

**Committee on Sustainable Energy**  
**Bureau Meeting/Call**  
**Geneva, 20 March 2018, 14.30-16.30**

**Bureau Report No. 2018/2**

**Present/WebEx, Bureau:**

Mr. Nazir Ramazanov, Mr. Jean-Christophe Füeg, Mr. Aleksandar Dukovski, Mr. Talyat Aliev, Mr. Sergio Garribba, Mr. Ray Pilcher, Mr. David MacDonald, Mr. Francisco de la Flor, all Vice-Chairs  
Ms. Miriam Gutzke, Germany, Ms. Heather Greenley, United States

**Apologies:**

Mr. Jarad Daniels, Mr. Ron Adam, both Vice-Chairs

**Present, secretariat, Sustainable Energy Division (SED):**

Mr. Scott Foster, Ms. Stefanie Held, Mr. Branko Milicevic, Ms. Charlotte Griffiths, Mr. Gianluca Sambucini, Ms. Lisa Tinschert, Mr. Oleg Dzioubinski

**Present, modellers:**

Mr. Holger Rogner, IIASA

Action points

SED secretariat:

- Inform of dates for regular Bureau meetings/calls in 2018 (outstanding from meeting 4/2017)
- Next in-person meeting on 18 June 2018 in Geneva
- Provide a detailed status report of the project *Pathways to Sustainable Energy* at the next occasion
- Initiate consultation process on the recommendations from the Committee on Sustainable Energy into the HLPF/SDG7 review process (deadline 30 April 2018)

Outstanding:

- Further develop the document on strategic priorities; possibly integrate into concept for 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee (outstanding from meeting 4/2017)
- Develop strawman for potential UNECE energy ministerial (outstanding from meeting 3/2017)

Bureau:

- React to process and content of the proposed input into the HLPF process by 30 April 2018 (COB)
- Chairs of the Groups of Experts on Clean Electricity Production, Gas and Renewable Energy to discuss audience, ambition and content of investment guidelines into fossil fuels, then share ambitions with the European member States of the UNECE
- Provide input into the objectives, metrics, target ranges and deep dive topics as requested by the modelling team
- All expert groups to get involved in the project *Pathways to Sustainable Energy* to guide the modelling team and secretariat in approach and policies
- Please note the 16 May 2019: confirmed date for an informal dialogue of the Committee on *Pathways to Sustainable Energy* or another desired topic

### Main discussion points

#### **1. Welcome and adoption of the agenda**

- The Chair was unable to participate in the meeting in person as originally planned because bad weather conditions left him grounded on the runway. The meeting was instead chaired by the Director of the Sustainable Energy Division as none of the Vice-Chairs stepped forward to do so. The Director welcomed the participants, including the Vice-Chairs who had joined through WebEx and audio and the representatives from the modelling group.
- The agenda was adopted as presented.

#### **2. Investment guidelines from the Group of Experts on Clean Electricity from Fossil Fuels**

- The Bureau continued the deliberations from meeting 4/2017. Objective: Revisit the overall direction of the Committee on fossil fuel related activities; decision if and when to present the document about investment guidelines to the Committee for endorsement. The Group of Experts on Clean Electricity Production would like the Committee to adopt the guidelines in its 27<sup>th</sup> session, as they are already approved by two expert groups.
- This piece of work proposes to work with international financial institutions and NGOs to develop ways to secure investments into an aging infrastructure, which in the medium-term will remain fossil based. The guidelines are also supported by the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and sparked interest by the Chairs of the Groups of Experts on Renewable Energy and Gas. The Group of Experts on Renewable Energy offered to support work on the guidelines within a wider concept of sustainable energy and the interplay of fossil and renewable energy. As the world is in a transition period, the guidelines should support the transformation to a renewable energy based infrastructure. In first instance, it was the interplay between renewable energy and gas that was of importance. The Chairs would discuss the possibilities and report back to the Bureau at its next meeting.
- The Bureau engaged in a lively discussion about the interplay between fossil fuels, clean industries and decarbonisation and what the Committee and its work should stand for, now and in the future. The Bureau confirmed its former position that all energy resources need to be considered and supported. The importance of coal in today's society was stated, and that clean technologies exist to justify a continued use of coal, oil and gas, even in the context of a 2-degree world. However, under no circumstances should the paper be used to promote the use of coal only.
- Again, the Bureau stressed the role of the Committee as a neutral platform for all technologies and solutions. The Bureau provided a reality check: currently there are still many new coal fired power plants being built, however, not using best available standards and technologies, including in China and Columbia. Guidelines could improve this situation and also target mine health and safety. Many mines remain in poor conditions, and gas is emitted into the atmosphere without sequestration even though cheap technologies exist. The paper should emphasise the positive impact on methane emissions reductions.
- Further recommendations made during the discussion: provide positive incentives and language rather than negative sentences, add retrofitting and CCS to the list of potential investments, as these technologies exist.
- There were also voices that requested a more fundamental discussion about what the Committee and the work of the sustainable energy subprogramme stand for and which topics to drive forward in the policy agendas. The question that the Committee should ask itself is if it is smart at all to invest in coal in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and what further investment in obsolete technologies would encourage? Members of the Bureau asked: Is it the Committee's role to provide coal as a viable alternative when 2 degrees has been declared the global target? While a lot of countries depended on coal, countries needed to be discouraged about coal usage. The Committee could become a catalyst for a new kind of thinking process leading to increased quality of life in other ways. It could be interesting to write a paper about the social aspects and

