



**UNECE Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (GERE)
Bureau Meeting/ Call
7 March 2019, 13:30-14:30**

Report of the Bureau Meeting/ Call

Attendance:

Mr. Nazir Ramazanov (Azerbaijan), Chair

Ms. Margalita Arabidze (Georgia), Vice-Chair,

Mr. Tibor Fischer (Germany), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Mr. Felice Cappelluti (Italy), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Ms. Isabela Cabrita (Portugal), Vice-Chair

Mr. Kostiantyn Gura, Vice-Chair, Ukraine,

Mr. Paolo Frankl, International Energy Agency (IEA), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Ms. Maria Michela Morese (GBEP-FAO), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Mr. Anuar Tassymov on behalf of Mr. Gurbuz Gonul (IRENA), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Secretariat, UNECE:

Mr. Gianluca Sambucini, Sustainable Energy Division (SED), GERE Secretary

Ms. Annukka Lipponen, Environment Division, UNECE

Ms. Lucia de Strasser, Environment Division, UNECE

Ms. Anastasia Ioannou, SED

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Item 1. Chair's welcome

The Chair of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy, Mr. Ramazanov, conveyed welcome remarks to the participants.

Item 2. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as proposed and reflected in the current report.

Item 3. Status of implementation of the Work Plan for 2018-2019: focus on the Hard Talks in BiH and Serbia within the Drina River Basin Project/ GERE input to the Pathways project

Chair and the secretariat informed the Bureau about the implementation of the current Work Plan.

Hard Talks: The representative of the UNECE Environment Division pointed out at dedicated renewable energy hard talks from a water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus angle and the promotion of good practices in using intersectoral synergies as key in the collaboration between UNECE Water Convention and GERE. She informed about the series of Hard Talks with a nexus theme planned as continuation of the cooperation in the Drina River Basin countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia). This series allows to identify some criteria and considerations to increase the benefits and improve trade-offs between renewable energy development and water management/environment. The GERE Bureau was invited to include in the future work plan the elaboration of guidance for sustainable renewable energy development and investment taking into account the intersectoral (nexus) opportunities and issues and building on the results of the Hard Talks in the Drina River Basin.

The secretariat provided an update on the Renewable Energy Hard Talk held in Sarajevo on 3-4 December 2018. Within a series of energy-water-food Nexus-focused Hard Talks directed at improving the uptake of renewable energy more sustainably considering also synergies with water management and agriculture/forestry in the Drina River Basin, a Renewable Energy Hard Talk took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 4-5 December 2018 in Sarajevo. This multi-stakeholder dialogue brought together major players in the fields of energy and environment (water and forestry) from public and private sector to discuss key issues, identify priorities and propose concrete recommendations for policy changes needed to overcome policy, legal, regulatory, technical barriers and take advantage of untapped renewable energy potential.

Taking into account these interdependencies, the Hard Talk discussed renewable energy in terms of the trade-offs in the nexus as well as their uptake as a priority for countries intending to reduce carbon emissions in line with Nationally Determined Commitments (NDCs). The inclusion of an intersectoral (nexus) perspective, considering various sectors, in the RE Hard Talk in BiH and with a particular attention to the Drina river basin, helped to understand the role of water and land management and the related synergies in renewable energy development, and to demonstrate the value of both integrating environmental considerations and coordinating across borders. Applying a nexus approach to renewable energy policy and planning and regional development, can provide

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benefits at multiple levels, from the local population to the different resource management sectors, to international cooperation.

Within the same context, another Hard Talk is to be organized in Serbia on 21-22 March 2019 in cooperation with UNDP Serbia.

Pathways Project: The secretariat briefed the Bureau members on the Pathways project, its current status and next steps. The project's goal is to strengthen the knowledge and capacities of countries to develop, implement and track national sustainable energy policies, aligned with international agreements. On a higher level, it aims to contribute to climate change mitigation and sustainable development. The ultimate outcome of the project is the development of new strategic orientations, options and national actions to ensure the attainment of sustainable energy in the ECE region. To achieve this goal, the project aims to achieve three milestones:

- (a) development of sustainable energy policy and technology options towards 2050 by means of modelling and other tools;
- (b) policy dialogue and stakeholder engagement – workshops in the region, consultations with expert groups, high level dialogue at CES in September 2019;
- (c) development of an early-warning system if achievement of sustainable energy objectives is not on track.

Consultation process is part of the Pathways to Sustainable Energy project that focuses on the development of policy options and adaptive policy pathways, increasing stakeholder engagement and the preparation of future policy dialogues. Experts are requested to validate data, identify key messages, and provide key insights and policy recommendations.

