



Implementing the Astana Ministerial Declaration: Outcomes of the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development

1. On 11 June 2017, ministers and prominent experts participating in the Ministerial Conference and Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (the Eighth Forum) endorsed the Astana Ministerial Statement (Annex III).¹ Ministers requested that the Eighth Forum participants explore means for achieving the intent of the Statement. They also requested that progress toward attaining the objectives of energy for sustainable development be assessed in future energy ministerial meetings organized under the auspices of the United Nations.
2. This document presents the relevant outcomes that emerged from the Eighth Forum. Participants endorsed this document at the closing session of the Forum and encouraged involved intergovernmental organizations and partners to submit this document and the Astana Ministerial Statement to their respective governing bodies for endorsement and subsequent action.
3. The Eighth Forum addressed:
 - (a) Accelerating the transition to a sustainable energy system;
 - (b) Accelerating the uptake of renewables;
 - (c) Improving energy efficiency in buildings;
 - (d) Improving energy efficiency in industry;
 - (e) Understanding the role of natural gas in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
 - (f) Valuing coal mine methane;
 - (g) Extending deployment of United Nations Framework Classification for Resources;
 - (h) Reducing the environmental footprint of fossil energy through deployment of high efficiency, low emissions technology and carbon capture use and storage;
 - (i) Building on international cooperation and collaboration; and
 - (j) Improving data quality and indicators.
4. The following initiatives are recommended by the Eighth Forum for consideration by countries:

A. Accelerate the transition to a sustainable energy system

5. Invest in education at all levels to build capacity for handling complexity as the world moves to a holistic and integrated systems perspective in energy policy.

¹ <http://energyministerial.kz/about/outcome-document/>

B. Accelerating the uptake of renewables

6. Continue to track the progress of renewable energy deployment in countries of South and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and address the relevant barriers;
7. Promote and participate in cross-sectoral dialogues (e.g. energy efficiency, renewable energy, gas, finance etc.) to enable effective interaction among supply- and demand-side alternatives in energy markets;
8. Develop the necessary frameworks that promote investments in renewable energy development and deployment, including through enhanced dialogue among public and private renewable energy stakeholders (e.g. demand-driven “hard talks” in ECE member countries);
9. Promote institutional learning about the interplay between renewable energy and gas, including about efficient distribution networks, flexibility of fossil fuel plants and variable renewables;
10. Provide training for fossil-intensive economies about the development of holistic energy strategies and pathways to achieve sustainable energy. This could include the economic integration of renewable energy technologies into the future national energy system and developing an integrated approach for the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus as part of greening the economy;
11. Increase the involvement of the private sector in developing and financing renewable energy projects;
12. Develop the skills of the public and private sectors at the national level to identify, develop, promote and implement renewable energy investment projects through matchmaking support activities.

C. Improving energy efficiency in buildings

13. Endorse the framework guidelines for energy efficiency standards in buildings and pursue their widespread deployment;
14. Use key performance indicators to evaluate smart and sustainable cities.

D. Improving energy efficiency in industry

15. Organize seminars to help policy makers understand the perspective of industry, help industry appreciate the financial and productivity benefits of energy efficiency, and apply both sets of lessons to finance and supporting organizations;
16. Find a host country and a flagship project as a case study on legacy industrial complexes that use inefficient technologies and processes. The intent is to deploy readily available and modern technologies and expertise when industrial complexes are modernising as part of a country’s greening the economy strategy;
17. Create framework conditions that allow industry and capital markets to invest. Develop a robust and flexible business model for efficient transition of an outdated site that could be replicable in other industrial complexes.

E. Understanding the role of natural gas in the 2030 Agenda

18. Develop and deploy best practices for monitoring and abating methane emissions;

19. All oil-producing nations to endorse the World Bank-introduced “Zero Routine Flaring by 2030” Initiative. The Initiative is designed to end the wasteful oil industry practice of routinely flaring associated gas at oil production sites around the world. Global gas flaring causes substantial emissions of CO₂, methane, and black carbon, in addition to wasting vast quantities of a natural resource that could be conserved or put to productive use.

20. Establish a partnership among the gas industry, governments, and other players to sustain the transition to the future energy system.

F. Valuing coal mine methane

21. Support development of coal mine methane projects that assist coal companies in adapting to changing economic and environmental conditions and provide them with additional source of revenue thus facilitating their sustainability;

22. Support the establishment of international centres of excellence on coal mine methane worldwide to train professionals and disseminate principles-based best practices to support coal mine methane projects.

G. Extending deployment of United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC)

23. Encourage countries and private industry to adopt UNFC as a tool to aid communication and sustainable management of resources;

24. Develop guidelines and case studies for application of UNFC to coal mine methane projects and waste to energy and materials from wastes projects.

H. Reducing the environmental footprint of fossil energy through deployment of high efficiency, low emissions (HELE) technologies and carbon capture use and storage (CCUS)

25. Encourage governments, the private sector and international organizations to provide funding, technology transfer and other support mechanisms for worldwide deployment of HELE technologies;

26. Provide policy parity to advanced coal technologies and CCUS with other low carbon technologies. Governments are encouraged to put in place measures to ensure this policy parity.

I. Building on international cooperation and collaboration (awareness raising among stakeholders)

27. SPECA²: Enhance strategic partnerships for conjunctive operation of thermal power plants and hydropower plants in Central Asian through transboundary cooperation to achieve sustainable power supply;

28. Support UNECE and ESCAP initiatives for developing cooperation and synergies to promote technical assistance projects in Central Asia.

J. Improving data quality and indicators

29. Support future regional reports on the tracking of progress of the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular on energy, e.g. the 2017 Global Tracking Framework regional companion reports;

30. Participate in the UNECE project “Pathways to Sustainable Energy” – the project would be strengthened by wider participation of donors and countries.

² The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was launched in 1998 to strengthen subregional cooperation in Central Asia and its integration into the world economy. The countries of SPECA are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.