

**Opening Remarks: Raymond C. Pilcher, Chair, Joint meeting of the GoE with GMI October 24,
2016**

Representatives of the governments of the member states of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, delegates, experts, members of Secretariat and members and Co-Chairs of the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) Coal Subcommittee, it is a pleasure to welcome all of you and an honor for me to chair the 11th session of the UNECE Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane. As you know, this meeting is being held in conjunction with the 24th session of the GMI coal subcommittee which celebrated a decade of its work in Washington DC of this year, in March. Our organizations, which share members and goals, often work in conjunction or in parallel to promote best practices in capture and use or destruction of methane that would otherwise be emitted to the atmosphere. Whereas, the GoE is an organization that was founded here at the UNECE and comprises members coming from the economic commission's member states promotes the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from coal mines with its activities on recovery and use of methane focusing on reducing the risks of explosions in coal mines; the Global Methane Initiative, is as the title suggests, a global organization with participating members from its 43 member countries the EU, and the UNECE focuses on reducing emissions of methane to the atmosphere through a broad range of support and outreach. The work of the Group of Experts' on Coal Mine Methane is mandated as a part of the portfolio of work undertaken by the Committee on Sustainable Energy, with its expert members drawn from governments, academia, industry, other non-governmental bodies.

The Committee on Sustainable Energy met 28-30 September 2016, here at the Palais des Nations. The prime objective of its 25th session is to explore how to deliver on the *national commitments* in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to discuss potential solutions to be agreed at an Energy Ministerial at the outset of the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 11 June 2017, as a major stepping stone in the history of this international fora process. As a runup to the ministerial, Mr. Foster attended the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Baku, Azerbaijan, held 18-21 October 2016 to discuss the practical issues associated transforming energy systems in order to meet SDGs. As small contribution to the process, Mr. Clark Talkington and I attended and the

CSE, presenting the goals of our GoE and report the progress that we have made toward achieving the goals and concrete work that are set out in our 2016 and 2017 workplan. We addressed the CSE along with the other Expert groups to show how our work helps satisfy the requirements of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. I urge you if you have not already done so, to review the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, as we will discuss our ongoing work in that context tomorrow. I also took the opportunity to express that while the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane, is fulfilling its mandate by endeavoring to meet the goals and deliverables set out in its work plan, it could work more effectively satisfy the UN's SDGs if our group consults with other Groups of Experts that work under the mandate of the Sustainable Energy Committee. In that regard, I used an example whereby the GoE would work with the *Experts Group on Resource Classification* and the *Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Production from Fossil Fuels*. The United Nations Framework Classification includes the socio-economic dimension to classify natural resources. With the addition of this dimension, we can view the development of natural resources in a more comprehensive way, for we have a method by which the coal and coal associated gas resource can be ranked as a function of its potential to be produced in a sustainable manner. Once a coal resource and its associated gas is classified in accordance with the UNFC scheme and projects have been implemented to reduce emission of methane to the atmosphere, the coal and gas from this deposit could be sold to electric power producers with its valuable environmental attributes documented. The *Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Production from Fossil Fuels* could then help to promote this approach to electricity producers in concert with the work that they are doing to promote implementation of carbon capture and sequestration. In this way, the GoE is doing its part to manage methane and contributing to the management other emissions.

While we will discuss these items in more detail tomorrow, our GoE is working in other concrete ways to satisfy the goals laid out its 2016-2017 workplan:

- Volunteers led by Dr. David Creedy, revised the Best Practice Guidance on Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines (BPG), which was published on the UNECE GoE homepage this week.

- Case studies were contributed to the BPG by several contributors and several more needed for publication on our website in 2017. These case studies are critical for future work and dissemination of best practices.
- In 2016, the GoE began the dissemination of the BPG with the Best practice session at the GMI Global Methane Forum held in Washington DC in March of this year. In addition, to this auspicious beginning, workshops will be held in various countries using extra-budgetary funds contributed by the USEPA. The first of three supported by USEPA was held in Karaganda Kazakhstan on 4th of October. Two more are required under this funding mechanism and will be scheduled in 2017.
- The first of the International Centers Excellence is being planned for opening in early 2017. This first one will be in Poland and is supported by the PGNiG, the Polish Oil and Gas company, the PIG, Polish Geological Institute, and the Polish Oil and Gas Institute and hosted by GIG the Central Mining Institute in Katowice, who worked hard to move this idea along and gain the support of the Polish government. A second of what we hope will be many centers of excellence is under discussion with supporters in China. This initiative will be discussed tomorrow by Dr. David Creedy.
- We are working to make a recommendation on ways for our group can expand its scope of work to cover integrated methane management in the context of the SDGs mentioned earlier. It is my view that coordination among the CSE's groups of experts it member states is critical.
- We continue to provide advice on methane related standards to the United Nations Framework Convention on climate Change, (UNFCCC), and the International Organization for Standardization. Coordination with other international organizations is encouraged and we look forward to fruitful exchange and cooperation with these organizations.

With this I will close before we reconvene and call to order the Sixth Joint meeting of the UNECE GoE and Coal Subcommittee of the Global Methane Initiative.