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## Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Sustainable Energy

### Group of Experts on Renewable Energy

Tenth session

Geneva, 11-12 September 2023

## Report of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy on its tenth session\*

### I. Introduction

1. The tenth session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (the Group of Experts) was held from 11 to 12 September 2023.
2. This report summarizes the proceedings of the Group of Experts at its tenth session. All the documents related to the session are available on the website of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).<sup>1</sup>

### II. Attendance

3. The meeting of the Group of Experts was attended by 85 participants.
4. Experts from the following ECE member States participated: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and Uzbekistan.
5. Experts from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, Ghana, India, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Qatar, and Tunisia, participated under Article 11 of the Terms of Reference of the Commission (E/ECE/778/Rev.5).
6. The following United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes were in attendance: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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\* The draft conclusions and recommendations were reviewed and agreed by the Group of Experts after each agenda item and updated as needed. The conclusions and recommendations were approved and report adopted at the end of the session subject to necessary editing and formatting.

<sup>1</sup> Official documents, room documents, and presentations delivered at the meeting are available on the ECE website (see <https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/10th-session-group-experts-renewable-energy>). Official documents of the session are also available at Official Document System of the United Nations (see <http://documents.un.org/>).



(UNHCR), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Representatives from the European Commission (EC) participated. Representatives from the Energy Community Secretariat, and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) also participated.

7. The meeting was additionally attended by representatives of international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the financial sector, non-governmental organizations, civil society, professional societies and associations, academia and the private sector, as well as by independent experts.

### **III. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2023/1 – Annotated provisional agenda

8. In accordance with the Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission (E/ECE/778/Rev.5), the first item of the provisional agenda was the adoption of the agenda. The provisional agenda as contained in document ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2023/1 was adopted without amendment.

### **IV. Opening remarks (agenda item 2)**

9. In his opening remarks, the Chair shared his reflections on how the war in Ukraine has confirmed the need to ensure global energy security which could be reached by renewable energy sources development. The Chair highlighted the main activities of the Group of Experts in line with its Work Plan for 2024–2025 (the Work Plan 2024–2025, ECE/ENERGY/2023/8) and with activities and priorities of the ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy.

10. The Chair noted that this year's session of the Group of Experts was delivered within the Sustainable Energy Expert Week, which included also the thirty-second session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy.

### **V. Activities and priorities of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and matters for consideration by the Group of Experts (agenda item 3)**

11. The secretariat provided an overview of recent activities of the Committee on Sustainable Energy following its thirty-first session, 21-23 September 2022, as well as the ongoing work on building resilient energy systems.

### **VI. Tracking progress in the uptake of renewable energy (agenda item 4)**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2022/3 – Renewable Energy Status Report 2022 - key findings

ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2023/3 - Status of implementation of renewable energy action plans across 17 ECE countries

CSE-32/2023/INF.2 – Policy brief on aligning critical raw materials development with sustainable development

CSE-32/2023/INF.3 – Policy brief on advancing power system connectivity in support of SDG7

12. Participants observed that although the 2023 ECE Policy Brief on SDG7 confirmed positive trends and the significant potential for the deployment of renewable energy systems within the ECE region, the rate of progress has not been enough to meet the SDG7 targets.

Acceleration of efforts is essential to achieving universal access to affordable, reliable, modern and sustainable energy.

13. Experts discussed the progress on the uptake of renewable energy within the region and assessed the prospects for future development. Obstacles and challenges were also pointed out, as well as policies and mechanisms to address financing for increasing the uptake of renewable energy.

