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**Economic Commission for Europe****Committee on Sustainable Energy****Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane****Eighth session**

Geneva, 19–20 November 2013

Item 14 of the provisional agenda

**Adoption of the report****Report of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane****I. Introduction**

1. The eighth session of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane was held on 19-20 November 2013<sup>1</sup>.

**II. Attendance**

2. The meeting was attended by 44 experts. Experts participated from the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member states: Denmark, Germany, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and United States of America. Experts from Australia, Colombia, China, India and Mongolia, participated under Article 11 of the Commission's Terms of Reference. Representative of the European Union also participated.

**III. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2013/1

3. The representative of the European Union expressed his views regarding agenda items 3, 7 and 11. His remarks were taken into account, in particular related to the Ad Hoc

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<sup>1</sup> 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 coal mine methane website: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=33217>.

Group of Experts' Terms of Reference that are currently being agreed on by the Executive Committee of ECE. In view of this the Ad Hoc Group of Experts did not further elaborate its Terms of Reference. The provisional agenda as contained in ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2013/1 was adopted without amendment.

#### **IV. Election of officers (agenda item 2)**

4. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts elected its new Bureau to serve in 2014-15: Mr Ray Pilcher (United States of America) as Chair, and Mr Yuriy Bobrov (Ukraine), Mr David Creedy (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Mr Ozgen Karacan (United States of America), Ms Felicia Ruiz (United States of America), Mr Jacek Skiba (Poland), Mr Sergey Shumkov (Russian Federation), Mr Clark Talkington (United States of America) and Mr Igor Yashchenko (Ukraine), as Vice-Chairs.

#### **V. Opening remarks from the Chair (agenda item 3)**

5. The Chair delivered opening remarks, outlining important work accomplishments of the Group of Experts in the past and the directions of its work in the future. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts has thus far:

- (a) Defined terms related to coal mine methane (CMM) throughout the life cycle of coal mining that allows us to communicate on a common basis;
- (b) Investigated the economics of mining accidents and the impact on attaining a sustainable coal mining future in gas prone coal basins. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts intend to undertake more work and develop case studies that will further disseminate the principles embodied in the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines;
- (c) Engaged the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in useful discussions, offering our services as a group of experts to the UNECE sister body. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts is going to submit further comments on the latest draft of ACM0008;
- (d) Published a document in English, Russian and Chinese that describes the framework of principle-based guidance to employing best practices. During the review process, the Ad Hoc Group of Experts engaged the International Labour Organization (ILO) to make certain that we do not infringe or interfere in the portfolio for which that organization is responsible. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts is in the process of translating the document into Spanish and Mongolian;
- (e) Held workshops to further disseminate the concepts conveyed in the Best Practice Guidance.

6. The integral text of Chair's opening remarks is available on the session's website as Agenda item 3 – Opening remarks by the Chair of Ad Hoc Group of Experts on CMM<sup>2</sup>.

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

7. The secretariat updated the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the relevant decisions adopted by ECE at its sixty-fifth session held on 9–11 April 2013 and the July 2013

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pp/coal/cmm/8cmm\\_nov2013/AI.3\\_OpRem\\_Chair.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pp/coal/cmm/8cmm_nov2013/AI.3_OpRem_Chair.pdf)

decision of the Executive Committee to extend the mandate of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and its subsidiary bodies, and on the preparation for and the possible outcomes of the twenty-second session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, planned to be held on 21–22 November 2013.

## **VII. Tour de table (agenda item 5)**

8. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts members reported briefly on relevant developments in their countries or organizations.

9. The expert from the German company DMT GmbH & Co. KG presented the work of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee (TC) 263 that deals with coalbed methane and suggested possible collaboration between TC 263 and the Ad Hoc Group of Experts. A number of experts expressed reservations about the possibility to expand the scope of work into standard-setting.

## **VIII. Dissemination and application of “*Best Practice Guidance on Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines*” (agenda item 6)**

10. In the outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE, adopted by ECE at its sixty-fifth session held on 9–11 April 2013, the Ad Hoc Group of Experts was requested to “electronically disseminate the *Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines* to all major stakeholders in the UNECE region and beyond as recommended by the Economic and Social Council (Decision 2011/222) before August 2013”. In response to this requirement, the secretariat prepared a new CD with the publication in three languages—English, Russian, and Chinese, which are also available at UNECE website—and distributed it to various stakeholders in the following countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, India, Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. The secretariat has initiated translation of the publication in Spanish and Mongolian.

11. The experts noted that it would be beneficial if the publication could be translated into more languages, such as Vietnamese and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian so that a wider audience could be reached. The experts also noted the need to update the original English version, which now is around four years old and may benefit from an update.