Timeframe: The formal consultations with Expert Groups on Pathways to Sustainable Energy Project will start the 1st of March and will last for 3-4 weeks, following this, a webinar on integrated key findings from all EGs will take place (4th of April).

All findings will be communicated over the outreach workshop with Member States (14-15 May), the CSE consultation meeting and the High-level Political Dialogue on September.

Item 4. 6th GERE session within the Tenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, Bangkok, 7-9 October 2019: participation and contribution by Bureau members

The 6th session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy is scheduled in Bangkok within the tenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development on 7-9 October 2019. This time the Tenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development is hosted by Thailand and UN ESCAP, our sister Regional Commission. UNECE and UN ESCAP have many countries that are member States of both Regional Commissions and also have similar energy issues. The exact dates for the Expert Group meetings will still need to be finalized but will be in the period 7-9 October 2019.

This meeting will replace the meeting scheduled in Geneva for 10-11 October 2019. The same arrangements are planned for the 6th session of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency initially scheduled in Geneva for 8-9 October 2019.

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The GERE Bureau, with no objection, expressed positive view on this opportunity and therefore the 6th GERE session is now planned in Bangkok within the 10th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development on 7-9 October 2019. The only pre-condition to start preparation of the GERE session towards this configuration is related to few technical/ logistic aspects that need to be solved together with ESCAP.

GERE Bureau members/ partner organizations will provide their views and suggestions for joint dedicated events within the GERE annual session and the Forum in Bangkok by 30 April 2019.

Item 5. Draft Work Plan for 2020-2021: brainstorming on content and information on process

As next session of GERE will take place after the session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, the Work Plan will need to be approved by GERE by written procedure.

By mid-July 2019, all Groups of Experts need to submit requests for mandate renewals and future work plans. During the 5th GERE session, the Group of Experts “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 2020–2021 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 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 taken to be tacit approval” (Para 48, ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2017/2).

Content wise, the Chair and the other Bureau members expressed a positive view to continue the activity of tracking progress and exchange of experiences on how to increase the uptake of renewable energy through an edition of the REN21 UNECE Renewable Energy Status Report 2020 which is planned to be prepared during the second half of this year and issued at the beginning of next.

Several Bureau members expressed positive view on the UNECE Renewable Energy Hard Talks as valuable multi-stakeholder policy dialogue to identify key obstacles, discuss possible options and agree on concrete recommendations that would allow UNECE countries to capitalize on existing benefits. This will promote renewable energy investments and, overall, will increase the uptake of renewable energy. There was a consensus in considering the Hard Talks as a dialogue able to gather a broad range of stakeholders, including policy-makers, public administrations, private developers and investors, financial institutions, donors, experts and civil society representatives to discuss the opportunities and challenges of renewable energy investment. Feedback from countries would be useful after a certain period of time to better understand support and measures still needed to increase the renewable energy uptake after the recommendations have been made at each specific Hard Talk: e.g .through a letter to relevant institutions asking update on the progress made after one or two years, possibly in relation to the preparation of a new edition of the REN21 UNECE Renewable Energy Status Report.

As in previous discussions, the Bureau reiterated that a follow-up action to the Hard Talks is missing to facilitate the follow-up and implementation of specific recommendations, particularly responding through a specific and tailored advice or training as part of a clearly expressed capacity building. This would require additional resources. A strengthening of the Hard Talk in this sense can be reflected in the GERE Work Plan 2020-2021.

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GERE Bureau members will provide views and suggestions on the GERE Work Plan 2020-2021 by 30 April 2019.

If there are interconnections between work plans of various Groups of Experts, they can be formalized. GERE can also be consulted by other Groups of Experts on renewable energy in their work. In this direction, Bureau members were informed and invited to participate in the next session of the Group of Experts on Gas which is scheduled in Geneva on 25-26 March 2019 in Geneva (updated agenda and info at <https://www.unece.org/energy/welcome/areas-of-work/natural-gas/meetings-and-events/group-of-experts-on-gas/group-of-experts-on-gas/2019/6th-session-group-of-experts-on-gas/docs.html>). A specific agenda item will be devoted to Exploring synergies between gas, renewable energy and energy efficiency and any suggestion from you on how to improve the interactions between gas and renewable energy is welcome (please send your input to me by the 6th March). The draft conclusions and recommendations are evolving from the initial draft here attached and so far these are the draft C&Rs under consideration on the specific agenda item 6.

Item 5. AOB

There was no other business