

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

Committee on Energy

Third session

Bangkok, 24–26 February 2021

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Work of the subprogramme on energy**Review of the work of the Committee on Energy****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The present document contains a summary of the work completed by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in the time between the second session and the third session of the Committee on Energy. The work during that time was focused on the implementation of Commission resolution 74/9 on the implementation of the outcomes of the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum.

The secretariat responded to the recommendations made by the Committee at its second session by conducting studies and organizing capacity development activities.

The secretariat has also implemented various activities since the second session, including holding national and regional workshops, capacity-building sessions and policy dialogues; drafting publications; and preparing technical reports to facilitate efforts by members States to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7. In addition, through the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity and an informal consultation meeting, the draft regional road map, entitled “Regional road map on power system connectivity: promoting cross-border electricity connectivity for sustainable development”, has been revised for the consideration of the Committee.

The Committee may wish to review the work carried out by the secretariat and provide guidance on the focus of the secretariat’s short- and long-term work on energy, taking into account the mandates of the subprogramme on energy.

The Committee may also wish to review and endorse the draft terms of reference of the Expert Working Groups on Universal Access to Modern Energy Services, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Use of Fossil Fuels and on Energy Connectivity and provide guidance on the focus of their future work.

* ESCAP/CE/2021/L.1.

I. Introduction

1. In 2015, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) adopted resolution 71/1 on restructuring its conference structure to be fit for the evolving post-2015 development agenda. It established the Committee on Energy, which was to hold biennial sessions of a maximum duration of three days, to identify and promote strong policy options, strategies and policy dialogue to advance access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil fuel technologies.

2. The first and second sessions of the Committee were held in Bangkok, from 17 to 19 January 2017 and from 9 to 11 October 2019. The current document contains a review of the progress made since the second session in preparation for the third session, to be held from 24 to 26 February 2021.

II. Second session of the Committee

3. At the second session of the Committee, four recommendations were brought to the attention of the Commission. The recommendations, and the actions taken by the secretariat in response, are described in the present section.

4. First, the Committee recommended that the secretariat prepare an analytical paper on international energy security for the third session. The secretariat conducted a study on energy security, taking into account the impact of the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as presented under agenda item 2. The outcome of the study is presented in document ESCAP/CE/2021/1 for consideration by the Committee at its third session.

5. Second, the Committee invited member States to submit comments on the draft regional road map, entitled “Regional road map on power system connectivity: promoting cross-border electricity connectivity for sustainable development”. Following the conclusion of the second session, the secretariat submitted the draft regional road map for consideration by the Commission at its seventy-sixth session. Owing to the abbreviated nature of the session, the Commission was unable to discuss and deliberate on the document in detail. Instead, in its decision 76/9, the Commission requested the Committee, at its third session, to review the road map with a view to providing guidance on the follow-up, as appropriate.

6. Subsequently, an online preparatory meeting, an informal consultation meeting and a meeting of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity were held to review the final draft prepared by the secretariat on the comments received from member States. The road map is presented in document ESCAP/CE/2021/4 for consideration by the Committee.

7. Third, the Committee recommended 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. The Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Reduction Division published the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019: The Disaster Riskscape across Asia-Pacific – Pathways for Resilience, Inclusion and Empowerment*, in which it laid out the risks to critical infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region, including risk hotspots for energy infrastructure. Disaster risk reduction was a critical complement to the capacity-building workshops on addressing sustainable dimensions of

infrastructure development, organized under the eleventh tranche of the United Nations Development Account project on addressing the transboundary dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific. During the workshops, policymakers in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia were provided with knowledge products to identify opportunities and challenges with regard to infrastructure connectivity, and methodological and policy approaches to building climate- and disaster-resilient infrastructure were proposed to address connectivity deficits in a sustainable manner.

