial safety, including the energy transition and changes of energy sources and the Convention’s relation to those issues,²

Recognizing in this respect the direct relevance of, inter alia, the Convention’s articles 3 (1) and 6 (1) on prevention, 8 (1) on emergency preparedness, 9 on information to and participation of the public, 10 and 12 (1) on notification, information-sharing and mutual assistance and 13-16 on international cooperation,

Emphasizing the central role of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and shaping the global decarbonization agenda, and the commitments made by Parties under this framework to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels,³

Recalling United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme resolutions 6/5 on environmental aspects of minerals and metals⁴ and 5/12 on environmental aspects of minerals and metals management,⁵ which underscore the importance of the need for enhanced action to support the environmentally sustainable management of minerals and metals, which in turn are components of the energy transition,

Recalling also United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme resolution 4/1 on innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production,⁶ which calls for the adoption of cleaner and more energy-efficient technologies as a part of broader efforts to transition towards a sustainable economy,

Reaffirming the commitments made under the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 7, which aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, and Goal 13, which calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts,

Emphasizing the importance of the decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement at its fifth session (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 30 November–12 December 2023) recognizing the need for deep, rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in line with 1.5°C pathways to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and calling on Parties to contribute to tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030, and to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science,

Recognizing the new challenges to industrial safety and risks brought about by the rapid pace of the energy transition and the emergence of new energy technologies, which necessitate robust safety protocols and regulatory frameworks,

¹ ECE/CP.TEIA/38/Add.1, Long-term strategy for the Convention until 2030, subsection III.4, key challenge (a).

² ECE/CP.TEIA/44, para. 104.

³ Paris Agreement, art. 2 (1) (a), available at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>.

⁴ UNEP/EA.6/Res.5.

⁵ UNEP/EA.5/Res.12.

⁶ UNEP/EA.4/Res.1.

Acknowledging the importance of understanding and addressing these new industrial safety challenges and risks, and emphasizing the need for concerted efforts in research, international cooperation and the development and sharing of technical guidelines, experiences and best practices to enhance safety standards in the energy sector, through established intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder platforms, such as that under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents,

Highlighting the value of partnerships and collaborative initiatives among member States and relevant stakeholders, including international organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia, to facilitate knowledge creation and the dissemination of key lessons learned in industrial safety during the energy transition,

Recognizing that the challenges and risks associated with the industrial safety of the accelerated energy transition are multifaceted and dynamic, and that they will be persistent features of the global landscape, thus requiring systematic and sustained attention and robust international cooperation to ensure both the safety and the sustainability of future energy systems,

1. *Welcomes* the work under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on industrial safety aspects linked to the energy transition, among other things, on mine tailings safety, land-use planning/siting, the storage, use and handling of hazardous substances, and, most recently, under the Bureau's Small Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition;

2. *Takes note* of the exchanges and conclusions drawn from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Seminar on the global energy transition: Strengthening industrial safety to address emerging risks (Geneva, 27 November 2024), organized within the context of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 27-29 November 2024), and the findings presented in the secretariat note entitled Emerging challenges and trends for industrial safety: Decarbonization, energy transition, critical minerals and the role of the Industrial Accidents Convention (ECE/CP.TEIA/2024/2) and of the survey conducted on the industrial safety of the energy transition (ECE.CP.TEIA/2024/INF.2);

3. *Recognizes* that tackling emerging challenges and risks for industrial safety from the accelerated energy transition is a high-priority issue that merits sustained attention and that necessitates continued and enhanced international cooperation through appropriate platforms for intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder cooperation;

[Option 1: Establishment of a dedicated Working Group]

4. *Decides* to establish a Working Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition, in accordance with the Convention's article 18 (2) (c);

5. *Adopts* the terms of reference of the Working Group, as contained in the annex to the present decision;

6. *Requests* Parties and invites other interested States, relevant international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the private sector and academia, within and outside the ECE region, to participate in the activities of the Working Group;

7. *Requests* Parties and invites other interested member States, relevant international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academic institutions, within and outside the ECE region, to nominate one or more representatives with relevant qualifications with regard to the topic addressed by the Working Group;

