

Economic Commission for Europe
Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition
Nineteenth session

Geneva, 18-19 March 2024

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of Conclusions and Recommendations

DRAFT Conclusions and Recommendations arising from the Nineteenth Session of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition

Agenda Item 2: Opening remarks

1. 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 despite human and financial resource constraints and the challenging situation caused by the multiple ongoing global crises.

Agenda Item 3: Activities and priorities of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and matters for consideration by the Group of Experts

2. The secretariat briefed the Group of Experts on the outcomes of the thirty-second session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (the Committee) (Geneva, 13-15 September 2023). The Group of Experts took note that its work plan for 2024-2025 (ECE/ENERGY/2023/5) was endorsed by the Committee at its thirty-second session and by the Executive Committee of ECE at its 131st meeting (Geneva, 4 December 2023).

Agenda Item 4: Report on implementation of the work plan for 2022-2023

3. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation successful implementation of its work plan for 2022-2023. The Chair and the secretariat thanked the members of the Group for their contributions to delivering the mandated activities and asked for their further engagement to complete the remaining tasks.

4. The Group of Experts thanked the International Centres of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane (ICE-CMM) in Poland and in China for their efforts and initiatives supporting the Group's work on disseminating and promoting best practices in methane detection, monitoring, capture, and use, approved their annual reports for 2023, and approved their work plans for 2024.

5. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the development of the study *Mapping Albania's readiness for green and just transition in post-coal mining areas*, and expressed its readiness to develop similar assessments in other ECE member States. The Group of Experts called interested member States to engage with the secretariat in exploring possibilities for conducting such work in their coal mining and post-coal mining areas.

6. The Group of Experts thanked the Regional Advisor on Sustainable Energy for his help in developing the above-mentioned study and expressed its concern with limited availability of RPTC funds for 2024, caused by the liquidity crises resulting from not honouring commitments towards the Organization by certain UN Member States that is currently faced by the United Nations.

Agenda Item 5: Work of Task Forces

7. The Group of Experts listened to the reports of its Task Forces (on (i) Methane Emissions Reduction, (ii) Just Transition, and (iii) Safe Operations and Closure of Coal Mines) delivered by their Chairs, approved their proposed work plans, and thanked the Chairs and the members of the Task Forces for their efforts and initiatives supporting the Group's work in their respective focus areas

Agenda Item 6: Work Plan for 2024-2025

8. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the progress in implementation of its work plan for 2023-2024. The Chair and the secretariat thanked the members of the Group for their contributions to delivering on the mandated activities and asked for their further engagement to effectively deliver on the remaining tasks.

9. The Group of Experts thanked the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) for providing funds to deliver the project *Strengthening national capacities to reduce coal mine methane (CMM) emissions from active and abandoned coal mines and to measure and manage methane emissions across the natural gas value chain*.

10. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation progress in the development of the study on processing ventilation air methane (VAM) and thanked its principal author, Mr. Richard Mattus, as well as all the experts involved in drafting, editing, and reviewing the document for their work and valuable contributions.

11. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation progress in development of the publication titled: *Mapping Just Transition and Identifying Barriers to its Implementation and Progress in the ECE Region* (new title as per ECE/ENERGY/2023/3 approved during the 32nd session of the Committee; mandate approved in the report from the Committee's 32nd session ECE/ENERGY/149 Item X.B para 52). The document is to present a new approach that sees coal mining not as a fuel provider, but a multipurpose platform that might be an important component of the green economy, and therefore promises to facilitate the process of just transition of the fossil-based energy sector.

12. The Group of Experts endorsed the idea of building a regional platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange on Just Transition among the universities in Central Asia, provided that the necessary extrabudgetary funds can be found for that activity.

Agenda Item 7: Fourteenth joint meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition and the Global Methane Initiative Coal Subcommittee

13. The Group of Experts thanked the secretariat of the Coal Subcommittee of the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) and its members for their continued support and collaboration.

14. The Group of Experts expressed its interest to continue to develop and implement joint projects with GMI and requested the secretariat to ensure, facilitate, and coordinate continued cooperation between the two entities.

Agenda Item 8: Global Methane Forum 2024

15. The Group of Experts expressed its gratitude to US EPA, GMI, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), Global Methane Hub, and other partners for convening the Global Methane Forum 2024 (GMF 2024), and to all GMF 2024 international participants for advancing action to achieve ambitious methane mitigation targets towards meeting the Global Methane Pledge.

16. Endorsing key GMF 2024 outcomes that promote replicable methane mitigation successes, the Group of Experts acknowledged that:

- a. Methane, a potent greenhouse gas, accounts for around one third of all climate warming.
- b. Achieving a sustainable and decarbonized energy system would require reduction of methane emissions throughout the coal value chain. The Group of Experts calls upon all actors to apply the available methane monitoring, verification, and mitigation technologies as quickly and consistently as possible.
- c. The Groups of Experts encouraged stakeholders from the coal sector to undertake all possible efforts to effectively monitor, report, capture, and use methane from active and abandoned coal mines, giving due consideration to best practices developed and advocated by UNECE.
- d. The Group of Experts concluded that the recently approved EU Regulation on methane emissions reduction in the energy sector is an important milestone on global regulation of

methane emissions. The Group of Experts, recognizing that the regulation will highly impact European and non-European companies and suppliers accessing the European Union, will monitor potential needs and opportunities to further align interests, also incorporating technological innovation.

Agenda Item 10: Any other business

17. The Group of Experts recalled that the delivery of a number of activities in the 2024-2025 Work Plan is dependent on the availability of extrabudgetary resources, and deemed securing such resources critical for attainment of the Group's objectives. The Group was invited to suggest potential sources of funding for the secretariat to explore.