8. Fourth, the Committee recommended 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 on Sustainable Development Goal 7. The secretariat developed the national expert Sustainable Development Goal tool for energy planning (NEXSTEP) and its underlying methodology to generate energy and investment models and conduct economic and policy analysis to develop a database of policies and best practices, taking into account national priorities. The secretariat continues to support the member States in this regard and has piloted the tool in three countries, namely Bangladesh, Georgia and Indonesia. In 2020, the secretariat was additionally able to support the Governments of Fiji, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Tajikistan, Tonga and Viet Nam in using the tool to develop national road maps on Sustainable Development Goal 7. Following national consultations and peer review, the road maps for all the above-mentioned countries will be completed in 2021.

III. Expert Working Groups of the Committee on Energy

A. Activities implemented by the Expert Working Groups

1. Expert Working Group on Universal Access to Modern Energy Services, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Use of Fossil Fuels

9. The Expert Working Group on Universal Access to Modern Energy Services, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Use of Fossil Fuels was created by the Commission at its seventy-third session, in May 2017, to take advantage of and build upon existing knowledge, information and policy research and to prepare inputs to inform the discussions of the Committee and the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, as appropriate.

10. The Ministers at the Forum requested the secretariat to support members and associate members in the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Energy Transition towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia and the Pacific, including through the continued work of the Expert Working Group.

11. The Expert Working Group played a crucial role in developing the key legacy of the Forum, with a focus on the development of the national expert Sustainable Development Goal tool for energy planning (NEXSTEP), by ensuring the tool's underlying methodology is peer reviewed, its underlying assumptions are well researched, its functionalities are user friendly and, more importantly, the resulting policy recommendations are practical to implement. After the Forum, the Expert Working Group held the following thematic sessions during the Tenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, held in Bangkok on 7 and 8 October 2019:

- (a) Workshop on the role of natural gas in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 and implementing the Paris Agreement;
- (b) Workshop on clean cooking – evidence and innovations for filling the gap;
- (c) Workshop on electricity access for social change;
- (d) Workshop on strengthening national capacities to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 and the targets set in the nationally determined contributions.

12. The purpose of the sessions was to provide expert input to the Committee's deliberations at its second session. More information on the activities of the Expert Working Group can be found at www.unescap.org/our-work/energy/ewg-on-sdg7.

2. Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity

13. The Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity was created by the Commission together with the Expert Working Group on Universal Access to Modern Energy Services, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Use of Fossil Fuels.

14. At its second session, the Committee welcomed the work of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity and the draft regional road map on power system connectivity and invited member States to submit comments on the draft road map before 1 December 2019. It also recommended that the Expert Working Group review comments on the draft road map and finalize it for consideration by the Commission at its seventy-sixth session (ESCAP/76/6).

15. The secretariat received comments from several member States and incorporated them into the draft road map. The Commission took note of the draft road map and requested the Committee to review it at its third session with a view to providing guidance on the follow-up, as appropriate (E/2020/39-ESCAP/76/35).

16. An online preparatory meeting was held in June 2020 to seek experts' views on the draft road map, which the secretariat opened to member States for comments between July and September 2020. Although the text had not yet been agreed upon, the importance of involving member States to maximize their ownership and involvement was emphasized at the online meeting, and a discussion was initiated to develop a road map implementation modality.

17. At an informal consultation meeting held on 17 and 18 November 2020, the comments and changes to the draft road map were reviewed and cleared by member States for submission to the Committee. The discussion was mainly focused on the key milestones, time frames and key implementers contained in the nine strategies of the draft road map.

18. The final draft was also shared with the Expert Working Group at its 4th meeting, held on 4 December 2020. Experts at the meeting discussed possible future activities for the implementation of the road map upon its endorsement by the Commission at its seventy-seventh session. The Expert Working Group also emphasized the importance of maximizing member State involvement and recommended that the nomination of member States to lead the implementation of each of the nine strategies contained in the road map could be beneficial. The Expert Working Group also recommended that criteria

for member States to lead a strategy could include the following: (a) interest in leading a strategy; (b) government agency/institution with a mandate to deal with energy connectivity issues; (c) willingness to collect information and data from all four subregions in Asia. Member States are encouraged to consider leading a strategy and informing the secretariat of their interest in that regard.