14. The Group of Experts:

(a) Noted with appreciation the ECE support to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2023 for the mid-term review of the implementation of the SDGs and the preparation for the 2023 SDG Summit to be convened under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023;

(b) Took note of the ECE contribution to develop three policy briefs in support of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2023: (i) Ensuring Universal Energy Access and Advancing Just, Inclusive and Equitable Energy Transitions; (ii). Advancing Power System Connectivity in support of SDG7; (iii). Aligning Critical Raw Materials Development with sustainable development;

(c) Noted with appreciation the active participation of ECE in webinars and events organized within the HLPF to present the policy briefs and the organization of a side-event on “The Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus amid Climate Change in the ECE Region – Regional Strategies for a Sustainable Future”, on 13 July 2023 in New York;

(d) Noted with appreciation the progress made in the uptake of renewable energy in the ECE region and the development of the necessary policy options to facilitate this uptake;

(e) Encouraged ECE member States to continue improving the quality of data so that progress made in the uptake of renewable energy can be accurately monitored and assessed, and an evidence-based development pathway can be formulated for sound decision-making and renewable energy sector development;

(f) Recognized the need to accelerate the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by building in the ECE region a resilient energy system that ensures access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all and helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector in the region.

## **VII. Exchange of experiences on how to increase the uptake of renewable energy. Case studies on Ukraine: strategy and plans for energy sector renovation with the use of renewable energy sources (agenda item 5)**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2023/4 - Bioenergy production and potential for addressing the compound food and energy crisis in Ukraine

ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2023/5 - Multi-stakeholder Dialogue: policy recommendations to support biofuels market development in Ukraine

15. Experts discussed specific activities and key findings from two renewable energy projects implemented in Ukraine, where the war has damaged more than 50% of the energy infrastructure, as an example and guidance for a distributed clean energy generation, which can increase the resilience of the energy system.

16. Participants were invited to exchange experiences and good practices and to discuss implications for the work of the Group of Experts in the ECE region. ECE has been driving change on renewables through multi-stakeholder dialogues at national level.

## 17. The Group of Experts:

(a) Noted with appreciation the outcome of the SDG Fund Project “Addressing the compounded food and energy crisis in Ukraine through innovative technologies and adaptive agricultural practices”. The activity was implemented jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), ECE and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);

(b) Noted with appreciation the organization of a multi-stakeholder dialogue on “Untapped Bioenergy Potential of Ukraine: Comprehensive View of Proper Use. Issues of Energy Security and Food Security”, which was organized at the end of the project and provided concrete recommendations to make the necessary changes to promote bioenergy development in Ukraine;

(c) Expressed appreciation on the “Study to Support Energy Crops Along Roads and Highways in Ukraine”, which can help to increase the uptake of renewable energy and, at the same time, restore the forest strips and, under certain conditions, be attractive to private investors;

(d) Recognized that in the current conditions the discussion exploring sustainable solutions to increase the generation of energy from renewable sources in Ukraine is of interest to other countries of the ECE region, in particular taking into account the current global energy crisis, and the ongoing efforts of many ECE member States to enhance the resiliency of their energy systems;

(e) Recognized the need to restore infrastructure, including renewable energy facilities, which are out of operation as a consequence of the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, including the effects of the war due to continuous attacks against critical infrastructure across Ukraine;<sup>2</sup>

(f) Highlighted the need for infrastructure development in Ukraine and other countries of the ECE region in order to support the decarbonization of their economies and scale-up the use of renewable energy sources;

(g) Emphasized the need for the development of renewable energy within a green transition and the fulfilment of the commitments from countries with the Paris Agreement;

(h) Encouraged the governments of ECE member States to indicate to the secretariat their interest in hosting and/or funding a Renewable Energy Hard Talk, as well as a Renewable Energy Performance Review in countries of the region;

(i) Requested the secretariat to assist, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, interested countries in identifying obstacles and bottlenecks to renewable energy investments and exploring possible carbon credit mechanisms in collaboration with other partners in the ECE region through organization of Renewable Energy Hard Talks in the ECE region through organization of Renewable Energy Hard Talks;

(j) Invited ECE member States to be more active in requesting the secretariat to conduct studies and capacity-building activities in the field of renewable energy, especially those that qualify for the support of the Regional Advisory Services;

(k) Welcomed the support provided to its work by the Regional Adviser.

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<sup>2</sup> The Russian Federation objected to the inclusion of item 17 (e) in the report and called upon the members of the Group to refrain from politicization of the Group’s activities.

