
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Energy

Second session

Bangkok, 9–11 October 2019

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Review of the work of the Committee and consideration
of the future focus of the subprogramme**

Review of the work of the Committee**

Summary

The present document summarizes the work completed by the secretariat in the time between the First Session and the Second Session of the Committee on Energy. During that time, ESCAP has attained two additional resolutions, including Resolution 73/8 on Strengthening regional cooperation for sustainable energy development in Asia and the Pacific, and Resolution 74/9 on Implementation of the outcomes of the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum. Based on Resolution 73/8, ESCAP has established two Expert Working Groups, including the *Expert Working Group on energy connectivity* and the *Expert Working Group on universal access to modern energy services, renewable energy, energy efficiency and cleaner use of fossil fuels*, both of which have engaged in meetings and are developing outputs.

Also, as agreed in resolution 73/8, ESCAP hosted the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum on 3-5 April 2018 in Bangkok. Following this ministerial level meeting, in order to better support its member States, ESCAP engaged in activities including the development of the National Expert Sustainable Development Goal Tool for Energy Planning to help countries develop national strategies to attain Goal 7; the study of energy connectivity and development of draft roadmap on energy connectivity, the Development Account projects to support evidence-based policy and the further development of the Asia Pacific Energy Portal support member States' data needs.

Lastly, ESCAP has published four official documents four publications and three statistical booklets as knowledge products to further support member States to achieving sustainable energy development through regional cooperation.

* ESCAP/CE/2019/L.1.

** This document is being issued without formal editing.

I. Introduction

1. On 2 June 2015, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted its new conference structure through resolution 71/1, on the restructuring of the Commission. It established a Committee on Energy to meet biennially for 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 Session of the Committee on Energy took place in Bangkok from 17 to 19 January 2017. The current document reviews progress made since this Session in preparation for the Second Session of the committee on Energy to take place from 9 to 11 October 2019.

II. First Session of the Committee

3. After its establishment at the seventy-third session of the commission in resolution 71/1, the First session of the Committee on Energy took place in Bangkok from 17 to 19 January 2017.¹ The Committee discussed opportunities and challenges for energy system transformation in Asia and the Pacific, and recognized the need to prioritize long-term national energy strategies, for which high quality data will be very valuable. Delegates discussed current actions in their own countries in support of Sustainable Development Goal 7 and discussed the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors as well as capacity building in developing countries. The Committee further discussed the promotion of energy connectivity to increase the sustainability of the power sector, particularly through its potential to increase the share of renewables. The Committee adopted the session report on 19 January 2017.²

III. Resolution 73/8 Strengthening regional cooperation for sustainable energy development in Asia and the Pacific

4. During the 73rd Commission session in May 2017, member States adopted Resolution 73/8 on Strengthening regional cooperation for sustainable energy development in Asia and the Pacific.³ This Resolution agreed to convene the second Asia Pacific Energy Forum, mandated the secretariat to conduct studies and disseminate relevant energy data and created two expert working groups, one on energy connectivity and one on universal access to modern energy services, renewable energy, energy efficiency and cleaner use of fossil fuels. Under the guidance of these mandates ESCAP has continued its initiatives to support member States in their pathways to attain Sustainable Development Goal 7.

IV. Expert Working Groups

5. Since the first Committee on Energy, ESCAP has established two Expert Working Groups, both of which have taken action toward advancing the implementation of Goal 7. The expert working group on energy connectivity convened on 13 December 2017 to discuss challenges and

¹ E/ESCAP/RES/71/1.

² E/ESCAP/CE(1)/8.

³ E/ESCAP/RES/73/8.

opportunities for regional power interconnection.⁴ Experts discussed how cross-border electricity connectivity has the potential to optimize allocation of energy resources by connecting energy-rich and energy-poor countries. However, political, financial, economic and technical/legal challenges obstruct the path toward greater connectivity. The expert working group agreed to develop a Regional Roadmap on Cross-border Electricity Connectivity and to present it at the second session of the Committee on Energy.