19. The secretariat will continue to consult member States to identify leaders among them to implement strategies efficiently.

20. The secretariat plans to develop and implement a project to improve the ability of regulators and other stakeholders to support cross-border and regional power system integration. The key result of the project will be an increased understanding of the regulatory requirements to accelerate power system integration, with a focus on linking connectivity to sustainability objectives, most notably Sustainable Development Goal 7.

21. More information on the activities of the Expert Working Group can be found at www.unescap.org/our-work/energy/ewg-on-energy-connectivity.

B. Review of the draft terms of reference of the Expert Working Groups

22. At its first session in January 2017, the Committee emphasized the need for continuous dialogue among member States in the intersessional periods and noted the importance of regional cooperation in terms of knowledge dissemination through the sharing of experiences and best practices, with a view to aligning national policies with the Sustainable Development Goals.

23. In this regard, the Committee discussed proposals for the establishment of a standing bureau and expert working groups under the purview of the Committee. The Committee requested the secretariat to prepare terms of reference for the proposed expert working groups and to include those draft terms of reference in the review of the implementation of resolution 71/1 by the Commission at its seventy-third session.

24. At its seventy-third session, the Commission considered the report of the Committee on its first session (E/ESCAP/73/30) and the draft terms of reference of the proposed expert working groups (E/ESCAP/73/36 and E/ESCAP/73/36/Corr.1, annex II).

25. The Commission adopted resolution 73/8 on strengthening regional cooperation for sustainable energy development in Asia and the Pacific, in which it decided to create two expert working groups on energy connectivity and on universal access to modern energy services, renewable energy, energy efficiency and cleaner use of fossil fuels. The draft terms of reference were subsequently put into use for the work of the Expert Working Groups.

26. The secretariat has prepared a revised draft of the terms of reference of the Expert Working Groups for consideration by the Committee at its third session (see annex). The draft terms of reference have been modified to bring them in line with the subprogramme on energy. Online or in-person work modalities, reporting arrangements and other important elements have been added to the draft terms of reference in order to realize the full potential of the Expert Working Groups to support the work of the secretariat and the Committee.

IV. Energy security

27. In order to support dialogue among member States on energy security and energy resilience, the secretariat carried out analytical work focused on energy security and building resilience in the Asia-Pacific region. The analysis was designed to orient regional cooperation opportunities in support of a more secure and more resilient Asia-Pacific energy sector and to identify strategies and actions that could be implemented by the Governments to navigate emerging energy security challenges and build long-term resilience.

28. As COVID-19 has also brought about new challenges in the region that can impact upon the energy sector, the analysis takes into account the relationship between resilience and energy security in the face of pandemics and other crises. The analysis is also focused on how the COVID-19 recovery efforts can be integrated into the slower-moving crisis of climate change in a way that enhances energy security and resilience. Document ESCAP/CE/2021/1 contains a summary of the results of the analysis. The results of the analysis were also summarized at a capacity-building workshop on energy security and resilience for member States, held on 14 December 2020.

29. At the subnational level, the draft city road maps on Sustainable Development Goal 7 include recommendations to align national and subnational commitments and plans; to work towards enabling policy frameworks, particularly for the building and transport sectors; to establish appropriate data collection systems for the energy sector and management systems with performance targets for energy end-users; and to provide additional financial incentives, particularly where national support is not currently available.