## Bureau Meeting Report - BMR No. 2018/2

the possibilities for alternative ways of living. With a fundamental change in consumption patterns and an increased implementation of energy efficiency measure possibly the same goals could be met. The Bureau sees an opportunity now to become more radical with solutions and statements. Are we proposing coal or would we rather drive innovative thinking in others to change the way they are doing business?

- Before embarking on further drafting of the document the target audience should be defined and its ambition clearly stated. This has to be seen in the context of fossil fuels, as 90% of action was outside the UNECE region (China, South East Asia, India). The Committee must avoid to become a self-proclaimed advocate on this matter and focus on its uniqueness, for example there could be an appeal to governments to be more active in pilots to decarbonize coal. The Bureau recommended not to engage in an academic debate but focus on the regional specificities of UNECE. What about the international financial institutions? Is the intention to drive policy change or investment decisions? What about developed countries, as new coal power plants are also being constructed in developed countries? Perhaps the paper could develop a recipe for countries and provide solutions. Currently the guidelines are too general to be impactful.
- The Bureau further requested that all messages and papers coming out of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies should be aligned, including policy briefs on this topic that are currently being drafted for the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) process. Further, an outreach/consultation process must be planned as part of the process, e.g. the member States of the European Union should be consulted as they are likely going to be critical about the intentions of the paper. The Bureau suggested to organise a meeting soon to initiate discussions.
- In the light of these points, the Bureau decided not to propose the document to the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee for endorsement as major rethinking was in order. The guidelines might be more impactful if integrated into a broader paper. This paper/approach could be discussed at the or be kick-started in the next Committee session in the context of a broader debate about deep systems transformation and energy transition.

### 3. Pathways to Sustainable Energy

- The secretariat provided a brief overview of the subregional workshop held in Vienna. The meeting had kindly been hosted by the Energy Community with financial support from GIZ and brought together modellers and stakeholders. For further details, please consult the slides and background materials distributed in preparation of this and the previous call on the subject.
- The Bureau was consulted on the objectives and metrics for the modelling process, on the deep dives that would be of further interest (depending on funding or voluntary leads) and the suggested timeline for the policy dialogues. Discussion focused on the constraint variables indicated in yellow and on the nine proposed metrics, deriving from the multistakeholder discussions of the workshop in Vienna. The project will consider more metrics, to be highlighted in more detail in the forthcoming analysis. In this context, the modelling team sought to understand the overall objectives and key interests of the Committee.
- The Chair had proposed a potential Bureau meeting at the auspices of the World Bank Spring Meetings to come to closure on the target ranges for the chosen metrics, however, Bureau members are not planning to be in Washington DC at that time. A potential in-person discussion of the Bureau is therefore most likely at the end of June 2018 in Geneva or around the HLPF meetings in New York in July 2018.
- The modelling team explained the rationale behind the current approach, which is linked to the objectives of the modelling exercise. The Bureau mentioned the importance of subsidies and market price signals. The climate constraint remains important as does a reference to quality of life in the form of energy price as a function of income. The modelling team stressed that energy affordability could be constraint in the model, however, requested the Bureau to comment on the desirable range for affordability, which % etc. The Bureau further stressed the importance of trade and import/export and not to focus only on self-sufficiency, which in reality is not a desirable target for countries, rather it would be mutually interdependence. For this reason, it

## Bureau Meeting Report - BMR No. 2018/2

was suggested to refrain from assigning a target range for the self-sufficiency indicator (even though it can be kept as a reporting metric). Further suggestions included to take out the land-use change related metric, as the carbon budget implications is included in the overall greenhouse gas emissions metric. It was further proposed to add a water-related metric.

- The Chair of the Expert Group on Resource Classification reminded the Bureau of the recently published UNFC guidelines on social and environmental impact<sup>1</sup> – now relevant for the approach on the social implications of energy systems transformation. He recommended the tool to be used by all other expert groups but in particular for the Pathways project. The approach provides guidance on how to value risks of resource types, manage resources and their by-products. It compares benefits and classifies GHG emissions. The Bureau further added water as a metric and important factor to consider in further analysis.
- In conclusion, the Bureau requested the modellers and the secretariat to propose the metrics and related ranges and agreed to react within 10 working days to any proposals made.
- It also requested from the secretariat a detailed status report and roadmap for the project beyond the information provided in the slides. This status update should also refer to the objectives and targets, system boundaries, and the boundaries of the region. The Bureau further would like to see at a minimum 4-5 policy scenarios, including consideration of one scenario that may not achieve 2 degrees. The secretariat informed that the Bureau would see a draft note no later than by Mid-June in preparation of the 27<sup>th</sup> session (document deadline by mid-July 2018).
- The Bureau further requested all expert groups to get involved in this key project, so that the scenarios and deep dives can draw on the expertise from the entire network.
- The Bureau recommended to inform the Committee on progress in 27<sup>th</sup> session. How do we put in place a tracking programme needed? How can Pathways support country tracking efforts and help with resourcing? The Bureau requested that a discussion would be organised around better understanding policy levers and early warning systems.

