



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Committee on Energy

Second session

Bangkok, 9–11 October 2019

Report of the Committee on Energy on its second session**I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention**

1. The following recommendations of the Committee on Energy are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for its consideration and possible action:

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the secretariat prepare an analytical paper on international energy security for the third session of the Committee on Energy in 2021.

Recommendation 2

The Committee welcomes the work of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity and the draft regional road map on power system connectivity and promoting cross-border electricity connectivity for sustainable development (ESCAP/CE/2019/3) and invites member States to submit comments on the draft road map before 1 December 2019. The Committee also recommends that the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity review comments on the draft road map, if any, and finalize it for consideration by the Commission at its seventy-sixth session.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the secretariat carry out capacity-building, training and outreach activities to support member States in their efforts to assess the safety and resilience of energy infrastructure against natural disasters as well as promote understanding of the energy trilemma in the context of the Asia-Pacific region.

Recommendation 4

The Committee notes the progress of work to develop national road maps on Sustainable Development Goal 7 and the development of the national expert Sustainable Development Goal tool for energy planning, based on consultations in three pilot countries, and recommends that the secretariat continue to support member States, particularly least developed countries,

landlocked least developed countries, and Pacific Island countries and territories in developing their national road maps using the tool.

II. Proceedings

A. Status of and progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 in Asia and the Pacific

(Agenda item 2)

2. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on the status of and progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CE/2019/1).

3. The Committee benefited from a high-level panel discussion on the progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 in the Asia-Pacific region. The panel comprised Mr. Mohammad Hossain, Director General, Power Cell, Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, Bangladesh; Mr. Dilip Sadaula, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Nepal; Ms. Dana Kenney, Chief of Party, United States Agency for International Development Clean Power Asia; Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst, Chair, Committee on Sustainable Energy, Economic Commission for Europe; and Mr. Solomone Fifita, Manager, Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, Pacific Community. The panel discussion was moderated by Mr. Yongping Zhai, Chief, Energy Sector Group, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, Asian Development Bank.

4. The panel discussed the major challenges in achieving the targets under Sustainable Development Goal 7 as well as recommendations on how to address those challenges. Those included providing energy access to populations in geographically inaccessible areas, addressing investment gaps and project specific risks, and improving on existing banking infrastructure to better mobilize future investments in the region. The panel highlighted the need to improve mechanisms to support trade, improve the bankability of projects by managing associated risks and explore opportunities in renewables by reallocating energy subsidies. Panellists concluded by noting the importance of supporting new technologies and market forces conducive to such technologies, as well as of establishing common standards for increased learning and cooperation among members.

5. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made statements: Azerbaijan; China; Japan; Kazakhstan; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Tuvalu.

6. Representatives of the International Renewable Energy Agency also made statements.

7. Representatives reasserted their commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7. Representatives noted various strategies for realizing the energy transition, which included passing legislation, increasing renewable energy, enhancing energy infrastructure, improving regional cooperation and energy diplomacy to reduce barriers for trade and increase connectivity, creating a favourable investment environment, supporting new technologies and engaging with civil society.

8. The representative from the Republic of Korea invited members of the Committee to attend the International Renewable Energy Conference, to be held in Seoul from 23 to 25 October 2019.

9. One representative from an intergovernmental organization noted that the energy transition needed to be accelerated. Public-private partnerships, increased investments and regional cooperation were important to boost renewable energy and could lead to positive externalities such as increased gross domestic product growth, gender equality, job creation and increased quality of life.

10. One representative proposed that the secretariat work further to identify the role of natural gas in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7.

B. Implementation of the outcomes of the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum
(Agenda item 3)

National road maps for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7
(Agenda item 3 (a))

11. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on supporting policy decisions to accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7 through the development of national road maps (ESCAP/CE/2019/2).

12. Representatives from the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; Pakistan; Russian Federation; Singapore; and Viet Nam.

13. Representatives of the Pacific Community also made statements.

14. Representatives reaffirmed their commitments to develop clean, affordable, reliable and environmentally sustainable energy. One representative emphasized the role of competitive markets and private sector engagement in incentivizing innovation, technological development and the advancement of human capital. Representatives also mentioned current initiatives and actions to enhance energy cooperation across the region. One representative noted the progress made on energy efficiency and the promising programmes being implemented to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 targets. Solar mini grids and solar home systems were identified by one representative as a means to facilitate access to electricity in regions not connected to the electricity grid. One representative recommended supporting developing countries to improve technology capacity by reducing the cost of technology transfer, shortening the terms of copyright protection by developed countries, promoting self-reliance in technology development and building resources, including quality human capital.