V. Activities related to Sustainable Development Goal 7

A. Universal access to electricity and clean fuels and technologies

30. In December 2020, the secretariat completed a systematic review of the impacts of clean cooking interventions on adoption outcomes and health impacts, which consists of a meta-analysis in which 1,090 studies on clean cooking interventions were screened and 86 were included in the review. According to the review, clean cooking programmes and policies are an effective means of encouraging the adoption of clean fuels and technologies by reducing fuelwood consumption, fuel collection time and cooking time for the beneficiaries of the programmes reviewed. Although there is less evidence of the positive effects of the clean cooking interventions on long-term health, a significant reduction in carbon monoxide levels and reduction in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease were observed in three of the studies included in the review.

31. In December 2020, the secretariat also completed a systematic review of the impacts of rural electrification on socioeconomic outcomes and gender equality, which consists of a meta-analysis in which 2,627 studies on electricity access were screened and 67 were included in the review.

32. The secretariat conducted a combined online policy dialogue on 17 December 2020 to disseminate recommendations from the two systematic reviews on improving the effectiveness of interventions to increase access to clean cooking and rural electricity. The policy dialogue was accompanied by a capacity-building workshop to support progress on clean cooking in

Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal. The secretariat collected data and prepared a report on progress towards the adoption of clean cooking and household fuels and technologies in Fiji and conducted a capacity-building session on that basis on 2 December 2020 in conjunction with a workshop on the national expert Sustainable Development Goal tool for energy planning (NEXSTEP).

B. National expert Sustainable Development Goal tool for energy planning

33. Based on the Committee's recommendations that the secretariat continue supporting national policymakers and energy planners in developing national road maps to attain Sustainable Development Goal 7 by 2030, ESCAP has continued its development and deployment of the national expert Sustainable Development Goal tool for energy planning (NEXSTEP). The tool is used to generate energy and investment models; conduct economic and policy analysis to develop a database of policies and best practices, taking into account national contexts, priorities and trade-offs; and generate national road maps on Sustainable Development Goal 7.

34. The tool is now fully functional and available for policymakers to input data and develop national road maps on Sustainable Development Goal 7. Progress on the tool's development and implementation is further detailed in document ESCAP/CE/2021/3.

35. The secretariat has continued working with three countries to pilot the tool, namely Bangladesh, Georgia and Indonesia, and has accepted requests to deploy the tool in a further six countries: Fiji, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Tajikistan, Tonga and Viet Nam. The national road map for Indonesia will be formally submitted to the Government in December 2020. By February 2021, draft national road maps will have been completed for Bangladesh, Fiji, Georgia, Tajikistan, Nepal and Tonga, and drafts for the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam will be completed later in 2021. In addition, the secretariat has engaged policymakers and stakeholders at the subnational level to develop road maps for the cities of Jakarta; Iskandar, Malaysia; and Cauayan, Philippines. All three road maps are currently in progress.

36. In response to expressions of interest in the tool from Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia, the secretariat is currently in consultation to develop their customized national road maps. The secretariat is still accepting requests from additional interested member States.

C. Energy efficiency

37. The activities of the secretariat on energy efficiency, mainly focused on the area of sustainable cooling, are a component of a broader project funded by Energy Foundation China. The secretariat is working with the Cool Coalition assembled by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to increase the capacity of member States in South-East Asia to adopt policies and strategies to advance sustainable cooling in alignment with the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol and in support of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the targets set in their nationally determined contributions. The overarching intent of this work is to develop a comprehensive methodology for member States to develop national cooling action plans. The methodology will include broad guidelines on developing the national action plans and the analytical framework for conducting national assessments across various cooling sectors (for example space cooling in

buildings, cold chain, process cooling and mobile air conditioning) to support the development of the plans.

38. Building upon the experience of various institutions active in the development of national cooling action plans, and utilizing the collaborative platform established by the Cool Coalition, the analytical framework under development is based on a holistic approach to assessing the full scope of cooling demands and needs across buildings, transportation, agricultural production, the food industry and the provision of effective health services, while taking into account equipment efficiency and renewable energy use and reducing the use of environmentally harmful substances.