## VIII. Cross-cutting and inter-sectoral cooperation to integrate renewable energy into energy systems (agenda item 6)

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2023/11 – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Platform on Resilient Energy Systems Work Plan

ECE/ENERGY/2023/12 - Advanced Concept for the Platform on Resilient Energy Systems

18. Renewable energy plays an important role in helping to achieve better management of resources within the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus. The role of renewable energy in promoting the nexus approach was specifically considered at the session, as also the links to the 2030 Agenda and the implications for climate change mitigation.

19. Participants were requested to present their experiences and views on possible synergies and technology interplays that help increase the uptake of renewable energy. These technical considerations were considered useful to identify actions for building resilient energy systems and implementing measures ensuring Just Transition and, within the ECE work, benefitting from participation in the ECE Platform on Resilient Energy Systems.

20. The Group of Experts:

(a) Recognized that in order to achieve a higher share of renewable energy in their future energy mixes, ECE member States should adopt an integrated approach and engage in a multi-stakeholder dialogue with national and international stakeholders. Such efforts have the potential to improve understanding of the renewable energy resource characteristics and availability, as well as strengthen the relevant policy, institutional, normative, and regulatory frameworks, including through the application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) to renewable energy resources, and to related critical raw materials and projects;

(b) Encouraged ECE member States to actively participate in the Platform on Resilient Energy Systems, which aims to facilitate adoption of policies needed for increasing energy security and affordability, as well as its environmental sustainability, simultaneously ensuring Just Transition, and thus providing for more resilient energy systems in the ECE region;

(c) Invited ECE member States to continue the dialogue on cross-cutting and intersectoral cooperation to develop renewable energy and to consider in that context the interplay of low and zero carbon technologies, strengthening cooperation with international partners including, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) among others;

(d) Appreciated the ongoing exploratory work to develop an international hydrogen taxonomy and the use of UNFC and the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS), as appropriate, as well as the discussion on scaling-up hydrogen and hydrogen derivatives production pathways through electrolysis from renewable energy, aiming to contribute to the development of a regional hydrogen ecosystem, including through mutual recognition of certification;

(e) Recognized that the further development of renewable energy sources will have a positive impact on achieving ambitious global climate goals and mitigating the negative impact of human actions on the environment and biodiversity;

(f) Highlighted the need for ECE member States to adopt a holistic and integrated approach to energy to further develop renewable energy technologies and ensure a better management of resources within the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus;

(g) Encouraged continued cooperation between the Group of Experts and the Renewable Energy Working Group of the Expert Group on Resource Management (EGRM);

(h) Appreciated publication of the Report on Assessment of the geothermal resources of Albania, to the development of which the Group of Experts contributed;

(i) Noted with appreciation the cross-sectoral collaboration with the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems on creating an enabling environment for scaling up

renewable energy capacity and strengthening the electricity network in the ECE region and within a global context;

(j) Noted with appreciation the cooperation with other Subprogrammes of ECE and the benefits that this brings to ECE member States in terms of improving the management of resources, including through increasing the share of renewable energy in their energy mixes;

(k) Encouraged all subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy with the support of the secretariat to continue working, within the scope of their mandates and expertise, on the transition of the energy sector in line with the principles and goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(l) Invited the secretariat to continue working on the role of women in the energy sector, recognizing that empowering women is likely to have multiple benefits, including in the fields of renewable energy and energy efficiency;

(m) Recognized the importance of installation of renewable power generation facilities at closed coal mines as a way of repurposing mined lands and establishing power production for the affected communities.

## **IX. Implementation of the Work Plan of the Group of Experts for 2022-2023 and draft Work Plan of the Group of Experts for 2024-2025 (agenda item 7)**

*Documentation:* ECE/ENERGY/2021/12 – Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2022-2023

ECE/ENERGY/2023/8 – Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2024-2025

21. The secretariat reported on the status of implementation of the Work Plan 2022-2023 (ECE/ENERGY/2021/12), as well on the support of the Regional Advisory Services in the area of renewable energy.