15. The representative from Singapore invited members of the Committee to the Singapore International Energy Week to be held from 29 October to 1 November 2019 in order to continue knowledge exchange and further cooperation.

16. One representative from an intergovernmental organization requested the secretariat to explore the possibility of including a Pacific country in the pilot phase of the project to implement road maps for Sustainable Development Goal 7. The representative recommended that, to that end, the secretariat should identify one of the Pacific countries engaged in the project on evidence-

based policies for the sustainable use of energy resources in Asia and the Pacific.

17. One representative acknowledged the need for cooperation between countries and the secretariat, noting the economic and geographic differences of countries. The problem of energy security was not only about the diversification of energy resources and the protection of energy infrastructure but also the stable supply of energy resources. The representative pointed to energy security elements such as respect for interests and fair sharing of risks between producers and consumers of coal, oil and gas. The representative emphasized the importance of research on energy security and proposed that the secretariat prepare an analytical paper on international energy security for the third session of the Committee, in 2021. The representative also mentioned that the study entitled “Pathways to Sustainable Energy: Exploring Alternative Outcomes” prepared by the Economic Commission for Europe could be considered an example of scenario analysis for the energy transition.

Regional road map on energy connectivity

(Agenda item 3 (b))

18. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Draft regional road map on power system connectivity: promoting cross-border electricity connectivity for sustainable development” (ESCAP/CE/2019/3).

19. The Committee benefited from a panel discussion on regional energy connectivity in Asia and the Pacific. The panel comprised Mr. Fengquan An, Deputy Director General, Department of International Cooperation, National Energy Administration, China; Mr. Sabar Hashim, Special Officer, Energy Division, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Malaysia; Mr. Emil Kaikiev, Member of the Board in charge of Energy and Infrastructure, Eurasian Economic Commission; Mr. Prasoon Agarwal, Regional Programme Officer Asia, International Renewable Energy Agency; and Mr. Nuki Agya Utama, Executive Director, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Centre for Energy. The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Margalita Arabidze, Deputy Head, Energy Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgia.

20. The Committee noted that regional cooperation was the most efficient mechanism for improving energy systems and increasing the deployment of renewable energy resources. The benefits of regional cooperation for energy connectivity highlighted by the panel included increased economic development, improved regional energy security through larger power system balancing areas, expanded options for affordable access to modern energy services and improved engagement with the private sector.

21. The Committee noted the panel’s recommendations on the draft road map. These recommendations included referring to best practices from other regions, understanding the complexities related to the development of common markets and connectivity, building mutual trust and political will among countries, and continuing the work of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity on the draft road map.

22. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Azerbaijan; Cambodia; China; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; and Russian Federation.

23. Representatives expressed their appreciation to the secretariat for creating the conditions for cross-sectoral collaboration in energy connectivity.

The Committee noted the importance of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 and the various strategies for energy transition, which included balancing the development of energy infrastructure, encouraging private sector participation, creating a favourable investment environment, implementing market reforms and improving cyber security.

24. The Committee expressed its willingness to enhance regional connectivity. The Committee highlighted the potential of that approach given the potential power surplus in some countries of the region. The Committee noted the existing cross-border bilateral and multilateral connections across the region.

25. The Committee emphasized the importance of the draft road map, but it was noted that it was an advisory document. The importance of the support provided by the secretariat was emphasized but it was noted that cooperation should be driven by national Governments. One representative stated that the role of other international organizations and intergovernmental bodies identified in the draft road map should be clarified. The Committee expressed concern about the time frame established for strategies in the draft road map and some representatives proposed its removal. It was suggested that more comprehensive analysis of the region's economic situation, including prices and economic consequences, be included in the draft road map. In that regard, it was proposed that the different terms used in the draft road map for power grid interconnection be clarified to avoid misunderstanding. One representative pointed to the need for clarity on the way forward as well as on legal, governance and resource implications of the road map strategies.

26. The Committee outlined challenges for multilateral cooperation on power grid connectivity, which included lack of political trust, differences in domestic policies and standards, and resource allocation.

27. It was noted that comments on the draft road map were still under consideration by relevant government bodies, and additional comments would be provided in the future.

28. The representative of the Republic of Korea informed the Committee about a forum to be held on 24 October 2019, in partnership with the secretariat, on planned activities for regional power interconnection in North-East Asia.