39. Cambodia was selected as the first member State to pilot the methodology with a view to developing a comprehensive national cooling action plan and, in the longer-term, replicating the process in other interested member States in South-East Asia. Indonesia was selected as the second pilot country. In both countries, the relevant ministries have been engaged, local focal points have been identified and recruited by the secretariat, and data collection has started. National cooling assessments for both countries are expected to be finalized during the first quarter of 2021.

D. Cleaner use of fossil fuels: natural gas

40. Natural gas plays an important role in the energy balances in many countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The Ministers at the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum called for further effective measures and actions towards rationalizing the share of fossil fuels in the energy mix, such as natural gas, which, as a flexible, relatively clean and reliable energy source, could play an essential role in the energy transition and in building low-carbon economies, with due consideration for national circumstances and priorities. The Ministers further encouraged regional and international cooperation on the efficient use of energy, including natural gas and oil.

41. In that regard, the secretariat initiated its work on natural gas by holding a workshop in October 2019 on the role of natural gas in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 and implementing the Paris Agreement, in conjunction with the Expert Working Group on Universal Access to Modern Energy Services, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Use of Fossil Fuels. During the workshop, participants discussed how natural gas might contribute to building sustainable and cleaner energy systems and providing access to clean fuels and technologies in the power, industry, transport and residential sectors for power generation, renewable energy integration and clean cooking to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions. Participants agreed that natural gas would continue to play a major role across multiple sectors of the modern economy and in the transition to low-carbon energy. The power and industrial sectors continue to act as main drivers of the rapid growth in demand for natural gas, which is also driven by the transition from coal to gas in countries in Asia.

42. Participants at the workshop also mentioned that natural gas was becoming increasingly accessible to consumers in various regions owing to increased capacities and small-scale projects related to liquefied natural gas. The productive discussion during the workshop contributed to a better understanding of the social, economic and environmental impacts of expanding the share of natural gas, in particular liquefied natural gas, in the fuel mix and of the role of natural gas in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 and implementing the Paris Agreement. In 2020, the secretariat initiated a regional

study on the role of natural gas in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 and implementing the Paris Agreement.

E. United Nations Development Account

43. The Development Account project on addressing the transboundary dimensions of the 2030 Agenda through regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific is a multidisciplinary project spanning the period 2018–2021. The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of selected member States to develop sustainable and inclusive policies and mechanisms for transboundary infrastructure connectivity within the context of the 2030 Agenda.

44. As part of the project, several analytical products were completed to support policymaking in three connectivity sectors, namely information and communications technology (ICT), energy and transport, as well as in finance and trade and shared social vulnerabilities. Policymakers reviewed cross-sectoral aspects and explored collaborative opportunities across the energy, transport and ICT sectors in order to ensure that the existing infrastructure and its future expansion utilizes sustainable practices, including co-deployment, while putting greater emphasis on social inclusion, disaster resilience and viable financing.

45. In addition, the project has included capacity-building workshops delivered in 2019 in three pilot countries, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia, as well as online expert group meetings and online consultations in preparation for the thematic working group on innovation and technology for sustainable development of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation of ESCAP. These events served to enhance the capacity of member States to implement national digital economy strategies that include the co-deployment of ICT, transport and energy infrastructure and to define the strategic entry points for coordinated and collaborative actions to implement the master plan for the Asia-Pacific information superhighway, 2023–2026.

F. Subregional activities

1. South-East Asia

46. The secretariat, in partnership with the Centre for Energy of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), carried out an analysis of the implementation status of Sustainable Development Goal 7. The analysis is presented in a joint ESCAP-ASEAN publication, entitled *Tracking SDG7 in the ASEAN Region: Regional Energy Trends – Report 2020* (ST/ESCAP/2921). The analysis tracks the subregion’s progress towards achieving targets under Sustainable Development Goal 7 in the areas of ensuring universal access, increasing the share of renewable energy in the energy mix and accelerating energy efficiency, and serves to highlight the principal trends and challenges leading up to 2030.