6. The Second Meeting of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity was held in Beijing from 12 to 14 December 2018. Members provided inputs on the challenges and opportunities for the development of a roadmap on energy cooperation and grid connectivity in Asia and the Pacific. The group further elaborated on subregional strategies based on contextual challenges as well as strategic approaches to address climate change issues and implementation of Goal 7 into cross-border electricity initiatives. The meeting determined that the regional roadmap will identify a pathway toward integrated market, including development of appropriate institutions to support and coordinate among other institutions. ESCAP will prepare the initial draft of the regional roadmap for the review by experts in 2019. Experts additionally agreed to review relevant subregional documents and provide feedback.

7. The Expert Working Group on universal access to modern energy services, renewable energy, energy efficiency and cleaner use of fossil fuels convened on 14 December 2017 to discuss the challenges and opportunities for the energy transition.⁵ Some of the key challenges identified included addressing clean cooking and lack of energy data and evidence. Clean cooking in particular will require drastic action in order to attain universal access by 2030. The group additionally discussed the value of using the multi-tier framework to better depict the status of progress on electricity access rather than defining access as a binary. With regard to renewable energy, experts acknowledged the success of the region's initiatives to increase renewable generation but stressed the need to accelerate efforts as the share is still low and largely limited to the power sector. Experts suggested that energy efficiency faces an investment gap, which could be rectified through national policy action and standards.

V. Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (APEF2)

8. As agreed in Resolution 73/8, the second Asia Pacific Energy Forum (APEF) convened on 3-5 April 2018 in Bangkok.⁶ This ministerial level platform worked toward promoting regional cooperation for enhanced energy security and sustainable use of energy in the region. The first Asia Pacific Energy Forum took place in May 2013 in Vladivostok. During the second forum, ministers and senior officials reviewed progress in the region's implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7, discussed policy perspectives on the role of regional cooperation for energy transition towards

⁴ Chair's Summary of the First Session of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity, 13 December 2017, Bangkok.
<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Chair%27s%20Summary%20-%20EWG%20EC%2013%20Dec.pdf>.

⁵ Chair's Summary of the First Session of the Expert Working Group on universal access to modern energy services, renewable energy, energy efficiency and cleaner use of fossil fuels, 14 December 2017, Bangkok.
<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Chair%27s%20Summary%20-%20EWG%20SDG7%2014%20Dec.pdf>.

⁶ ESCAP/74/27.

sustainable, resilient societies, and ultimately adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Energy Transition towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia and the Pacific.⁷ In this Ministerial Declaration member States agreed to promote regional cooperation in pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 7, to continue to support the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity and to reconvene the Asia Pacific Energy Forum in 2023. Member States additionally requested the Executive Secretary to support members and associate members in promoting regional cooperation, to review progress towards Goal 7, to continue to support the Expert Working Groups, to conduct analytical studies on key energy trends and emerging issues, and lastly to assist countries upon request in developing national road maps for the implementation of Goal 7. This Ministerial Declaration was later endorsed in Resolution 74/9 during the 74th Commission Session in May 2018.

VI. Resolution 74/9 on Implementation of the outcomes of the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum

9. Resolution 74/9 on the Implementation of the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum welcomed the outcomes of this forum and endorsed the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Energy Transition towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia and the Pacific.⁸

VII. National expert sustainable development goal tool for energy planning (NEXSTEP)

10. Based on the member States' request to the Secretariat in the Ministerial Declaration, ESCAP has taken action toward helping policymakers and energy planners develop nation roadmaps to attain Goal 7 by 2030. To better meet requests, ESCAP is developing the national expert sustainable development goal tool for energy planning (NEXSTEP), an innovative tool to examine national targets in the energy sector. Using countries' historical data on energy, demographics and macroeconomic factors, the tool generates energy and investment models, and conducts economic and policy analysis to develop a database of policies and best practices based on national priorities and tradeoffs. The methodology of this tool has been peer reviewed by organizations including the World Bank and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis. This will serve as the basis for an energy implementation roadmap with national level recommendations to address both Goal 7 and the Paris Agreement. ESCAP has been working with three pilot countries Bangladesh, Georgia and Indonesia to learn about variations in national contexts. ESCAP has already received interests in the national expert Sustainable Development Goal tool for energy planning and requests for support from Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal and Tonga. ESCAP is currently in consultations with these countries to develop customized national roadmaps and is still accepting additional requests from interested member States. Progress on this tool is further detailed in the official document of the Committee entitled, supporting policy decisions to accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7 through the development of national road maps.⁹

⁷ ESCAP/74/27/Add.1.