## **IX. Update on current and possible future activities related to methane management (agenda item 7)**

12. The secretariat updated the experts on the implementation of the extra-budgetary project on coal mine safety, funded by the Russian Federation and approved by the ECE Executive Committee on 27 October 2011. The implementation of this project is currently on hold. According to Russian experts, this is a consequence of uncertainties regarding the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts and the subsequent decision by the donor of the funds—Russian Federation—to temporarily stop the implementation of this project until a mandate for the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts emerges from the intergovernmental negotiations on ECE's activities in sustainable energy.

13. The secretariat informed the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on other prospective methane management activities and possible synergies through collaboration with other bodies and organizations, such as the Working Group on Coal of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and ILO.

## **X. Eighteenth session of the Global Methane Initiative Coal Mine Subcommittee (agenda item 8)**

14. The eighteenth session of the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) Coal Mine Subcommittee discussed, inter alia, Partner and Project Network updates, development of country Action Plans, and the 2014 Partnership-Wide 10-Year Anniversary Meeting. Representatives from Partner Countries, some of which are ECE member States, informed the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on their CMM activities. A summary of the discussions during this agenda item and presentation are available at Global Methane Initiative's website<sup>3</sup>.

## **XI. Revision of international and national coal mine methane emission reduction mechanisms (agenda item 9)**

15. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts reviewed existing and potential international, national and regional market-based coal mine methane emission reduction mechanisms that may serve as a driver for promoting the adoption of best practices in methane capture and use.

16. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts heard a presentation on North American emission reduction mechanisms and in particular on the California Air Resources Board Mine Methane Capture Protocol that was released for comments in September 2013 and is expected to be approved in March 2014. Some of the public comments received were discussed, with the view as to how the Ad Hoc Group of Experts could help clarify a number of the issues.

17. Before the session the Ad Hoc Group of Experts was invited to comment the revision of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's "Consolidated methodology for coalbed methane, coal mine methane and ventilation air methane capture and use for power (electrical or motive)", also known as ACM0008. The comments made by the Ad Hoc Group of Experts will be compiled and sent to UNFCCC. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts expressed its interest to continue to provide advice to UNFCCC in this matter.

18. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts provided its initial comments on the latest revision of ACM0008. Experts remarked that the methodology should be modified to accommodate surface to in-seam drilling used for pre-mine draining.

## **XII. Establishing an International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane (agenda item 10)**

19. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts discussed recent developments towards establishing International Centre of Excellence on CMM. The Chair of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts, and experts from the United Kingdom and the United States informed the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the outcomes of their recent visit to China, at which time the possible establishment of an International Centre of Excellence was discussed with Chinese Government officials.

20. The experts from Poland presented a letter in which Poland expressed an interest to host an International Centre of Excellence on CMM at the Central Mining Institute in

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<sup>3</sup> [www.globalmethane.org](http://www.globalmethane.org).

Katowice. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts took note of the activities of the Mine Training Centre in Lugansk, Ukraine.

### **XIII. Adoption of conclusions and recommendations (agenda item 11)**

21. After discussions, the Ad Hoc Group of Experts recommended for approval by ECE Member States the following concrete activities:

- (a) Utilize electronic dissemination of *Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines*;
- (b) Begin determination of how to update and further develop *Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines*;
- (c) Establish a Task Force of group members (Mr David Creedy, Mr Ray Pilcher and Mr Clark Talkington) to work towards establishment of International Centre(s) of Excellence on CMM, by one or more United Nations Member States;
- (d) Invite individual members of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts to correspond with ISO and determine possible synergies between ISO TC 263 and the Ad Hoc Group of Experts;
- (e) Continue to provide advice to UNFCCC on the matters related to ACM0008;
- (f) Provide comments on other international, national and regional market-based coal mine methane emission reduction mechanisms, such as the California Air Resources Board Mine Methane Capture Protocol.

### **XIV. Preparations for the ninth session of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts (agenda item 12)**

22. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts discussed preparations for its ninth session. As possible topics for the substantive portion of the session were proposed activities related to the fields of work defined in paragraph 21. The preparations for the ninth session will continue through electronic means, including teleconferences and possibly webinars.

23. The ninth session of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts is tentatively scheduled to be held on 18 November 2014, as a part of the annual ECE Energy Week, as was the case in 2013.

### **XV. Adoption of the report (agenda item 14)**

24. The Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, summarized the agreed conclusions and recommendations. The draft meeting report was circulated and adopted at the meeting. After editing, it will be posted on the ECE coal mine methane website.