

**Economic Commission for Europe**  
**Committee on Sustainable Energy**

**Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane**

**Unofficial Online Meeting**

Geneva, 22-23 July 2020

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**Approval of Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Draft Conclusions and Recommendations arising from the Unofficial  
Online Meeting of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane<sup>1</sup>**

**Draft for discussion**

**Agenda Item 2: Election of officers**

1. The Group of Experts recommended to approve at its 15<sup>th</sup> session a candidature of Ms. Volha Roshchanka representing the United States of America to join the Bureau and serve until the end of the sixteenth session in 2021.

**Agenda Item 3: Opening remarks.**

2. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the work of the Bureau and the secretariat and their efforts to manage and direct the Group's work plan between annual sessions in spite of human and financial resource constraints and the unprecedented situation caused by COVID-19.

**Agenda Item 4: Overview of delivered and upcoming events**

3. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the success of the workshop "Post-Mining Perspectives: Capture and Use of Abandoned Mine Methane and Mine Reclamation and Revitalization of Post Mining Areas" that was delivered within the framework of the XXIX School of Underground Mining, on 26 February 2020, in Cracow, Poland.

**Agenda Item 5: Future of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane**

4. The Group of Experts discussed with the secretariat the latter's position on fossil fuels in the context of the energy transition. The Group was also briefed by the Secretary of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on the differing positions of member States towards fossil fuels and their role in the future energy mix, as well as their contribution to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda.

5. Observing that 80% of today's primary energy is fossil-based and the majority of the world's population and national economies depend on fossil energy, the Group underlined the importance of maintaining a debate on the social, environmental, and economic aspects of

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<sup>1</sup> The draft conclusions and recommendations will be reviewed by the Group of Experts after each agenda item and updated as needed.

extraction and use of fossil fuels that is open, inclusive and fact-based. At the same time, the Group recognized the need for modernization of the global energy sector with a special focus on coal and carbon-intensive industries in order to ensure progress on the essential transition towards a green economy and low-carbon society. The Group of Experts noted that any further work on the letter intended to bring these matters to the attention of the ECE Executive Secretary and the Secretary-General of the United Nations was dependent on obtaining support for such an initiative from the Committee on Sustainable Energy.

6. The Group of Experts urged the secretariat in cooperation with the Bureau to develop a resourcing strategy and list of potential donors in order to identify extrabudgetary resources necessary for continuation of the effective work of the Group on dissemination and promotion of best practices in methane capture and use from active and closed coal mines. The Group thanked the International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane (ICE-CMM) in Poland for providing the funds for implementation of the project “Strengthening national capacity of the UN member States for environmentally responsible methane management through coordination of activities of the International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane in Poland.” The Group of Experts welcomed the pledge from ICE-CMM in China to provide funds for a similar project strengthening oversight and coordination of the activities of the Chinese Centre with the current work plan and the needs of the Group. The Group of Experts thanked the Committee on Sustainable Energy for endorsing its efforts to establish this project and requested the secretariat to undertake all necessary steps to have it implemented at the earliest opportunity in order to assure the uninterrupted work of the Group.

7. The Group of Experts recommended to make an offer at its 15<sup>th</sup> session to contribute within the scope of its expertise to the project on Carbon Neutrality that is being implemented by the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems. The Group discussed the need for financial support from the project.

8. The Group of Experts reviewed the recommendations that it made within the framework of the Pathways to Sustainable Energy project and recommended to make a request at its 15<sup>th</sup> session that the Committee on Sustainable Energy endorses the final document containing policy recommendations arising from that project.

9. The Group of Experts discussed the need for developing Rules of Procedure for the Group and its Bureau. It endorsed making a recommendation at its 15<sup>th</sup> session that Rules of Procedures for the subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy are uniformed, and to make an offer to work with other Groups of Experts on the common text that could be presented to the Committee for its approval.

10. The Group of Experts recommended to repeat at its 15<sup>th</sup> session its strong support for the secretariat’s efforts for having an International Year or Decade of Methane declared by the UN General Assembly in the near future.

11. The Group of Experts recommended to make a decision at its 15<sup>th</sup> session to further explore the proposal made by the European Commission to jointly develop best practices on: (1) monitoring, reporting, and verification of methane emissions from the coal sector on the facility level, (2) monitoring methane emissions from surface mines, and (3) mine closure. The Chair requested experts to volunteer to prepare a project proposal for the project on monitoring, reporting, and verification of methane emissions from the coal sector. The Group recommended that the secretariat is requested to gather submissions and coordinate the work on that matter.

12. The Group of Experts recommended to approve at its 15<sup>th</sup> session a text for a proposed ECOSOC decision that is to be submitted to the Committee on Sustainable Energy as a first step of seeking the ECOSOC's endorsement of the *Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Recovery and Use from Abandoned Coal Mines* developed by the Group. The secretariat was requested to monitor the progress of the matter. In this context the Group:

- Endorsed the “Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Recovery and Use from Abandoned Coal Mines”;
- Recommended the Secretariat to take appropriate measures to support worldwide application of the Best Practice Guidance; and
- Invited the ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy and the Executive Committee to consider submitting to the ECOSOC the draft decision on this issue for consideration and possible endorsement.

**Agenda Item 7: Preparations for the sixteenth session of the Group of Experts**

13. The sixteenth session will be held on 22-23 March 2021 in Geneva.

14. The Group of Experts recommended to endorse at its 15<sup>th</sup> session the proposal for its sixteenth session to be organized within the framework of the Global Methane Forum 2021, provided that the latter will be held in March 2021 in Geneva, and that the Group can reserve sufficient time to discuss its own matters.

15. The Group of Experts suggested the following topics to be featured in the sixteenth session's agenda: **to be added during the meeting**.

**Agenda Item 10: Approval of the report for the 15<sup>th</sup> session and close of the meeting**

16. The Group of Experts recommended to adopt at its 15<sup>th</sup> session a report, including the conclusions and recommendations, in a form decided at the meeting, subject to any changes necessary to reflect the additional discussions on any item taking place at the official annual session of the Group in September, as well as to any necessary editing and formatting.

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