



Ministerial Conference
& the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development
MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
11-14 June 2017, Astana, Kazakhstan



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Ministerial Conference
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and Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development
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Summary

The Energy Ministerial Conference and Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development were held in Astana, Kazakhstan from 11-14 June 2017. The Forum was held against the backdrop of EXPO 2017 “Future Energy”, taking place from 10 June to 10 September 2017 in Astana. The annual Forum, organized by the five UN Regional Commissions since 2010, provides an opportunity to explore how the UN system can help countries and the business sector to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Eighth Forum was jointly organized by the Government of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Regional Commissions and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UN Department on Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and other international organizations, including the International Energy Agency (IEA), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), the World Bank, the Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency, and the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21).

The objective of the Eighth Forum was to enhance the understanding of sustainable energy and possible policy drivers to achieve a common goal on sustainable energy, promote policy dialogue and provide awareness-raising of different outcomes. It aimed to explore how the UN system can help implement or pursue sustainable agendas within the regional context. The Forum opened with an Energy Ministerial Conference on “Meeting the Challenge of Sustainable Energy,” and followed by a high-level plenary session with parallel workshops. Over 1200 delegates from more than 80 countries attended the Eighth Forum.

Ministers, high-level delegations and leading energy experts shared their visions for the future energy, discussed the role of and need for regional cooperation and planning, and the imperative for nexus solutions as part of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the closing of the conference, ministers and heads of delegations adopted Astana Ministerial Statement on Sustainable Energy (http://energyministerial.kz/906/uploads/2016/10/declaration_eng_print_ADOPTED.pdf), which reaffirmed the importance of energy collaboration among countries for tackling common energy challenges and shaping a sustainable energy future for all.

Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development

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14 June 2017

Sessions and Workshops

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Track III Modernizing Energy Industry

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Workshop Modernization of the Energy Sector: a Pathway Towards Low-Carbon Energy and Green Economy

Raymond Pilcher, Chair of the UNECE Group of Experts on CMM, moderated this session. He opened the session by stating that there is an urgent need to take positive actions in the energy sector to mitigate climate change. He noted that 80% of the energy sector worldwide is fossil fuel-based. He further underlined that the legacy-industries using inefficient technologies and processes offer an opportunity to employ readily available and modern solutions, as well as expertise to mitigate environmental impacts. He explained that the UNECE groups of experts joined forces to examine the opportunities to deploy their collective capabilities to this end.

Aleksandar Dukovski, Chair of the UNECE Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency, observed that people are creatures of comfort and do not want to change their way of life, nor the way in which they perceive the world. He argued that in the debate on modernizing the energy sector, the technology is actually of less importance than the organizational structure of the society. The real challenge, in his view, is with the latter, which is incomparably harder, though cheaper, to change.

David MacDonald, Chair of the UNECE Expert Group on Resource Classification, pointed out that the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) constitutes a very useful tool for identifying barriers that either hinder projects' development or even prevent the latter from gaining traction.

Nazir Ramazanov, Chair of the UNECE Expert Group on Renewable Energy, observed that renewable energy is not as expensive as many people think, and emphasised that it should be a critical component in the future energy mix.

Torstein Indrebø, Vice-Chair, UNECE Group of Experts on Gas, remarked that thanks to the energy sector, the world has experienced great prosperity. He underscored the continued necessity of fossil fuels, and warned that closing fossil fuel-based facilities would lead to social unrest. He argued that the question the world should seek an answer to is not how to eliminate fossil fuels, but rather how to modernize the industry so it produces the fossil-based energy in a cleaner way. He also advocated for focusing more on the consumers who, in his view, could be a driving force for a change.

Richard Mattus, UNECE Expert, observed that the general public is currently not fully implicated in the climate change debate. He pointed out that it has no tools to act and called for empowering people by providing them with information and proper means necessary to engage

in the debate. He agreed that there is a need to make fossils climate friendly. He argued that it is necessary to differentiate between long-, medium- and short-term perspectives, and to think about solutions accordingly. He stressed the necessity of finding quick solutions and advocated for improvements in energy efficiency and a greater use of gas co-located with coal. Being of the position that CMM can contribute to reducing the use of coal, he observed that being only a by-product it often rests unexploited by the companies that have no incentives to utilize it.

Sigurd Heiberg, former Chair, UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy, agreed that if gas has no value at the source, then it is usually wasted. Referring to Aleksandar Dukovski's intervention, he underlined the importance of education in changing people's attitude.

Raymond Pilcher closed the session by observing that the time had come to act and to demonstrate the power of the discussed approach by finding a host country and a pilot project to inspire further development.