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COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

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(Item 10 of the provisional agenda)

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2004-2005

Note by the secretariat

1. The draft programme of work of the Committee on Sustainable Energy is prepared in the light of the decisions of the Commission at its fifty-eighth session and the decisions of the Committee at its twelfth session and meeting of the Bureau of the Committee held during June 2003.
2. The draft programme contains the programme elements that the Committee itself implements and those programme elements of its subsidiary bodies that are of particular importance and significance to the Committee. The subsidiary bodies of the Committee are: the Working Party on Gas, the Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 21 Project, the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal in Sustainable Development, the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Electric Power and the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the Harmonization of Energy Reserves/Resources Terminology. The detailed programmes of work of these subsidiary bodies are contained in their respective reports.
3. This document is intended to facilitate the work of the Committee and not to prejudice in any way its decisions. Moreover, the Committee will have to consider how best to implement decisions taken by the Commission at its last session in April 2003 as well as broad issues of particular concern to the UN-wide system, such as gender mainstreaming.

OVERVIEW & PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Related programme elements and implementing bodies

(C: Committee; WP.G: Working Party on Gas; EE 21: Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 21 Project; GE.C: Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal in Sustainable Development; GE.E: Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Electric Power; GE.H: Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the Harmonization of Energy Reserves/Resources Terminology; G.C: Gas Centre)

1. NORMATIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE ENERGY FIELD INCLUDING LABELLING AND CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS AND RELATED LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Work to be undertaken: To develop and implement norms and standards, and to harmonize legislation, regulations and policies in the field of energy in order to promote sustainable energy development, such as:

- follow up on the implementation of the United Nations International Framework Classification for Reserves/Resources: Solid Fuels and Mineral Commodities (C, GE.H);
- harmonization of terminologies and classification systems for the evaluation and assessment of reserves/resources of energy commodities - petroleum, natural gas, coal and uranium (C, GE.H);
- preparation and publication of the International Codification System For Low-Rank Coal Utilization (C);
- development of standards for carbon emissions trading (C, EE 21);
- harmonization/convergence of norms, practices and policies (C);
- provision of technical assistance to countries with economies in transition in the regulatory and policy fields (C).

Work methods: To be carried out at annual sessions of the Committee and through Ad Hoc Groups of Experts, Task Forces, conferences, seminars, workshops, special studies and through the Regional Advisory Services.

2. OPENING AND LIBERALIZATION OF ENERGY MARKETS; PRICING POLICIES AND SUPPLY SECURITY

Work to be undertaken: To assess the major developments and new trends in the restructuring and liberalization of energy markets, inherent challenges and opportunities associated with the opening up of energy markets and to address issues related to the implementation of the regulatory, trading and technical aspects of market liberalization, such as:

- assessment, monitoring and exchange of experiences regarding the implementation of the EU Gas Directive in EU Member States and, in particular, its extension to other UNECE countries (G.C);
- dialogue with the private sector on the implementation of market liberalization principles and practices (C, G.C);
- assessment of the security of natural gas supplies (G.C);

- assessment of overall energy security risks and potential policy responses(C);
- institutional capacity development and training for the benefit of economies in transition regarding industry restructuring, privatisation, pricing and tariff setting (C, G.C);
- exchange of views as well as policy-related studies on implications of market liberalization for government objectives, such as energy security and protection of the environment (C);
- assessment of prospects for coal and coal-based electricity in liberalized energy markets (C, GE.C);
- technical advisory missions relating to regulatory matters, industry restructuring and market liberalization (C, G.C).

Work methods: Exchange of information and experiences among member countries at annual sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, and through Task Forces, seminars, workshops, technical missions and Regional Advisory Services, including preparation of analyses.

3. SUSTAINABLE ENERGY STRATEGIES FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Work to be undertaken: To promote the development and implementation of strategies and policies to facilitate the transition to a more sustainable energy future and to contribute a regional perspective to global events where issues related to energy sustainability are addressed, such as:

- development of guidelines for reforming energy pricing and removal of (consumption) subsidies for sustainable energy development (C);
- review of sustainable energy indicators for monitoring performance (C);
- regional input to the work and activities of the Commission on Sustainable Development (C);
- dialogue with the private sector and non-governmental organizations to facilitate transition to a sustainable energy future (C);
- dissemination of information and provision of technical assistance to countries with economies in transition on sustainable energy issues (C);
- participation in international efforts to develop bench-marking systems for industrial processes to promote environmentally benign best practices, notably in countries with economies in transition (C);
- reappraisal of the key energy issues confronting the UNECE region and the energy policy responses required to meet the challenges of sustainable energy development as outlined in the Committee's contribution to CSD-9 "One More Step on the Path to a Sustainable Energy Future" (C)
- a periodic exchange of views on energy security risks and their interactions with the global financial community and investments in the energy sector, an internet based information exchanges on the subject and a continued assessment of energy security, corporate governance, and energy efficiency undertaken in cooperation with other relevant international organisations.

