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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane
Second session, 31 January - 1 February 2006

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SECOND SESSION

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting on Tuesday, 31 January 2006 , at 10 a.m. *

This session will be held during the same week as the following energy-related meetings:

- (a) Second session of the Task Force on the Economic Benefits of Improving Mine Safety through the Extraction and Use of Coal Mine Methane will be held on 30 January 2006 (provisional agenda ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2006/5)
- (b) Eighth session of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal in Sustainable Development will be held on 2-3 February 2006 (provisional agenda ECE/ENERGY/GE.1/2006/1)

* Delegates are requested to complete the attached registration form also available from the Internet web site of the UNECE IREED Division (<http://www.unece.org/ie>) and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat, at the latest two weeks prior to the session, either by fax (+41 22 917 0038) or by e-mail: (clark.talkington@unece.org). Prior to the session, delegates are requested to present themselves at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Villa Les Feuillantines, 13, Avenue de la Paix (a map is attached) for the issuance of an identification badge. In case of difficulty, please contact the UNECE secretariat by telephone (internal extension 74140).

1. Adoption of the Agenda (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2006/1).
2. Election of the Chairman of the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts.
3. Election of one new member of the Bureau.
4. Adoption of the Final Terms of Reference.
5. Activities and priorities of the UNECE programme of work on Sustainable Energy, and matters for consideration by the Ad Hoc Group of Experts (ECE/ENERGY/65).
6. UNECE extrabudgetary project on "Development of Coal Mine Methane Projects in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States" and Report on Criteria for Financing Coal Mine Methane Projects (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2006/4).
7. Questionnaire for the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2006/3).
8. Update on the International Methane to Markets Partnership to enhance clean energy sources and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
9. Report on the Task Force on the Economic Benefits of Improving Mine Safety through the Extraction and Use of Coal Mine Methane (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2006/5)
10. Facilitating global cooperation in the development and implementation of profitable coal mine methane projects.
11. Activities of and cooperation with various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other related bodies.
12. Programme of work.
13. Any other business.
14. Adoption of the report of the meeting (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2006/2).

Note: Simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Russian will be provided during the meeting.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Item 1

In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure, the first item on the provisional agenda is the adoption of the agenda. The documents for the session will be published in English, French and Russian and will be posted on the UNECE web site as soon as they become available at the following address: <http://www.unece.org/ie/se/coal/cmm.html>.

Item 2

In August 2005, the Chairman of the Bureau for the Ad Hoc Group of Experts resigned from the Bureau. Under the Rules of Procedure for UNECE Ad Hoc Groups of Experts, members of Bureaus are normally elected for two-year terms. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts must elect a new Officer to serve as Chairman for the remainder of the Bureau's two-year term until the third session of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts in November 2006. Delegations are invited to put forward nominations for the new Chairman, but are advised that the UNECE Rules of Procedure limit nominations to the existing Bureau members.

Item 3

With the departure of the previous Chairman and election of one member of the existing Bureau of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane as the new Chairman, there will be one vacancy on the Bureau. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts will discuss whether it is appropriate to fill this vacancy for the remainder of the two-year term. If the Ad Hoc Group of Experts determines that the vacancy should be filled, the Bureau will seek nominations and the Group of Experts will elect one new member of the Bureau from the list of nominees. The new member will serve until the 3rd meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts in November 2006. Delegations are advised that the current Bureau consists of the following members: Chairman (vacant), Germany (1 member), Kazakhstan (1 member), Poland (1 member), Russian Federation (2 members), Ukraine (1 member).

Item 4

The Ad Hoc Group of Experts will consider the final Terms of Reference for adoption. At the first meeting in December 2004, the Group of Experts discussed the draft Terms of Reference (Annex I to the Provisional Agenda for the first session of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane, ENERGY/GE.4/2004/1), and approved two amendments. The first concerned the term "coal mine methane" (CMM); it was proposed that this term should include methane recovery from abandoned mines since this is a significant source of methane in many countries and abandoned mine projects often co-exist with active mine methane projects. The second amendment focussed on the need to establish a clearer link between methane recovery and mine safety and that a special technical task force or working group should be created to specifically address this issue for the Group of Experts. The final Terms of Reference are included in the provisional agenda as Annex I.

Item 5

An overview of recent activities within the work programme of the Committee on Sustainable Energy will be provided, with particular emphasis on those areas related to sustainable energy production and consumption and development of projects resulting in the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. This overview of the Committee's work is intended for the information and guidance of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts.

Item 6

Recovery and use of coal mine methane is an important policy objective in many countries inside and outside the UNECE region. Unfortunately, critical barriers are limiting further exploitation of this resource. One of the primary challenges is a lack of access to financial capital. Mining industry officials and government representatives are not aware of the wide range of sources of domestic and foreign capital and have limited experience preparing and presenting investment grade documents suitable for securing investment. Conversely, members of the financial community have expressed interest in this sector, but do not understand the sector and lack the resources to seek out and support individual projects from conception to implementation. The UNECE extrabudgetary project on "Development of Coal Mine Methane Projects in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States" is intended to address this problem.

The Ad Hoc Group of Experts will hold a workshop during its meeting, on 31 January, of the Group of Experts to consider various financing mechanisms and strategies for constructing successful portfolio structures. The presentations and resulting dialogue among participants at the workshop will be used as the basis for a report on the necessary criteria for successfully financing coal mine methane projects (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2006/4). The workshop will address the following issues:

- (a) Objectives and expected outcomes of the UNECE project to foster development of CMM projects in the CIS and CEE region;
- (b) Overview of the workplan for the two-year programme;
- (c) Coordination with other ongoing and relevant initiatives including the Methane to Markets Partnership and the UNECE project to support financing for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects;
- (d) Barriers to project finance for CMM projects;
- (e) Meeting the expectations of the capitals markets: The importance of financial engineering and development of investment grade documentation; and
- (f) Sources of debt and equity investment including private, bilateral, and multilateral institutional finance and greenhouse gas markets.

