www.unece.org/cleanerelectricityproduction/about.html

The Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Production from Coal and Other Fossil Fuels

The UNECE region faces significant challenges in meeting growing electricity demand. Electricity dominates almost all sectors of final energy consumption, with the exception of the transport sector. Global demand for electricity is expected to double by 2030 led largely due to growth in developing economies , while the UNECE region will see a 50% increase in demand. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), if present trends continue, US$16 trillion of investment will be needed globally over the next three decades to maintain and expand energy supply of which US$4 trillion will need to be invested in the UNECE region, about equally in generation and in transmission and distribution.

Although renewable sources and nuclear energy play very important roles in supplying primary fuel for electricity production, fossil fuels, especially coal and natural gas, are the dominant fuels for generating electric power globally and in the the UNECE region. Over 60% of the electricity generated in the UNECE region comes from fossil fuels and this trend is expected to continue given that the region holds 40% of the world's natural gas reserves and 60% of global coal reserves. Combustion of fossil fuels, however, presents a range of environmental challenges, including carbon dioxide emissions, release of traditional criteria pollutants such as SO2 , NOx and particulate matter, and waste disposal. Production of electricity from fossil fuels must also deliver on environmental performance to ensure its long-term sustainability and acceptance.

In November 2006 at its 15th Session, the UNECE's Committee on Sustainable Energy recognized the importance of encouraging investment in the power sector while ensuring that it is done so in an environmentally sustainable manner. To carry out this work, the Committee created the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity from Coal and Other Fossil Fuels. Specifically the Ad Hoc Group of Experts provides a forum for an intergovernmental dialogue on investment and regulation for the promotion of cleaner electricity production between governmentally appointed experts, complemented by the participation of representatives from the electric power industry and other related industries, as well as the international financial sector and relevant international organizations.

In creating this Group, the Committee on Sustainable Energy consolidated the efforts of two earlier working groups, the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal in Sustainable Development which focused principally on coal production and coal industry restructuring, and the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Electric Power which focused on investment in the electricity sector and facilitation of cross-border transfers. Consolidation recognizes first that many of the issues related to coal have shifted from production to utilization. In addition, it also acknowledges the strong interrelationship and interdependency between liberalizing electricity and natural gas markets, improving environmental performance, and successfully attracting investment to the power sector.

CONSOLIDATED ACTIVITIES TO CLEANER ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION

Coal
Electricity