Work methods: Through exchanges of experiences at the annual session of the Committee, the Energy Security Forum, through Ad Hoc Groups of Experts, Task Forces, conferences, seminars, workshops, special studies and through the Regional Advisory Services.

4. RATIONAL USE OF ENERGY, EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

Work to be undertaken: To harmonize and develop guidelines and strategies to enhance energy efficiency and conservation, and to develop projects to reduce the energy efficiency gap between actual practice and best technologies, and among UNECE countries, in particular between the formerly centrally planned economies and the market economies, such as:

- development of guidelines for improving energy conservation and efficiency, in particular in countries with economies in transition (C, EE 21);
- networking and information exchange, including through world wide web (EE 21);
- development and implementation of energy efficiency demonstration zones in economies in transition (EE 21);
- institutional capacity building and training activities in business planning, financial engineering and project development (EE 21);
- assistance in securing financing for energy efficiency projects (EE 21);
- rational use of energy and water resources in Central Asia under the auspices of the Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia - SPECA (C, EE 21);
- dissemination of the Carbon Energy Emissions Handbook on CD-ROM (EE 21) through seminars and training courses;
- exchange of views and technical information on the efficiency of gas equipment and appliances (WP.G).

Work methods: Implemented through national participating institutions, private sector companies, international financial institutions, commercial banks, international organizations, other multi- and bilateral technical assistance programmes, Ad Hoc Groups of Experts and Regional Advisory Services, as well as through meetings, training sessions, workshops, seminars and special studies.

5. ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING ELECTRIC POWER AND GAS NETWORKS

Work to be undertaken: To encourage the modernization, extension and transboundary interconnection of the energy infrastructure of member countries in order to promote energy trade, economic efficiency, security of supply of electricity and the fuller integration of energy systems in the UNECE region, through activities such as:

- annual reviews of the situation and prospects for European interconnections in the fields of electric power and natural gas (C, WP.G, GE.E);
- evaluation and dissemination of information to promote and facilitate the security of supply of electricity, particularly in economies in transition, in order to achieve reliable generation, transmission, distribution and delivery of electricity to the end-consumer, and all at economic levels over a continuous period (GE.E);

- technical assistance and support to develop a regional electricity market and better integration of the electricity networks of countries with economies in transition (GE.E);
- updates of studies on Underground Gas Storage, Gas Grids and Map of Natural Gas Reserves (WP.G);
- assessment of the feasibility of developing an international programme to establish a transboundary corridor in the UNECE region for freight traffic by natural gas vehicles - NGVs, the Blue Corridor Project (WP.G).

Work methods: Exchange of information and views during annual sessions of the Committee, coordination of activities and joint meetings with sub-regional organizations, and through Ad Hoc Groups of Experts composed of representatives of interested governments, companies and other international organizations as well as through seminars and workshops, including special studies.

6. COAL AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Work to be undertaken: To provide an overview of the policies and programmes carried out in member States related to coal and its use, with focus on market adaptation of the coal sector, the role for coal in the context of the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and also promotion of technical cooperation among member States in applying clean coal technologies and practices throughout the coal-energy chain, such as:

- periodic assessments of the prospects and outlook for coal and thermal power, including identification of any significant new developments affecting coal demand and supply in the region (C, GE.C);
- assessment of the opportunities for coal in a competitive energy market (C, GE.C);
- dissemination of information on technological innovations that will result in a reduced environmental impact from coal use, including in the area of coal bed and coal mine methane which would also result in economic benefits and increased safety at the mine site; (GE.C);
- periodic gathering of information and analysis on coal industry restructuring, particularly in countries with economies in transition (C, GE.C);
- assessment of the economic and social impacts of restructuring the coal industries and transfer of know-how and best practices to economies in transition (GE.C);
- evaluation, promotion and dissemination of information on agreed policies and cooperation on clean coal combustion in small and medium-sized boilers (GE.C);
- dissemination of information on improving the thermal efficiency of large coal-fired power plants and the reduction of environmentally harmful emissions, particularly for the benefit of countries with transitional economies (GE.C).

Work methods: Exchange of information and views at the annual session of the Committee and through the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal in Sustainable Development, seminars, workshops and study tours; and through the preparation of studies, as well as presentation of case studies on successful projects.