C. Review of the work of the Committee and consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme

(Agenda item 4)

29. The Committee had before it the information document on the review of the work of the Committee (ESCAP/CE/2019/INF/1). The secretariat made a presentation.

D. Consideration of draft resolutions, recommendations and decisions for submission to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-sixth session

(Agenda item 5)

30. No draft resolutions were proposed to the Committee for consideration.

E. Other matters

(Agenda item 6)

31. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Malaysia; Nepal; Russian Federation; and Tuvalu.

32. The representative of the Pacific Community made a statement.

33. One representative highlighted the importance of the discussions at the Tenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, particularly on the issues relating to natural gas.

34. It was emphasized that a holistic assessment of the impact of renewable energy expansion was needed to inform policy decisions. It was also recommended that the secretariat prepare an analysis on the energy trilemma in the context of Asia and the Pacific, assess safety aspects and the resilience of energy infrastructure against natural disasters, and continue to foster intergovernmental cooperation to share experiences and best practices.

35. The secretariat was invited by the Pacific Community to consult on a draft energy security road map for the Pacific for 2020–2030 at a regional workshop, to be held in April 2020. That road map would contribute to the national road maps on Sustainable Development Goal 7 being developed by the secretariat in cooperation with member States. The secretariat's project on evidence-based policies for the sustainable use of energy resources in Asia and the Pacific led to a joint paper by the secretariat and the Pacific Community, that was endorsed at the fourth Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers' Meeting, held in 2019. The value of that project and of conducting an in-depth assessment of the social and environmental impacts of renewable energy was emphasized.

F. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its second session

(Agenda item 7)

36. The Committee adopted the present report on 11 October 2019.

III. Organization**A. Opening, duration and organization of the session**

37. The Committee held its second session in Bangkok from 9 to 11 October 2019. The session was opened by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP; Mr. Sarawut Kaewtathip, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Thailand; and Mr. Fengquan An, Deputy Director General, Department of International Cooperation, National Energy Administration, China, and Vice-Chair of the first session of the Committee on Energy.

B. Attendance

38. The Committee session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members: Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; Georgia; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Nauru; Nepal; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand;

Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkey; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

39. A representative of Germany attended.
40. Representatives of the following offices of the United Nations Secretariat attended: Economic Commission for Europe; and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.
41. A representative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization attended.
42. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: ASEAN Centre for Energy; Asian Development Bank; Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank; Eurasian Economic Commission; International Renewable Energy Agency; International Solar Alliance; and Pacific Community.
43. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities attended: Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia; Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization; and United States Agency for International Development Clean Power Asia.

C. Election of officers

44. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Mohammad Hossain (Bangladesh)
 Vice-Chairs: Mr. Fengquan An (China)
 Mr. Talyat Aliev (Russian Federation)
 Mr. Sarawut Kaewtathip (Thailand)
 Mr. Avafoa Irata (Tuvalu)

D. Agenda

45. The Committee adopted the following agenda:
 1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
 2. Status of and progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 in Asia and the Pacific.
 3. Implementation of the outcomes of the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum:
 - (a) National road maps for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7;
 - (b) Regional road map on energy connectivity.
 4. Review of the work of the Committee and consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme.

5. Consideration of draft resolutions, recommendations and decisions for submission to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-sixth session.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its second session.

E. Other events

46. The following seminars, side events and special sessions were held in conjunction with the Committee session:

- (a) 7 and 8 October 2019: Tenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development: Translating Targets into Actions, co-hosted with the regional commissions;
- (b) 11 October 2019: Government-Business Dialogue on the Energy Transition.

Annex

List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
ESCAP/CE/2019/1	Status of and progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 in Asia and the Pacific	2
ESCAP/CE/2019/2	Supporting policy decisions to accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7 through the development of national road maps	3 (a)
ESCAP/CE/2019/3	Draft regional road map on power system connectivity: promoting cross-border electricity connectivity for sustainable development	3 (b)
ESCAP/CE/2019/4	Report of the Committee on Energy on its second session	
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/CE/2019/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
ESCAP/CE/2019/L.2	Draft report	7
<i>Information series</i>		
ESCAP/CE/2019/INF/1	Review of the work of the Committee	4
<i>Information available online</i>		
www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-energy-second-session	Information for participants	
www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-energy-second-session	List of participants	
www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-energy-second-session	Tentative programme	