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Opening Statement

by

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United Nations Under-Secretary-General

Executive Secretary

of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

at

Global Methane Forum

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10:00

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Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I'm pleased to welcome you to the 2024 Global Methane Forum.

The Forum is hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Global Methane Initiative (GMI), in partnership with the Global Methane Hub and the UNEP-convened Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC).

We have convened governments, industry leaders and international partners from all over the world to promote replicable methane mitigation successes, and to mobilize action to achieve the ambitious methane emission reductions needed to limit global temperature growth to 1.5°C by mid-century.

This Forum comes at a time of rapid development in methane emissions measurement, including through cutting-edge satellite monitoring. Political momentum is building fast for methane mitigation - 157 countries are now on board for the Global Methane Pledge – which aims to reduce global methane emissions at least 30% from 2020 levels by 2030.

We aim to catalyze efforts to turn this commitment into action, harnessing collective expertise and the best available science and technology to help governments and industry deliver rapid emissions reductions.

This Forum will address all aspects of methane emission reduction efforts - technological, financial, social, and political. It aims to serve as a mid-term checkpoint of progress in countries' commitments made at COP28, offering a

pivotal moment for greater and better coordinated action on methane, as countries prepare for COP29.

Let me acknowledge and congratulate Romania, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan for announcing last year in Dubai their intention of joining the Global Methane Pledge. I also acknowledge and congratulate Azerbaijan for announcing its will to join the Pledge at the recent UN Environment Assembly. To all new members of the Pledge: We are here to help you to turn those pledges into real actions.

Let us recall why we need action on methane.

- Methane's radiative forcing is over 80 times greater than that of CO₂ over a 20-year period. Therefore, cutting emissions now can unlock significant near-term benefits for climate action.
- Readily available measures – of which half are in the fossil fuels sector – can reduce 2030 methane emissions by 30% if fully implemented.
- Together with decarbonization of energy systems, additional targeted actions to reduce methane emissions are essential to limit global warming to 1.5° C and steer us away from irreversible climate tipping points.

UNECE has a long history of working towards mitigating methane emissions. Our two groups of experts address methane emissions from the energy sector. The annual sessions of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition and the Group of Experts on Gas are taking place in the framework of the Forum.

The objective of these Groups of Experts is to determine and promote the most efficient methods of measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) of emissions, and to develop best practices for preventing them during the entire coal and gas life cycles.

To this end, several best practices Guidance documents have been produced and are available on our website. Because of their global relevance, the Guidance documents on coal have been endorsed the UN Economic and Social Council. Indeed, ECOSOC has invited all UN Members States and international organizations to “consider the possibility of taking appropriate measures to ensure the application of the Best Practice Guidances in countries worldwide”.

The goals of this Forum are as follows:

- To discuss global efforts to reduce methane, including:
 - i. effective practices undertaken by governments and industry,
 - ii. the importance of data,
 - iii. latest policies on methane emissions monitoring and mitigation, and
 - iv. successful financing strategies for their implementation.
 - To showcase technical and policy achievements, leadership, and experiences on methane.
 - To engage and enhance private sector participation in methane mitigation.
 - To promote replicable methane mitigation successes and mobilize action to continue making progress toward addressing methane.
 - To promote the Global Methane Pledge, encourage non-signatory States to join, and advocate for ambitious commitments by members.
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Before I close, let me thank our partners, the Global Methane Initiative, the Global Methane Hub, the Clean Air Task Force and the US Environmental Protection Agency, for their efforts in the organization of the event and the resources they have provided to host you here.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all of you for participating to this important event and wish you successful and fruitful discussions. I look forward to advancing together on reducing methane emissions and mitigating climate change.

Thank you.