Item 7

The Bureau has prepared a questionnaire for the members of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2006/3). The questionnaire is intended as a tool for members, and to assist the Bureau and the secretariat to develop an informative and effective programme of work. The responses will guide the work of the Group of Experts and will be of significant help in focusing on the most important issues the industry is facing.

Item 8

The Methane to Markets (M2M) Partnership is an international initiative launched in November 2004 by 14 countries to encourage reductions of methane emissions from a range of sources including coal mines. The objectives of the Partnership are to reduce human-induced greenhouse gas emissions while encouraging sustainable use of an otherwise wasted energy resource, methane. The objectives and work of the Partnership are closely aligned with the goals of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane, and the UNECE, as a Partnership Project Network member, hosted the second meeting of the Partnership's Coal Mine Subcommittee in April 2005. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts will receive an update on the Partnership's activities, including a summary of the M2M Steering Committee meeting held in Buenos Aires in November 2005. This item will also include an overview of the UNECE's participation in the work of the Partnership, and will provide for a dialogue among members to discuss appropriate activities to undertake that are complementary and not duplicative of the M2M Partnership.

Item 9

At the first session of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts, many members expressed a strong desire to expand the discussion on coal mine methane to include upstream technical issues relating to methane degasification. The Task Force on the Economic Benefits of Improving Mine Safety through the Extraction and Use of Coal Mine Methane was created to address these concerns (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2006/5). The Ad Hoc Group of Experts will receive an update on the objectives and activities of the Task Force including a report from the first meeting of the Task Force held on 29 April 2005.

Item 10

Cooperation and collaboration are required at the global level in order to facilitate development and financing of CMM projects. The meeting will discuss obstacles to the development and financing of such projects, creating incentives for profitable CMM recovery and the future role the Ad Hoc Group of Experts might play in these areas, including in enhancing cooperation at the UNECE and global levels.

Item 11

The Ad Hoc Group of Experts will be briefed on the activities of common interest of other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and related bodies. These organizations are particularly encouraged to draw attention to issues that may have an impact on the development and commercialization of CMM projects in the UNECE region that are not covered on this agenda. Additionally, these organizations are invited to present their views and proposals with regard to future activities and areas of cooperation.

Item 12

The Ad Hoc Group of Experts will be given an opportunity to discuss and review the programme of work for 2006 and propose specific activities to be carried out during this period.

Item 13

Any additional issues that arise between the time of preparation of the provisional agenda and the holding of the meeting will be considered under this item.

Item 14

A report on the session will be prepared by the secretariat after the meeting, sent to the Bureau for approval and then circulated to member countries (ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2006/2). In accordance with the recommendations of the Commission, the report of the session will be short and focussed and address the key conclusions and recommendations.

ANNEX I

AD HOC GROUP OF EXPERTS ON COAL MINE METHANE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane, an intergovernmental body launched in December 2004 to specifically support the activities of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal in Sustainable Development in the area of coal mine methane (CMM), is established for a period of two years by the Committee on Sustainable Energy. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts will carry out, under the Committee's guidance, activities related to development and profitable recovery and use of CMM and abandoned mine methane (AMM), with a specific focus on the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental – recovery and use of CMM otherwise emitted mitigates climate change, improves mine safety and productivity, and generates revenues and cost savings.

The tasks of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts are:

- (a) to promote and provide support where applicable to the UNECE extrabudgetary project on "Development of Coal Mine Methane Projects in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)". This project, which is financed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the UN Foundation, will run for three years commencing in 2005;
- (b) to seek to facilitate financing of CMM projects in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS, including through actively engaging in a dialogue with the international finance community to understand their needs and the barriers to funding of CMM projects in this region;
- (c) to provide a forum for exchange of information and experience on ongoing activities in the area of CMM development and for enhanced collaboration and cooperation thereof;
- (d) to identify and seek to mitigate the problems associated with the creation of incentives for CMM recovery;
- (e) to establish a clear link between the economic benefits and the mining of gassy coal seams based on the safe drainage and use of the gas, and to facilitate this through the establishment of a dedicated Task Force with membership from the technical, business and regulatory communities;
- (f) to explore opportunities for the CMM sector, in particular in UNECE member States with economies in transition, to participate in and benefit from the various public and private greenhouse gas emissions markets;
- (g) to identify any significant new developments affecting CMM, in particular in UNECE member countries; and
- (h) to seek to strengthen inter-agency cooperation and to cooperate and collaborate with all stakeholders, including other governmental and non-governmental organizations and the business community/private sector, in order to realize the above objectives.

ANNEX II

AD HOC GROUP OF EXPERTS ON COAL MINE METHANE

Second session, 31 January - 1 February 2006, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland
Opening on Tuesday 31 January 2006 at 10 a.m.

REGISTRATION FORM

Each delegate attending the session is kindly requested to fill out the attached Conference Registration Form and return it by fax (+41 22 917 0038) or by e-mail at least two weeks, if possible, before the session commences, to:

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IREED Division
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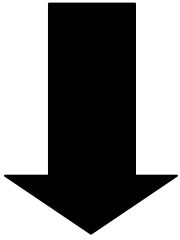
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