

Speech on Opening Ceremony of International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane in China

Secretary of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane

Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Energy Division, UNECE

Mr. Michal Drabik

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Michal Drabik and I work in the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division.

It is my pleasure to be here, and I would like to say a couple of words about how it came to be that we all can celebrate this happy occasion today.

However, giving due respect to the hierarchy, I would like to start by reading a letter that the Executive Secretary of UNECE, Madam Olga Algayerova, has written. Unfortunately, due to previous commitments, Madam Executive Secretary could not join us here today, but I am honored to represent her with the following message.

Dear Mr. Jin Zhi Xin,

I would like to congratulate you and the Shanxi Coking Coal Group (SCCG) for opening the International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane in China. UNECE applauds this initiative and we highly value our collaboration on this venture.

The inauguration of the Centre of Excellence constitutes a significant step forward towards improvement of methane management techniques and standards in China. The importance of the Centre derives from the fact that it is intended to serve as a repository for relevant knowledge and a promoter of best practices in methane capture and use, developed by the UNECE Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane. By disseminating knowledge aimed at reducing methane emissions, improving mining conditions and facilitating sustainable production of coal and associated gas resources, the Centre will be of benefit equally to coal producers, local communities, and the environment. Its work will meaningfully contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I am convinced that hosting the Centre operating as a public-private partnership under the auspices of the UNECE Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane will allow the Shanxi Coking Coal Group to become a model of a successful application of measures for effective methane drainage and use. Capitalizing on the international character of the Centre, SCCG will have an opportunity, but also a responsibility, to lead by example and to propagate the best practices in methane management in China and elsewhere.

The offer to host the Centre is a commendable commitment on the part of Shanxi Coking Coal Group. I look forward to the continuing fruitful cooperation between the Centre and UNECE. I also encourage you to engage with our sister organization in your region, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), to seek its involvement in the Centre.

I wish the International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane every success.

Your sincerely,

Olga Algayerova

Much has been said today about how big an achievement it has been to set up the Centre. I fully agree. The Centre is an important institution that will work to the benefit of all: miners, mining companies, local

communities and the environment. The pace in which it was established is also impressive. However, it did not happen magically by itself, and therefore I would like to tell you a bit about the process of its creation.

I was involved in the work on the Centre from the very beginning. I helped to draft a Memorandum of Understanding that we signed in May. I worked on coordinating this event and the workshop that will follow. And the one thing that I can assure you of, is that we would not be here if not for the hard work of many people. Some of them unfortunately are not here with us today. I am talking about many SCCG employees and high level officers who were involved in this work. I am talking about my colleagues from the UNECE: from Sustainable Energy Division, from Finance and Legal Departments, and from the secretariat of the Executive Secretary. I am talking about our partners from US EPA. But I am also talking about those who are here in this room with us, and to whom I would like to give my warmest thanks for such efficient work and cooperation. I would like to express my gratitude for their help, patience, understanding and friendship that they have demonstrated to me along the way. Due to the time constraints I cannot mention them all, and I apologize for this, but I would like to ask you to give a big round of applause to Mr. Jin, to Mr. David Creedy, to Mr. Ray Pilcher, and to Mr. Beau Jia. Thank you. It is you who built this Centre.

Thank you.