

Conference Call of the Bureau of the Group of Experts
26 September 2014, 10 am-12 am

Minutes

A. Participants

- Mr. Francisco de la Flor Garcia, Chair
- Mr. Torstein Indrebø, Vice-chair
- Mr. Tamas Kőrösi, Vice-chair
- Mr. Alexander Chachine, representing Vice-chair Alexander Karasevich
- Mr. Scott Foster, Director, Sustainable Energy Division
- Ms. Yana Tsybzhitova, Sustainable Energy Division
- Mr. Branko Milicevic, Secretary of the Group of Experts on Gas, Sustainable Energy Division

B. Summary of discussions and decisions

1. Adoption of the Agenda

1. Agenda was adopted as previously circulated.

2. Introduction to Bureau members and functioning of the Bureau

2. The secretariat informed the Bureau that Ms. Sally Kornfeld of the US Department of Energy has been nominated to the Bureau by the United States. She is expected to be endorsed as the Bureau's Vice-chair at the Group's next session in January 2015.

3. Vice-chair Indrebø informed participants that he was in the process of terminating his function as the Secretary General of International Gas Union (IGU). Mr Pål Rasmussen, now Deputy Secretary General, will become IGU Secretary General effective from 1 December 2014 and serve till the end of October 2016. Mr. Indrebø informed that he will continue in an advisory function for Mr. Rasmussen. The IGU secretariat function will be transferred from Norway to Spain from 1 November 2016.

4. The Secretariat advised that Bureau members were nominated on an individual basis, so that it was anticipated that Mr. Indrebø would remain Vice-chair through his term.

Decisions:

5. The Bureau requested that the secretariat organize a separate conference call with Ms. Kornfeld during the first week of October, so that she could be briefed about the Group's activities and become a valuable member of the Bureau.

6. The Bureau agreed that the final approved minutes of Bureau calls could be posted to the UNECE website.

3. Release of the report of the Group's first session

7. The secretariat informed the Bureau that the report of the Group's first session was released on 5 September 2014. The Group's work plan is annexed to the report.

4. Progress in implementation of the Group's work plan: establishment of the four Task Forces

8. The Chair reminded the participants that the four activities agreed upon in the Group's work plan had come as a result of a scoping exercise over the summer that the ECE member States subsequently endorsed. The Bureau stressed that the work done by the former Working Party on Gas could be put to good use in some of these activities.

9. Discussing activity A (Task Force on Best Practice Guidance in Reducing Gas Leaks in the Gas Value Chain), the Director of SED pointed out the challenges the US pipeline operators face due to the corrosion of the aging infrastructure. Leakage and emission problems exist everywhere in the ECE region. The Bureau agreed that the Task Force A is expected to deal with leakage and emissions along the entire value chain—not only in transportation of gas but also during its extraction, production and distribution. It was suggested that the information from the private companies would provide value-added.

10. The Chair reminded the participants that the Best Practice Guidance on leakages—and on the other three topics as well—was not expected to be done within one year. However, the critical first step is the establishment of the four Task Forces. Vice-chair Kőrösi pointed out that the new Group of Experts on Gas should use its expertise and the studies previously done by the former Working Party on Gas and its Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Supply and Use of Gas.

11. The Chair informed the Bureau that a matrix with actors and developments in LNG world was already developed and that it could serve as a model and a starting point for similar scoping exercises in other three fields of work. The IGU and its Working Committee D could provide there a valuable contribution. Vice Chair Indrebø expressed IGU's willingness to help out with that element of the work, provided it was not time-burdening. The Chair stressed that the Task Forces were expected to meet once or twice a year. The secretariat was also working on finding ways to reduce the burden on experts through document-sharing and reliance on teleconferences and other electronic means. The secretariat would facilitate the work of experts, so that they could concentrate on substantive work.

12. The Chair noted the previously made offers by Vice-chair Ingwersen to take the lead on the Task Force B and by Vice-chair Karasevic to co-lead Task Force C.

Decisions:

13. Vice-chair Kőrösi accepted to participate in assembling Task Force A (on Best Practice Guidance in Reducing Gas Leaks in the Gas Value Chain). IGU would also be involved.

14. Vice-chair Ingwersen will take the lead on interacting with prospective participants, working towards assembling the Task Force on Best Practices on the Role of Natural Gas in Significantly Increasing the Uptake of Renewable Energy in the ECE Region

15. The Task Force C (Best Practice Guidance for Liquefied Natural Gas) will be co-led by Vice-chair Karasevich, with support from another co-lead on topics other than small-scale LNG

C. For Task Force D (Removing Barriers to the Use of Natural Gas as a Transportation Fuel), to invite NGVA to take the lead.

16. In searching for qualified experts to be invited to the Task Forces, the Bureau should reach out to IGU Working and Programme Committees, the European Union, US EPA, GIIGNL, NGVA Europe, Marcogaz, IEA and other relevant organizations.

5. Participation of the Group in the 23rd session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy 19-21 November 2014

17. The secretariat updated the Bureau on the preparations for the 23rd session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on 19-21 November 2014. The Bureau was invited to participate in the fossil fuel panel

discussion: "From source to use: the role of fossil fuels in delivering a sustainable energy future" on 20 November.

Decisions:

18. Vice-chair Indrebø accepted the invitation to represent the Group of Experts on Gas in this panel. The Chair may also be able to participate in the final session of the Committee, when its future directions will be discussed.

6. Preparations for the second session of the Group of Experts on 20-21 January 2015

19. The bureau discussed the potential main theme of the 2nd session of the Group, planned for January. One of the possibilities would be a mixture of theme C (LNG) and theme D (natural gas in transportation).

Decisions:

20. The Bureau decided to participate in the discussions during the 23rd session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, in particular in the session on the role of natural gas in the future energy system and how gas could contribute to energy for sustainable development. Using the Committee's outcomes as a starting point, the substantive segment of the second session of the Group of Experts on Gas will provide an opportunity for a continued dialogue on this important theme.

21. In the coming weeks, the secretariat should circulate a draft agenda that would be finalized at the next Bureau conference call.

22. The bureau endorsed the official document forecast for the second session (for the time being, the agenda and the report).

7. Gas Centre: Update

23. SED Director informed the Bureau about recent challenges in functioning of the UNECE Gas Centre. At this time, the 21st meeting of the Gas Centre Executive Board is planned for 23 January 2015 and the 5th Industry Forum will be held back to back with the 2nd session of the Group of Experts on Gas, on January 22.

9. Dates of next Bureau meetings/calls

Decisions:

24. The Bureau decided to have another conference call around 27 October.

C. Action items

25. The secretariat to contact Ms. Kornfeld and arrange a conference call between her, the Chair, and available Bureau members.

26. The four Task Forces are to be assembled by 15 October 2014. The leaders of this effort are Vice-chair Kőrösi for TF A, Vice-chair Ingwersen for TF B, Vice-chair Karasevich for TF C, and NGVA for TF D. The secretariat will support the work on establishing the four task forces.

27. The secretariat to circulate a draft agenda for the second Session of the Group of Experts on Gas before the end of October 2014.

28. The secretariat to co-ordinate the Group of Experts on Gas' participation in the 23rd Committee on Sustainable Energy.

29. The secretariat to organize a conference call on, or around, 27 October dependent on the availability of Bureau members.

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