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Economic Commission for Europe
Committee on Sustainable Energy
Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency
Seventh session
Geneva, 22 and 25 September 2020
Item 9 of the Annotated provisional agenda
Adoption of conclusions and recommendations

Draft Conclusions and Recommendations arising from the seventh session of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency¹

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the agenda

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/1 – Annotated provisional agenda

1. The provisional agenda as contained in ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/1 was adopted.

Agenda item 2: Election of officers

2. The Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency (the Group of Experts) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) elected ... as Vice-Chair for two years. The Group of Experts also invited ... to join the Bureau to strengthen its activities. The term of office for the elected members is two years.

3. The Group of Experts has the following members to serve on its Bureau:

- (a) Until the conclusion of the eight session: Ms. Antonela Solujic (Serbia), Dr. Romanas Savickas (UNEP-DTU Partnership, Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency), and Dr. Piyush Verma (International Energy Research Centre) as Vice-Chairs.

- (b) Until the conclusion of the ninth session:

Agenda item 3: Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3 – Draft Industrial Energy Efficiency Action Plan, and assessment of the role of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in delivering on it

GEEE-7/2020/INF.2 – Framing the ambition of carbon neutrality

4. The Group of Experts:

¹ These DRAFT Conclusions and Recommendations were developed by the Bureau of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency and are not intended in any way to prejudice the discussions at the seventh session, but rather to provide a draft text that will be updated as the meeting progresses.

(a) Supported the approach of the Task Force to addressing the issues in the subject area, as envisioned in ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3. In the context of improving the overall performance of operations of businesses, reiterated the importance of better interaction between governments, industry and supporting organizations to overcome many known, new and emerging challenges, and expressed appreciation to the Task Force as a platform for supporting such a type of cooperation.

(b) Taking note of the document being premised on the strong links ECE has to its member States and a network of supporting organizations, stressed an opportunity to widely communicate, through the Task Force, the evidence-based business case for industrial energy efficiency. Encouraged the experts to serve as active links to their constituencies in mainstreaming and dissemination of work of the Task Force.

(c) Having reviewed ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3, welcomed the proposed activities of the Task Force. Recognized, nevertheless, that these largely depend on availability of extrabudgetary resources and in-kind contributions, and requested interested members of the Group of Experts and its Bureau and the secretariat to explore opportunities for securing financial support through developing new project proposals and/or engaging in relevant ongoing and/or planned projects to support activities of the Task Force. Supported enhanced cooperation in implementation of these activities with the other international organizations, academia, and private sector.

(d) Recommended to submit ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3, subject to its necessary editing, to the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-ninth session to seek endorsement of the role of ECE.

(e) Thereby requested extension of the mandate of the Task Force for 2021–2022 (with possibility of extension) to implement the activities as contained in ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3. The Terms of Reference for the Task Force for 2021–2022, the text of which is annexed to ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/3, were reviewed and adopted.

5. The Group of Experts also:

(a) Discussed the benchmarks as contained in GEEE-7/2020/INF.2 with regard to a carbon neutrality, as well as possible ways to achieve them through policies that address various developmental aspects of the energy system. Took note of the document and requested the Task Force to further elaborate on related steps towards carbon neutrality based on sector-specific requirements and report on its findings at the eight session of the Group of Experts.

(b) Owing to domain-specific knowledge of the Task Force, welcomed its engagement with the project “Enhancing understanding of the implications and opportunities of moving to carbon neutrality in the UNECE region across the power and energy intensive industries by 2050” of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems. Reiterated its stand on the need for closer cooperation between the subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on cross-cutting issues (with systemic efficiency being among those); in this respect, offered to further contribute to the project within the scope of its expertise.

Agenda item 4: Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/4 – Updated Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings
ECE/ENERGY/121 – Promoting Energy Efficiency Standards and Technologies to Enhance Energy Efficiency in Buildings (ECE Energy Series No. 60)

6. The Group of Experts:

(a) Welcomed the improvements to the United Nations Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, specifically those related to taking account of the buildings’ value chain for more accurate calculation of energy efficiency (*i.a.*, the amount of

energy consumed to produce building materials); orientation on low-carbon technologies to encourage utilization of clean and potentially renewable energy-based technologies to lower greenhouse gas emissions, and; recognition of the impact that buildings have on human health.

(b) Recognized the potential for its collaboration with the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy on buildings' energy supply, with a view to apply a holistic, systems approach to building design, delivery and operation and thereby align buildings with the highest standards of health, comfort, well-being and sustainability (including improving energy productivity and reducing emissions).

(c) Requested the secretariat to facilitate coordination between the two Groups of Experts.

7. The Group of Experts also:

(a) Took note of the publication entitled "Promoting Energy Efficiency Standards and Technologies to Enhance Energy Efficiency in Buildings" (ECE/ENERGY/121, ECE Energy Series No. 60), which maps the existing standards and technologies and outlines the best practices identified across the region based on the ECE studies conducted in the area of energy efficiency in buildings in 2017–2019 and suggests recommendations intended to support the ECE member States in ongoing efforts to increase buildings' energy performance.

(b) Welcomed the new 2020–2022 extrabudgetary project "Enhancing national capacities to develop and implement energy efficiency standards for buildings in the UNECE region", funded by the Russian Federation. Requested the preliminary results of the related gap analysis between the performance objectives as set forth in the Framework Guidelines and the current energy efficiency standards and their implementation in the countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and in the Russian Federation to be reported at the eighth session of the Group of Experts.

(c) Took note of the trainings, conducted in the intersessional period in-person and through means of telecommunication, on energy efficiency standards in buildings and on high-performance buildings for building sector practitioners and policymakers, and recommended continuation of such trainings subject to availability of resources and provided the circumstances permit.

