

**Conclusions and Recommendations of the UN ESCAP Expert Group Meeting  
“Energy for Sustainable Development: Policy Dialogue on Opportunities for  
Cooperation in North and Central Asia”  
18-20 November 2013, Grand Hotel Tien Shan, Almaty, Kazakhstan**

The meeting was attended by government representatives in the field of energy and experts from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, and Tajikistan, as well as representatives of international organizations and financial institutions (the list of participants is attached herewith).

At the **first session** of the meeting, Mr. Nikolay Pomoshchnikov, Head of ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia, welcomed the participants and highlighted ESCAP priority areas of work for the energy sector development.

Subsequently, Mr. Sergey Tulinov, ESCAP Economic Affairs Officer briefed the participants on the goals and objectives of the meeting.

UNECE and ESCAP representatives informed of the latest UN initiatives on the sustainable energy sector development, specifically, the initiative of the UN Secretary General “Sustainable Energy for All”, Global Energy Efficiency 21 Project, etc.

The focus was made on the outcomes of the ESCAP Asian and Pacific Energy Forum held at the ministerial level in Vladivostok, Russian Federation, in May 2013. ESCAP presentation overviewed the outcomes of the Forum, namely, the Ministerial Declaration and the Plan of Action on Regional Cooperation for Enhanced Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific, 2014 – 2018.

The Plan of Action on regional cooperation comprises areas of collaboration for member countries in Asia and the Pacific, as well as more specific priorities for North and Central Asia:

- Creation of joint information resources and knowledge sharing systems in the field of energy sector development.
- Strengthening existing cooperation mechanisms on energy among member States in North and Central Asia in order to better coordinate national energy policies and realize the full potential of subregional cooperation in the area of energy security and sustainable use of energy for the benefit of all participating member States.
- Encouraging the development and implementation of joint hydropower projects for electricity generation to facilitate grid connectivity and trade in energy.
- Strengthening subregional and inter-regional cooperation towards developing harmonized cross-border energy infrastructure, and supporting the continuation of bilateral and regional consultations on this matter.

At the **second session**, ESCAP Consultants presented a study entitled “Challenges to Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in North and Central Asia: Opportunities for Regional Cooperation” providing an overview of the economic situation, as well as the information concerning the status of the energy sector in the countries of the region. Throughout discussion, participants made comments and remarks to the study, as well as suggestions for further improvements, in particular, stressed the need to update the study with available energy projection data of the countries in the region. The study will be updated and uploaded to the ESCAP web-site.

The **second session** was continued with country presentations. During the session, energy experts and government representatives informed the participants on the current

economic situation and the priorities of the energy sector development in their respective countries. The presentations covered the following range of issues:

- Current status of the energy sector and its contribution to the social and economic development of the country.
- Country's energy production and consumption patterns.
- Energy tariffs, tariff-setting and subsidies systems.
- Sources of energy sector funding.
- Energy efficiency potential.
- Basic legal frameworks for energy sector regulation and promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- Power infrastructure (existing and development plans).
- Existing mechanisms of energy cooperation with other countries.
- Current energy challenges, achievements and development plans.

Participants highlighted the following challenges common for all the countries of the region:

- Ageing energy infrastructure, need for additional investment resources to its operation and development.
- Lack of efficient implementation mechanisms for existing regulatory frameworks in the field of energy sector sustainable development, including energy efficiency and promotion of renewable energy.
- Need for improvements in energy statistics data collection, as well as preparation of the countries' energy balance in accordance with international standards.
- Need for further improvement of the energy tariff-setting systems.
- Need for strengthening human capacities in the field of energy, taking into account the international experience.
- Need for awareness-raising on international projects and programmes in the area of sustainable energy development in the countries of the region.

The **third session** reviewed activities of international organizations and financial institutions in the region. The following organizations informed about programmes and projects related to the energy sector development in the countries of the region.

- World Bank (CASA-1000 and other projects)
- Asian Development Bank (The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation, CAREC)
- GIZ (EU supported Sustainable Energy Programme for Central Asia, CASEP)
- Electric Power Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States
- USAID (Central Asian Energy Efficiency Support Program and other projects)
- Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia

Participants expressed their gratitude to rapporteurs for the contribution made by organizations to the energy sector development in the region.

At the **fourth session**, the development of regional energy infrastructure was discussed. Participants highlighted that countries of the region were endowed with sufficient energy resources to meet the energy demand, and unanimously agreed on the need for reestablishment of the unified power system in Central Asia, as well as reinforcement of

energy interconnections in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The importance of access to extra-regional energy markets, specifically, in Afghanistan, China, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, was underlined.

Participants recognized the important role of international organizations for enhancing energy cooperation, but underscored the need for establishing a common discussion platform with participation of all the countries of the region.

Taking into consideration the outcomes of the ESCAP Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, participants emphasized that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific might constitute the platform.

At the **fifth session**, UNECE representative reported on the perspectives of renewable energy use in Central Asia and the Caucasus, taking into account international practices, and overviewed research projects on renewable energy potential in several countries of Central Asia. During the discussion, the participants reaffirmed their countries' strong intentions to promote renewable energy and to cooperate in this regard.

At the **sixth session**, ESCAP Consultant presented a study on the power price-setting and tariff policy. In the course of discussion, the participants noted the important role of the tariff-setting for implementation of economic and social development plans, as well as for sustainable operation and development of the energy sector. Participants stressed the need for further improvement of the energy tariff-setting system.

Participants also noted that tariff policy remained one of the priorities in all countries as a substantial element of social policy.

Participants expressed their interest to continue the dialogue on a range of the above-mentioned issues, in this connection, ESCAP secretariat proposed that relevant ministries of the countries of the region assign focal points for better coordination and future meetings planning.

Finally, participants commended ESCAP secretariat for convening a successful event.

(Participants from the countries of the region discussed and agreed on conclusions and recommendations at the final session convened on 20 November 2013.)

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