⁸ ESCAP/RES/74/9.

⁹ ESCAP/CE/2019/2.

VIII. Workshop on Sustainable Development Goal 7 Implementation in Asia and the Pacific

11. From 19 to 21 March 2019, ESCAP held a “Workshop on Sustainable Development Goal 7 Implementation in Asia and the Pacific” to build government capacity in energy planning and modeling as well as to gather input to further the development of the national expert sustainable development goal tool for energy planning. During this meeting academics, multilaterals, country government officials and the private sector engaged in panel discussions and presentations to inform on the key challenges and solutions to achieving Goal 7. Participants concluded that there is an urgent need to accelerate action on Sustainable Development Goal 7. This should include developing a clear understanding of the Goal 7 targets, especially what fuels and technologies are included, because countries differ in how they identify renewable energy or clean cooking fuels. There is a critical need to improve data, as well as monitoring and evaluation to track the progress of policies and programmes. Adequate planning and modelling tools need to be promoted and capacity needs to be built. Additionally, lessons learned from past projects must be taken in account for integrated planning and to identify and share best practices.

12. The workshop placed emphasis on capacity building for national energy planning based on data and evidence. Member States were presented with various technologies and tools to support energy modelling and decision analysis in order to best plan for the energy transition based on national priorities. ESCAP additionally facilitated small group discussions on various energy topics in order to gather member States’ input on the national expert sustainable development goal tool for energy planning (NEXSTEP) methodology. Lastly, the workshop served to garner buy-in for national expert sustainable development goal tool for energy planning (NEXSTEP) among member states with a vision to boost its utilization.

IX. Development Account

13. Under the project ‘Evidence Based Policies for Sustainable Use of Energy Resources in Asia and the Pacific’, ESCAP is enabling evidence-based decision-making through three capacity building streams. This includes 1) strengthening the data and policy informational base, 2) analyzing future resource demand, availability and development scenarios, and 3) broadening understanding of trends, impacts, and efficacy of current and past policy structures in order to inform new policy development. Member States highlighted that the project has already supported capacities in data gathering, analysis and tracking capacity, as well as energy modelling and scenario building to support national targets, Nationally Determined Contributions and Sustainable Development Goal 7.

14. In June 2019, ESCAP delivered a sub-regional dialogue, entitled Workshop on ‘Evidence Based Policies for Sustainable Use of Energy Resources in Asia and the Pacific’ in the Pacific in which countries made a number of requests to ESCAP to support national energy planning, support data infrastructure, and facilitate more cross-country exchange of lessons learned and best practices. As an outcome of the meeting, the Pacific Community (SPC) invited ESCAP to collaborate on a joint paper on ‘Pacific Progress in the Sustainable Development Goal 7 and the SAMOA Pathway’ to be presented at the 4th Pacific Energy and Transport Ministers Meeting. ESCAP is also mediating between member States and international institutions

to promote wider collaboration beyond the time frame of the project, thereby ensuring that built capacities are sustained and institutionalized.

X. Asia Pacific Energy Portal

15. During the first Asia Pacific Energy Forum in 2013, member States requested the dissemination and exchange of information by “*increasing the coherence and availability of energy statistics and policy-related information*”. In response, ESCAP launched the Asia Pacific Energy Portal in 2015, a platform to facilitate research and analysis for decision-making. The Portal houses more than 200 datasets from global institutions, and more than 3,000 policy documents, Geographic Information System (GIS) referenced infrastructure maps and country profiles. The second Asia Pacific Energy Forum renewed its mandate of “*compiling and disseminating relevant energy information and data, including through the Asia Pacific Energy Portal, to ensure informed intergovernmental deliberations*”. In 2017, the Portal had more than 9000 new users from around the world. It also supports publications such as *Sustainable Energy in Asia and the Pacific: A statistical overview of energy and development*. Since the first Committee on Energy, ESCAP has continued to expand the services offered by the portal through such features as additional spatial data, including location information for power plants, data on trade flows and a full translation of the portal into Russian to support member States in Central Asia.