47. In collaboration with UNEP, the secretariat has developed an analytical framework, based on seven qualitative indicators, to assess the implementation of policies and actions related to Sustainable Development Goal 7 at the subnational and city levels, which is referred to as Goal 7 localization. For each of the 19 cities selected from five ASEAN countries, the results and recommendations will be presented in a concise policy-oriented fact sheet, entitled “Sustainable Development Goal 7 localization snapshot”. Important

policy messages and lessons learned from the data analysis will be summarized in a technical synthesis report, which will be prepared in collaboration with United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific and UNEP.

48. In collaboration with the Government of Thailand and with the support of the ASEAN Centre for Energy, the secretariat is developing a training curriculum on power and heat generation from biomass for a target audience of non-technical stakeholders such as community sector organizations, local administration organizations, project proponents, financiers and the general public. The work is intended to be applicable across the South-East Asia subregion. English-language curriculum materials will be made available at the beginning of 2021, and the secretariat will consider requests from member States for translation, dissemination and delivery of the curriculum, subject to the availability of resources.

49. The secretariat is also conducting in-depth analyses on technological and policy pathways to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 in three cities (Jakarta; Iskandar, Malaysia; and Cauayan, Philippines), applying the national expert Sustainable Development Goal tool for energy planning (NEXSTEP) and presenting the results of the local analyses as Goal 7 road maps for each of the cities. In 2021, the secretariat plans to increase the number of partnerships with cities to conduct in-depth analyses in the region. The Goal 7 road maps will enable city and subnational authorities to identify technological solutions and prioritize policy actions to accelerate action on Goal 7 in a cost-effective way. The results of the road maps can pave the way to formulating and developing bankable and investment-ready projects in cities and unlocking the required financing.

2. East and North-East Asia

50. East and North-East Asia is the only subregion without an intergovernmental agreement on electricity connectivity in Asia. In developing political commitments to develop such an agreement, the ESCAP Energy Division and Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia have worked together to facilitate the building of political commitments by organizing the North-East Asia Regional Power Interconnection and Cooperation Forum, to be held on 10 December 2020.

51. At the Forum, a technical presentation on regional power grid connectivity for sustainable development in North-East Asia will serve to examine the opportunity to enhance cross-border power grid connectivity in the subregion. Based on a comprehensive literature review of more than 130 studies and contributions by national experts, the presentation will provide policymakers and other stakeholders with an overview of the potential benefits of regional power grid connectivity, with a focus on sustainability.

3. North and Central Asia

52. Activities in North and Central Asia were implemented under the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, founded in 1998 to facilitate economic cooperation among participating member States and their integration into the world economy. Two regional commissions, namely the Economic Commission for Europe and ESCAP, provide overall support to the Programme. The thematic working group on water, energy and environment of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia is a subsidiary body within the governing structure of the Programme. The thematic working group provides a platform for supporting progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

with a focus on those related to water, energy and the environment. In 2018, the thematic working group endorsed the work of ESCAP with regard to capacity-building and the monitoring of progress on Sustainable Development Goal 7 in the participating member States.

53. In 2020, ESCAP initiated a publication on tracking Sustainable Development Goal 7 and energy progress in Central Asia and the Caucasus based on the latest information and data available from the International Energy Agency, the International Renewable Energy Agency, the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the World Bank and the World Health Organization. A wide range of regional and national sources are covered to capture national contexts and the latest energy developments in the subregion.

G. Asia Pacific Energy Portal

54. The Asia Pacific Energy Portal (available at <http://asiapacificenergy.org>) was created by the secretariat with financial support from the Russian Federation to facilitate the dissemination and exchange of information by increasing the coherence and availability of energy statistics and policy-related information, as mandated by the First Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, in 2013. It is a web-based, interactive information platform designed to increase the accessibility and use of energy information and data, including Sustainable Development Goal 7 data sets, to support research, analysis and, ultimately, informed decision-making. It has been widely used as an efficient tool for monitoring progress on the Goal 7 targets in the Asia-Pacific region.