8. *Recognizes* the importance of ensuring the provision of adequate funding to support the work on the industrial safety of the energy transition under the Convention;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to strengthen the secretariat's capacity to service the Working Group;

10. *Calls upon* Parties and other interested actors to provide voluntary cash and in-kind contributions to support the participation of representatives of eligible countries and

organizations in the meetings of the Working Group and the implementation of activities under the responsibility of the Working Group;

11. *Invites* Parties to consider taking the lead regarding the activities on the industrial safety of the energy transition and chairing the Working Group;

12. *Entrusts* the secretariat to organize the first meeting of the Working Group, pending the availability of resources.

Annex

Terms of reference of the Working Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition

1. The Working Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition (hereinafter referred to as the Working Group) shall be an open-ended working group consisting of representatives of Parties with relevant qualifications with regard to the topic. Observers may participate in the meetings of the Working Group in accordance with rules 6, 7 and 8 of the rules of procedure for the meetings of the Conference of the Parties,¹ which apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to its subsidiary bodies. The Chair of the Working Group may also invite other individuals or organizations to attend Working Group meetings as observers if they have relevant qualifications with regard to matters on the agenda.
2. When defining their delegations, Parties and observers should give due consideration to gender balance.
3. The Working Group shall meet, subject to the availability of resources, once per year in person, unless otherwise decided by the Conference of the Parties or its Bureau. The Working Group may also meet online or in a hybrid format, if so permitted by United Nations rules and practices applicable at the time of the meeting.
4. The Working Group shall elect its Chair and two Vice-Chairs from amongst the representatives of the Parties.
5. The Working Group shall:
 - (a) Review and analyze safety trends and risks associated with the energy transition, focusing on industrial practices and technologies employed in the renewable and clean energy sectors;
 - (b) Take stock of and assess the work done by other international organizations relating to the industrial safety of the energy transition;
 - (c) Develop draft technical and policy guidelines and recommendations to promote safety and risk management in the deployment of new energy technologies, paying special attention to high-risk areas and sectors, for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties;
 - (d) Facilitate the exchange of information, experiences, best practices and lessons learned focusing on safety standards, regulatory frameworks, policies and good practices, and emerging risks in the energy transition;
 - (e) Promote international cooperation and partnerships to advance policies and practices for the industrial safety of the energy transition at the regional and global levels, working closely with international organizations, non-governmental organizations and private-sector stakeholders;
 - (f) Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented safety measures and industrial practices, proposing updates and improvements based on evolving technological landscapes and risk assessments;
 - (g) Organize workshops, seminars and training sessions to enhance awareness and build capacity in industrial safety management;
 - (h) Prepare proposals for the Conference of the Parties on strategic directions and policy formulations related to the industrial safety of the energy transition of relevance to the Convention;
 - (i) Carry out any other function entrusted to it by the Conference of the Parties.

¹ ECE/CP.TEIA/37

6. The Working Group shall report on its work to the Conference of the Parties at its sessions.]

[Option 2: work carried out in the framework of an extended Small Group under the Bureau, in cooperation with the Working Group on Implementation and Joint Expert Group

4. *Decides* to entrust the Bureau of the Convention to continue to pursue this work in the form of an extended Small Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition, in cooperation with the Working Group on Implementation and the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents. The Small Group's activities should entail: assessing related work done by other international organizations; generating a better understanding of safety trends and risks associated with the energy transition; providing background information to member States to address those risks; and advising, through the Bureau, the Conference of the Parties on strategic directions and policy formulations for the industrial safety of the energy transition of relevance to the Convention;

5. *Requests* the Bureau, in pursuing this work, to actively consult relevant international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the private sector and academia, within and outside the ECE region, and to invite them to voluntarily contribute to its activities as needed;

6. *Also requests* the Bureau, in pursuing this work, to consider the need to establish an open-ended Working Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition in accordance with the Convention's article 18 (2) (c) and to report to the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting;

7. *Recognizes* the importance of ensuring the provision of adequate funding to support the work on the industrial safety of the energy transition under the Convention.]