XI. Publications

16. Since the first Committee on Energy, ESCAP has had several publications that showcase the data from the portal. These include the following booklets on statistical perspectives:

(a) Sustainable Energy in Asia and the Pacific: A statistical overview of energy and development¹⁰

(b) Energy and Development in Central Asia: A statistical overview of energy sectors in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (bilingual publication Russian & English)¹¹

(c) Energy and Development in the ASEAN Region: A statistical overview of energy sectors in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam¹²

¹⁰ ESCAP, “Sustainable Energy in Asia and the Pacific: A statistical overview of energy and development” Available at <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Statistical%20Perspective%202018%20WEB.pdf>.

¹¹ ESCAP, “Energy and Development in Central Asia: A statistical overview of energy sectors in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan” Available at <https://www.unescap.org/resources/energy-and-development-central-asia-2018>.

¹² ESCAP, “Energy and Development in the ASEAN Region: A statistical overview of energy sectors in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam” Available at <https://www.unescap.org/resources/energy-and-development-asean-region>.

17. Additionally, leveraging data from the portal as well as other resources, ESCAP has had several other publications to support evidence-based policy in the region. These include:

(a) A Global Tracking Framework 2017 Regional Assessment Report: Asia-Pacific Progress in Sustainable Energy¹³

(b) Energy Transition Pathways for the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific: Regional Trends Report on Energy for Sustainable Development 2018¹⁴

(c) Energy interconnection in ASEAN for sustainable and resilient societies: Accelerating energy transition (written in collaboration with the ASEAN Center for Energy and the Global Energy Interconnection Development Corporation)¹⁵

(d) Integrating South Asia's Power Grid for a Sustainable and Low Carbon Future¹⁶

XII. Clean Cooking

18. Recognizing clean cooking as a priority issue, ESCAP has committed to undertake initiatives that will help inform policies and programmes to address it. Currently, almost 44 per cent of the Asia-Pacific region (2 billion people), live without access to clean cooking, using unclean fuels and technologies that have detrimental impacts on health and the environment. ESCAP's estimation of future progress predicts that, based on current policies, by 2030 the region will attain 67.7 per cent access to clean cooking. This falls drastically short of the Sustainable Development Goal 7 target for universal access, and radical policy action will be required to fill this gap. To help inform this cause, the official document for the 75th Commission Session in 2019, included an in-depth analysis of clean cooking programmes in the region in order to provide recommendations on what works and what doesn't, including analysis of specific fuels and technologies as well as different programme structures. Further to this analysis, ESCAP has presented these findings in several meetings including the Workshop on Sustainable Development Goal 7 Implementation in Asia and the Pacific.

19. Furthermore, ESCAP is currently conducting a systematic review with meta-analysis quantifying the success of different programmes and policies to effectively induce change in cooking behaviors. This study will additionally investigate the quantified impacts of programmes on health and other indicators of wellbeing. Future work on clean cooking may include capacity building activities such as in-country consultations and workshops as well as qualitative analysis based on the perspectives of member States and programme implementers. These initiatives will serve to better inform action on clean cooking.

¹³ ESCAP, *A Global Tracking Framework 2017 Regional Assessment Report: Asia-Pacific Progress in Sustainable Energy*, (ST/ESCAP/2812).

¹⁴ ESCAP, *Energy Transition Pathways for the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific: Regional Trends Report on Energy for Sustainable Development 2018*, (ST/ESCAP/2828).

¹⁵ ESCAP, *Energy interconnection in ASEAN for sustainable and resilient societies: Accelerating energy transition* (ST/ESCAP/2843).

¹⁶ ESCAP, *Integrating South Asia's Power Grid for a Sustainable and Low Carbon Future*, (ST/ESCAP/2830).