#### **4. Review of SDG7, policy briefs and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)**

- The Bureau received an update about the ongoing process of the review of SDG7 and quick feedback from the HLPF pre-meetings on 21-23 February 2018 in Bangkok, managed by UN DESA and on 19 March in Paris, managed by the International Energy Agency (IEA).
- UN DESA is in the lead as they are the secretariat to the HLPF, which will review SDG7 together with other SDGs in July 2018. Topics have been defined through a consultation with all interested UN bodies. Norway has an advisory role and leads the discussions in the run up to HLPF. It is a process into which UNECE has input, but which is not controlled by the sustainable energy subprogramme.
- The UNECE Regional Forum was mentioned, where the sustainable energy subprogramme organised two roundtables on energy efficiency and energy transition. Some Bureau members and members of Groups of Experts participated in the roundtables as speakers.
- The Bureau pondered the areas of impact on energy for sustainable development. The process is complicated and with the many actors and differing views influence will be limited. The question was really about the role of the Committee and its Bureau in the process.
- The Bureau referred to the work done under the *project Pathways to Sustainable Energy* and recommended to use the tool to inform progress of SDG7. In this context, signposts and early warning systems (i.e. the second part of the modelling project) were key.
- 27 policy briefs have been drafted for information and input into the process (more than 200 pages of material). UNECE was in the lead to develop two of these: number 20 and 27 on energy indicators and on the UNECE region. The Bureau's comments have been integrated. The policy briefs can be accessed here:  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/EnergyConference/documentation>
- The Director mentioned the 3 key outcomes proposed in policy brief number 20:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unece.org/energywelcome/areas-of-work/unfc-and-sustainable-resource-management/applications/unfc-and-environmental-and-social-considerations.html>

## Bureau Meeting Report - BMR No. 2018/2

1. We are not on track to achieve SDG7, while the UNECE region shows 100% access quotas, the indicator itself is an inadequate measure of progress on quality, quality of life etc.
  2. Other measures exist that could be considered to track progress
  3. In general, a broader range of indicators needed to be pursued, e.g. SDG13 (climate)
- The Director stressed that it is not proposed to change the SDGs rather to refine the existing indicators and link them in a logical manner. The more important question to solve was where are the data sources that could populate a different set of indicators, related to for example the quality of life aspects.
  - The group 'Friends of Sustainable Energy' will convene again on 18 April 2018 in New York to receive an update from UN DESA. The intention was to launch a summary document of the policy briefs on this date. It contains key messages pulled together by UN DESA. This document will be sent to the Chair of ECOSOC in preparation of the meetings in July. UNECE will be represented by its Executive Secretary. [NB at the time of writing the meetings this meeting has taken place and the Bureau has been informed of the outcomes in a separate email].
  - The Bureau requested a more visible input by the Committee on Sustainable Energy into the HLPF process and discussed at length how it could do so before the next meeting of the Committee, referring to the process it had agreed in its meeting on 20 March, as the Committee will hold its next session only in September and it has so far not agreed to written procedure.
  - It was decided that the Bureau would receive a draft document containing recommendations focused on the UNECE region and stemming from the Global Tracking Report. Comments should not be received later than Monday, 30 April 2018 COB. Any comments should be copied to the whole Bureau. Based on the comments and modifications, Mr. Keinhorst will contact the Latvian chair of the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) to inform EXCOM of your intention to submit the document into the HLPF process on SDG7 review (July 2018). It is hoped that the Chair of EXCOM would then put it onto the EXCOM agenda on 18 May 2018 for comment or reaction. Once EXCOM has expressed its views, Mr. Keinhorst will contact the Chair of ECOSOC as official UNECE input into the HLPF. It is further hoped that UNECE member States would take the opportunity that the SDG7 review process offers to present ideas and positions in support of the key messages the document contains.
  - [NB – at the time of writing the minutes, EXCOM had discussed the proposal on 18 May 2018 and decided not to take action. No other recommendations were made by EXCOM].
- 5. Preparation of the Committee 27<sup>th</sup> session (26-28 September 2018)**
- The Bureau decided to discuss the draft agenda based on a version proposed by the secretariat in its next meeting. It did fully support the proposal by the Group of Experts on Clean Electricity Production to focus in depth on the cross-cutting themes related to electricity and markets. This would mean a shortening of the 3-day Committee meeting to 2 days with an additional dialogue in form of an informal Committee consultation in spring 2019. The secretariat confirmed the possibility of such a dialogue on 16 May 2019 in Geneva.
- 6. AOB**
- No additional topics were raised.
  - Next Bureau meeting: 18 June 2018, Geneva.

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