55. The Portal has a collection of more than 200 datasets from global institutions including UNdata, the International Energy Agency, the World Bank, the UN Comtrade Database, the International Renewable Energy Agency and Bloomberg. More than 3,000 policy documents have been collected from hundreds of official websites, and more than 7,000 power plants have been mapped.

56. At the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, in 2018, the Ministers acknowledged the efforts made by the secretariat to develop the Portal and requested the Executive Secretary to support member States by conducting analytical studies on key energy trends and emerging issues in the region and compiling and disseminating relevant energy information and data, including through the Portal, to ensure informed intergovernmental deliberations, including at the sessions of the Commission and the Committee on Energy.

57. Since the second session of the Committee, the Portal has been further developed to improve its user interface and data coverage.

VI. Issues for consideration by the Committee

58. The secretariat has implemented various activities since the second session of the Committee, including workshops, online meetings,¹ publications² and national and technical reports,³ to support members States in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7.

59. The Committee may wish to review the work carried out by the secretariat and provide guidance on the focus of the secretariat's short- and long-term work on energy, taking into account the mandates of the subprogramme on energy.

60. The Committee may also wish to review and endorse the draft terms of reference of the Expert Working Groups on Universal Access to Modern Energy Services, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Use of Fossil Fuels and on Energy Connectivity and provide guidance on the focus of their future work.

¹ For more information on meetings, see www.unescap.org/events.

² For more information on publications prepared by the Energy Division, see www.unescap.org/publications?f%5B0%5D=field_programme_of_work%3A9090.

³ For more information on technical reports prepared by the Division, see www.unescap.org/resources?f%5B0%5D=field_programme_of_work%3A9090.

Annex

Draft terms of reference for the Expert Working Groups on Energy Connectivity and on Universal Access to Modern Energy Services, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Use of Fossil Fuels

1. The Expert Working Groups on Energy Connectivity and on Universal Access to Modern Energy Services, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Use of Fossil Fuels will carry out the following activities:

(a) Examine issues related to national, subregional and regional policy frameworks and identify specific economic, institutional and regulatory measures in order to facilitate the region's transition to a more sustainable energy future;

(b) Prepare comprehensive regional studies on the current state of and future prospects for selected areas of work with a view to identifying issues and challenges that could be addressed through regional cooperation;

(c) Explore opportunities to enhance cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations and with non-governmental organizations and the business community by preparing joint studies and participating in joint activities such as surveys, seminars and workshops;

(d) Provide the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) with advice on the implementation of the subprogramme on energy, including the formulation and implementation of capacity-building and technical cooperation activities in the region;

(e) Examine and discuss any other issues recommended to them by the secretariat or requested by the Committee on Energy of ESCAP.

2. The Expert Working Groups are open to participation by all member States. Meetings are attended by experts nominated by member States on the basis of criteria including possession of the required technical expertise, practical experience and willingness and ability to contribute to the substantive work of the Expert Working Groups. The required area of technical expertise should be explicitly mentioned in the invitation letter conveyed to the member States through the existing channels.

3. In practice, the meetings of the Expert Working Groups are led by the Chair and/or Vice-Chairs of the Committee on Energy. The Chair and Vice-Chairs supervise and coordinate the work of the Expert Working Groups and, where possible, seek opportunities to consolidate and streamline their activities.

4. The secretariat, in consultation with the Chair and/or Vice-Chairs of the Committee, may invite experts, as appropriate, from civil society, academia and the private sector to provide important technical advice and support as needed.

5. The Expert Working Groups report to and seek guidance from the Committee.

6. The Expert Working Groups accomplish their work online and in person, in conjunction with meetings held by the secretariat.