22. The Group of Experts reviewed the activities mandated by the Work Plan for 2022–2023 and implemented over the last intersessional period, as well as other sustainable energy activities and initiatives that the Group of Experts was involved in since its eighth session. The Group also exchanged views on practical aspects of implementation of outstanding activities of the Work Plan 2022–2023.

23. The Group of Experts:

(a) Noted with appreciation the positive and tangible results of the concrete activities that it has been implementing since 2014 to help increase the uptake of renewable energy in the ECE region;

(b) Noted with appreciation that it has been successfully delivering on its work plan for 2022-2023 and invited the Committee on Sustainable Energy to give it an opportunity to present its key achievements at the Committee's thirty-second session and on that basis extend its mandate and approve its draft work plan for 2024-2025;

(c) Requested the Bureau of the Group of Experts to continue, in cooperation with the secretariat, to oversee implementation of the Work Plan of the Group of Experts, and to explore opportunities to secure extrabudgetary funding for specific projects focused on activities related to: (i) regulatory and policy dialogue, and (ii) sharing best practices in efficient and effective use of various renewable energy sources with a view to increasing the share of renewable energy resources in the global energy mix.

## **X. Election of officers (agenda item 8)**

24. The secretariat received the following nominations from the member States to stand for election at the tenth session of the Group of Experts: Mr. Alberto Biancardi (Italy) and Mr. Andreas Dreisiebner (Switzerland), as Vice-Chair(s).

25. The Bureau of the Group of Experts (the Bureau) also invited Ms Aida Sitdikova (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) to join the Bureau as Vice-Chair.

26. The Group of Experts elected Mr. Alberto Biancardi (Italy) and Mr. Andreas Dreisiebner (Switzerland) as Vice-Chair(s). The term of office for the elected members of the Bureau is from the close of the tenth session until the close of the twelfth session. The term of office for the elected members of the Bureau is two years.

27. The Group of Experts has the following members to serve on the Bureau:

28. Until the conclusion of its eleventh session: Mr. Kostiantyn Gura (Ukraine) as Chair and Mr. Adrian Bylyku (Albania), Mr. Kamran Huseynov (Azerbaijan), Ms. Sanja Kapetina (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ms. Margalita Arabidze (Georgia), Mr. Tibor Fischer (Germany), Mr. Akhat Omiralin (Kazakhstan), Ms. Olena Lenska (Ukraine), Ms. Suriya Jayanti (United States) as Vice-Chairs, and Ms. Naida Taso (Energy Community), Ms. Maria Michela Morese (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/Global Bioenergy Partnership), Mr. Paolo Frankl (International Energy Agency), Mr. Binu Parthan (International Renewable Energy Agency), Ms. Rana Adib (The Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century), and as Vice-Chairs (without the right to vote).

29. Until the conclusion of its twelfth session: Mr. Alberto Biancardi (Italy) and Mr. Andreas Dreisiebner (Switzerland) as Vice-Chair, and Ms. Aida Sitdikova (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development); as Vice-Chair.

30. The Chair of the Group of Experts is ex officio also a Vice-Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy.

## **XI. Other business (agenda item 9)**

31. At the time the draft report was prepared, no issues were raised under this agenda item.

## **XII. Dates of the next meeting (agenda item 10)**

32. The tenth session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy is scheduled to take place in Geneva, 16-17 September 2024. The Group of Experts confirmed its proposal from the previous sessions that its meetings may take place in venues outside Geneva.

## **XIII. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting (agenda item 11)**

*Documentation:* GERE-10/2023/INF.1 – Draft conclusions and recommendations arising from the tenth session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy

ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2023/2 – Report of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy on its tenth session

33. Draft conclusions and recommendations arising from the tenth session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (GERE-10/2023/INF.1) were circulated to participants and Geneva Permanent Representations.

34. The Chair of the Group of Experts, with the assistance of the secretariat, summarized the discussions, reflecting in a concise and factual manner the views expressed by participants.

35. The Group of Experts adopted the draft conclusions and recommendations arising from the tenth session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy, which are included under the relevant agenda items highlighted in this report.

36. The report of the meeting was adopted, including conclusions and recommendations, subject to any necessary editing and formatting. Following that, the meeting was closed.

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