Agenda item 5: Regulatory and policy dialogue addressing barriers to improve energy efficiency

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/5 – Pathways to Sustainable Energy – Policy Recommendations from the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency

GEEE-7/2020/INF.3 – Digitalization: enabling the new phase of energy efficiency

8. The Group of Experts:

(a) Reconfirmed its vision that energy efficiency shall be at the core of an energy system; relevant measures must be deployed as a priority in production, transmission, distribution and consumption of energy.

(b) Also reconfirmed that a nuanced approach to developing energy efficiency measures, accountable of features of the national energy systems, may ultimately lead to limiting the growth of, or even reducing total final energy consumption in the ECE region, where the share of fossil fuels in the energy mix equals to 80 percent at present and under no economically rational scenario could reduce below 50 percent before 2050. That is also thought to help protecting the populations from energy price volatility resulting from efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of the energy sector in the ECE region.

(c) Endorsed the conclusions on possible ways of accelerating transition to sustainable energy systems in the ECE region and the policy recommendations in relation to energy efficiency as contained in ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/5, paragraphs 17 and 18, and

encouraged the Committee on Sustainable Energy to take note of these in its deliberations at the twenty-ninth session. Also called upon the Committee on Sustainable Energy to endorse the final document containing policy recommendations arising from that project.

9. The Group of Experts also:

(a) Expressed appreciation to the Bureau for its efforts in addressing the issues of applying digital technologies in the energy sector, specifically for improving energy efficiency. Took note of the opportunities, thought to be enabled by digitalization, to improve the efficiency of the overall system through, *i.a.*, feedback loop and so that better policy decisions.

(b) Recognized that the presented paper lays the ground for future work of the Group of Experts in the area of digitalization and that the paper also elaborates on opportunities and risks that digitalization involves as applicable to the areas of work within the mandates of the other subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy. Hence, taking note of the potential for closer cooperation on the subject among the latter, encouraged embedding digitalization issues in the work of the other subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, and called upon them to jointly explore the landscape of stakeholders in the area to understand their roles in the future digitalized energy system.

(c) Recommended the Committee on Sustainable Energy to consider establishment of a dedicated Task Force on Digitalization in Energy, which shall help placing greater focus of the Group of Experts on the subject of digitalization, and, by involving experts from the other subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy to work on the issues of common concern, will aim to bring together a range of stakeholders and enhance the dialogue to shape the digitalization policy agenda. The proposed Task Force on Digitalization in Energy, subject to its establishment, will report to its parent body, the Committee on Sustainable Energy, and to the Group of Experts.

Agenda item 6: Guidelines and best practices for micro-, small and medium enterprises in delivering energy-efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment in the post-COVID-19 recovery phase

Documentation: GEEE-7/2020/INF.4 – Guidelines and best practices for micro-, small and medium enterprises in delivering energy-efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment in the post-COVID-19 recovery phase

10. The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the recommendations to governments for developing policy guidelines and establishing financial incentives schemes for MSMEs. The Group acknowledged that these recommendations, if tailored to the national contexts of ECE member States, could enable a more secure development environment for MSMEs to deliver energy-efficient products and provide renewable energy equipment.

(b) Welcomed development of a publication on this topic based on the findings of the study being undertaken by ECE.

(c) Expressed appreciation to the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for its participation in the discussions under this agenda item and reiterated the request to the secretariat to facilitate further cooperation between the two Groups of Experts.

Agenda item 7: Other business

Documentation: GEEE-7/2020/INF.5 – Strategy of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency: vision, mission, goals and objectives

11. The Group of Experts:

(a) Having reviewed the proposed strategy, embraced the idea of focusing on the three pillars designated in the document along with their narratives and messaging. Encouraged the ECE member States to give consideration to possible concrete and results-oriented activities in line with this vision, including specific projects aimed at improving regulatory and institutional frameworks for energy efficiency, which are within the mandate of the Group of Experts and which could shape its prospective Work Plan.

(b) Requested the secretariat to work with the Bureau of the Group of Experts to develop a draft Work Plan of the Group of Experts for 2022–2023 taking account of the above considerations, and submit it for review and approval by the Group of Experts by written procedure. The Group of Experts agreed that, in order to expedite timely submission of a draft Work Plan and other possible documentation for endorsement by the Committee on Sustainable Energy, it can work by written procedure subject to a minimum comment period of 21 days. No response or feedback is to be taken as tacit approval.

12. The Group of Experts also:

(a) Discussed a need for developing Rules of Procedure governing organization of work of the Group of Experts and its Bureau and agreed that such rules shall be developed and put in place. The Rules of Procedure were thought to be uniform for all the subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, and the Group of Experts hence offered to work on a common text that could eventually be presented to the Committee on Sustainable Energy for its consideration and approval.

(b) Noted the need to expand its membership and requested the secretariat to work with the Bureau of the Group of Experts to identify new members.

(c) Took note with satisfaction that implementation of the Work Plan of the Group of Experts for 2020–2021 was on track, and expressed appreciation to the Bureau and the secretariat for their efforts in managing and directing the current Work Plan between annual sessions amid unprecedented circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Agenda item 8: Dates of the next meeting

13. The eighth session of the Group of Experts is scheduled to take place in Geneva on 20–21 September 2021. The Group of Experts confirmed its proposal from the previous sessions that its meetings may take place in venues outside Geneva.

Agenda item 10: Adoption of the report and close of the meeting

14. The report of the meeting was adopted, including conclusions and recommendations, subject to any necessary editing and formatting. Following that the Chair closed the meeting.
