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Informal Preparatory Meeting on the UNECE Group of Experts on Renewable Energy

Geneva, Palais des Nations, Salle V, 26 June 2014, 10:00-18:00

AGENDA

Renewable energy policies mean well but do not work well enough. Renewable energy represents one way to reduce the carbon intensity of the energy sector, improve energy security, and encourage economic development. However, if renewables require enduring support because the overall policy framework for energy does not take proper account of externalities, this industry may not be politically or economically sustainable. Renewable energy (RE) is gaining momentum and uptake is increasing as costs fall and markets are established. RE is integrating progressively into the global energy mix. Yet there is much more to be done. Recent publications of the IPCC and the International Energy Agency (IEA) highlight our imperative to reduce carbon emissions if we are to avoid a 6 degree pathway. The global architecture for energy is evolving, and so must both the vision for RE and the processes for enhancing their uptake. Improving system design including optimized use of RE could speed up implementation and improve our chances of attaining sustainable energy.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (UNECE's) 56 member States created the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (GERE) to carry out action-oriented, practical activities to significantly increase the uptake of RE, in line with the UN Secretary General's Sustainable Energy for All Initiative. UNECE is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations, providing analysis, policy advice and assistance to governments, in cooperation with other global players and key stakeholders, notably the business community.

This brainstorming session gathers leading global experts to discuss the state of development of RE with a particular focus on the challenges in the UNECE region. The region is comprised of countries of western, central and eastern Europe, central Asia, Israel, Turkey, and North America. The region has huge economic, cultural, and energy diversity, and it plays a large role in the current and future global energy architecture. Experts will launch activities under the group's draft work plan to implement the mandate on RE, and the outcomes of those activities will feed in to the first session of GERE, planned in Geneva on 18-19 November 2014 during UNECE's Energy Week.

UNECE seeks to establish both a long-term dialogue and targeted partnerships at this first gathering of experts. The informal, moderated discussion will focus on the role that UNECE and notably GERE can play in addition to and in partnership with already-established players in the RE field, notably the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the IEA, REN21 and regional and networking organisations.

Morning

Time	Agenda item
10:00-10:15	Setting the Scene and Moderator: Scott Foster, Director, Sustainable Energy Division
10:15-10:30	<i>Tour de table</i>
10:30-13:00	Moderated discussion on the status of renewables, best-practice guidance, technology development and partnerships Status of RE in the UNECE region: Deger Saygin, Programme Officer, IRENA This discussion aims to define the baseline for further activities, including support to communities that at present have no access to energy. Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the status of RE, including access to modern energy services?• Is this region different from other regions? Best-practice guidance: Oliver Frank, Head of RE Division, DENA This discussion aims to exchange views on how to develop RE “the right way” in order to develop best practice guidance for countries. Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the framework conditions for the sustainable development of RE?• What is “the right way” to develop and deploy RE?• What else needs to happen to boost RE uptake in the region and beyond? Towards a RE Status Report in the UNECE region: Rana Adib, Research Coordinator, REN21 REN21 will present ongoing activities, including data gathering, questionnaires, timelines and challenges. Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to plan a RE Status Report in the UNECE region?• What are the methods used? Who are the partners?• How is data collected, validated and shared?• What is the timeline? Costs?• What are the challenges?• How can the process be started?• What roles can different actors play? What baseline data are needed for the UNECE Region? Tomaž Lajovic, Consultant, GIZ/BMUB
13.00-14:00	<i>Buffet Lunch hosted by the German Permanent Mission (Delegates Restaurant, 8th floor)</i>

Afternoon

Time	Agenda item
14:00-16:30	<p>Brainstorming (continued)</p> <p>Technology development and uptake: <i>Julian Popov, Advisor, European Climate Foundation</i></p> <p>This discussion aims to exchange know-how on persistent barriers to RE technologies and better understand the interaction of RE and traditional fuel sources and infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hybrid technologies• Integration of variable RE, including modernisation/expansion of grids and off-grid• Project development• Electrification and RE• Competitive market environment for RE investments• Investor needs and regulatory environment <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the gaps (linked to above list)?• What can “we” do about it (“we” being the international community and UNECE as part of that international community)?• What are the specific challenges?• Which next steps would have the biggest impact? <p>Partnerships, regional cooperation: <i>John Tidmarsh, Chief Investment Officer at R20 Regions of Climate Action</i></p> <p>This discussion aims to shed light on possible synergies with international actors.</p> <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there specific collaborative models that have worked well?• Who are the main actors that the GERE should consider?• Is there a role for public-private partnerships, public-private engagements or other forms of collaborative activities?
16:30-17:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
17:00-18:00	<p>Conclusions and Roadmap</p> <p>This point seeks to summarize the recommendations and build an action oriented pathway for the first session of GERE. Of particular importance will be to define how GERE can support UNECE member States to increase the share of RE. Recommendations might include a questionnaire for member States on RE.</p> <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the value added and the niche for UNECE in RE?• How can SE4All be strengthened?• What concrete activities should be undertaken for the November meeting?• Who can do what (or is committed to what)?• Next steps• What concrete activities should be undertaken for the November meeting?
18:00	Meeting ends