

Background on implementation of the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2016–2017

Under the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2016–2017, the Group of Experts was requested to undertake a number of activities. In accordance with the Work Plan, the following has been achieved:

(a) **Tracking of the progress made in the uptake of renewable energy sources in the UNECE region.** A report on the UNECE Renewable Energy Status Report 2015 was prepared in partnership with the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) to fill data gaps and thus establish a more accurate baseline for the uptake of renewable energy in the region. This first edition of the report was launched at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2015.

A new edition of the Renewable Energy Status Report 2017 is under preparation and will be launched at the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 12 June 2017.

Data from the UNECE Renewable Energy Status report support the other GERE activities as well as contribute to the UNECE input to global tracking processes, in particular the Global Tracking Framework of the Sustainable Energy for All.

(b) **Exchange of know-how and best practices in the UNECE on how to help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy.** The Group of Experts exchanged information and experiences on how to significantly increase energy production from renewable sources as a means of sustainable development and climate change mitigation. During the third session of the Group of Experts, case studies were presented on key drivers for renewable energy within future energy systems as well as case studies and good practices and policies for intersectoral synergies to deploy renewable energy: the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus approach to support the Sustainable Development Goals. Specific activities to increase the uptake of renewable energy have been implemented through the exchange of country experiences and lessons learned.

Taking into account this exchange of experiences and considering key findings from the UNECE Renewable Energy Status Report, Hard Talks were organized in Georgia and Ukraine in December 2016 to analyse specific issues and identify possible solutions and priorities as outcome of an open dialogue among all stakeholders. Concrete and specific recommendations came out from these Hard Talks, identifying possible solutions to concrete problems based on a shared perspective and consideration of the different interests expressed by major stakeholders. A new Hard Talk is foreseen in Azerbaijan during the second half of 2017.

More specifically on benefit of transboundary cooperation on water-energy nexus, a report on the “Deployment of renewable energy: The water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus approach to support the Sustainable Development Goals” will be presented at the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development on 12 June in Astana.

(c) **Integration of Renewable Energy in Future Sustainable Energy Systems in the region.** Several discussions and meetings organized in 2016-2017 with the participation of GERE Bureau members and experts and for the benefit of UNECE

countries were held allowing an improved understanding of renewable energy resource characteristics and availability, as well as the system integration of the various renewable energy technologies across the broad range of present and future energy supply systems. These discussions considered possible synergies between renewable energy and fossil fuels in the energy production. The Group of Experts cooperated with the Experts Group on Resource Classification (EGRC) to allow investments in renewable energy projects through the application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources to renewable energy resources

The Group of Experts has promoted the renewable energy integration and investment conditions in UNECE Member States by supporting and participating in the assessment processes of the renewable energy potential made by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in South East Europe (2016) as well as in Central Asia and the Caucasus (2017).

Specific activities to match project developers with investors and policy makers have started at the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development and Third session of the Group of Experts (Baku, Azerbaijan, 20-21 October 2016) and have been followed up with dedicated sessions and the opportunity for bilateral meetings at the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (Astana, Kazakhstan, 13-14 June 2017) jointly organized by the UNECE and the EU Technical Assistance Facility.