The Committee on Energy held its first session in Bangkok from 17 to 19 January 2017. The Committee has been an intergovernmental forum for discussing emerging trends and development issues relevant to supporting access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all in Asia and the Pacific, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and identifying modalities for regional energy cooperation.

The Committee recognized the need to accord high priority to the development of long-term national energy strategies for energy transition that align national plans and programmes with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 7. The Committee further recognized the need to substantially increase the level of support and capacity-building for the member States that are developing countries, in particular those with special needs, in order to align national plans and programmes with the 2030 Agenda. The Committee also recognized the importance of energy connectivity in achieving sustainable development and, in particular, recognized the potential benefits of transboundary power trade as a tool for increasing the sustainability of the power sector.

The Committee discussed the possible structural options for its work, including the proposals for the establishment of a standing bureau and expert/working groups under the purview of the Committee. In this regard, the Committee requests the secretariat to prepare terms of reference for such 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.

The Commission may wish to consider matters calling for action or brought to its attention, as contained in the report of the Committee, and provide the secretariat with further guidance.
I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

1. The following matters are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP):

   (a) The Committee on Energy discussed proposals for the establishment of a standing bureau and expert/working groups under the purview of the Committee. The Committee requests the secretariat to prepare terms of reference for such 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;
(b) The Committee recognizes its key role as an intergovernmental forum for discussing emerging trends and development issues relevant to supporting access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all in Asia and the Pacific, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and identifying modalities for regional energy cooperation;

(c) The Committee recognizes the importance of energy connectivity in achieving sustainable development and in particular recognizes the potential benefits of transboundary power trade as a tool for increasing the sustainability of the power sector. With regard to moving forward, the Committee recognizes the need to provide further clarity for the development of strategies and a road map identifying concrete steps to promote regional energy connectivity through expert-level discussion, due consideration by experts, and intergovernmental processes with the support of the secretariat;

(d) The Committee recognizes the need to accord high priority to the development of long-term national energy strategies for energy transition that align national plans and programmes with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 7. The Committee further recognizes the need to substantially increase the level of support and capacity-building for the member States that are developing countries, in particular those with special needs, in order to align national plans and programmes with the 2030 Agenda.

II. Proceedings

A. High-level panel discussion on the theme “Opportunities and challenges of energy system transformation in Asia and the Pacific: how far and how fast can the region go?”
(Agenda item 2)

2. The Committee had before it notes by the secretariat on the energy scene and trends in Asia and the Pacific, promoting regional energy connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, the progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7 and other Goals in relation to energy, and the report to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on progress in the implementation of its resolution 70/9 (E/ESCAP/CE(1)/1, E/ESCAP/CE(1)/2, E/ESCAP/CE(1)/3 and E/ESCAP/CE(1)/4).

3. The Committee benefited from a keynote address and two panel discussions, one on energy transition and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the second on energy connectivity for regional economic integration and sustainable development.

4. The keynote address was made by Mr. Liu Zhenya, Chair of the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization.

5. The Committee was informed that the critical factor in promoting energy transition in the region lay in finding ways to accelerate economic development combined with the deployment of clean energy. Such a development process could be supported by accelerating grid interconnection and building transnational power transmission systems. The Committee noted with interest the proposal on deploying transboundary grid interconnections globally with clean energy as the primary source of energy, combined with an ultra-high voltage alternating current/direct current transmission system and smart grid technologies. The Committee was informed about the need to prioritize a batch of pilot projects as soon as possible to demonstrate profitability and the potential of a clean energy-based global power transmission system.
1. **Energy transition and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**

6. The Committee benefited from a panel discussion on energy transition and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The panel comprised Mr. Narith Bun, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Cambodia; Mr. Ajith P. Perera, Deputy Minister of Power and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy, Sri Lanka; Mr. Vijay Nath, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, Fiji; and Mr. Areepong Bhoocha-oom, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Thailand. The panel discussion was moderated by Mr. Jesus Cristino P. Posadas, Undersecretary, Department of Energy, Philippines.

7. The Committee noted the panel discussion on the major challenges to achieving the targets under Sustainable Development Goal 7 from national perspectives and how regional cooperation could help to address them. Challenges included securing access to reliable and affordable energy, diversifying the energy mix, increasing energy efficiency and accelerating deployment of renewable energy. Panellists stressed the importance of energy data for decision-making and improving the resilience of energy infrastructure.

8. The Committee also noted the various strategies for energy transition, which included passing legislation, balancing the development of energy infrastructure, encouraging private sector participation and creating a favourable investment environment.

2. **Energy connectivity for regional economic integration and sustainable development**

9. The Committee benefited from a panel discussion on energy connectivity for regional economic integration and sustainable development. The panel comprised Mr. Hayk Harutyunyan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy Infrastructures and Natural Resources, Armenia; Mr. Bhagwati Prasad Pandey, Special Secretary, Ministry of Power, India; Mr. Houshang Falahatian, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy, Islamic Republic of Iran; Mr. Gankhuu Purevjav, Minister, Ministry of Energy, Mongolia; Mr. Satya Narayan Bhagat Bin, State Minister, Ministry of Energy, Nepal; and Mr. Kirill Molodtsov, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy, Russian Federation. Mr. Kirill Molodtsov served as the moderator.

10. The panellists discussed energy connectivity, including the role of energy connectivity and transboundary power trade in meeting increased energy demand in a sustainable manner and the associated hurdles to increasing transboundary power trade. Panellists highlighted the importance of renewable energy as part of the sustainable energy transition taking place in order to meet the targets set forth in the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. Panellists further noted the pivotal role of transboundary power trade due to its potential to effectively integrate large scale renewables and link geographically diverse supply and demand centres. They recognized the role of energy connectivity in enhancing national and regional energy security through interdependence, as opposed to independence, and highlighted current examples of transboundary power trade and interconnection taking place within the region.

11. The Committee noted the principal challenges to increasing transboundary power trade and the means to overcome them through regional cooperation. Panellists primarily noted the need for better coordination among stakeholders, improved consistency in policies, standards and legal frameworks, strengthened institutional structures, enhanced transmission and
distribution infrastructure, increased investment, and enriched knowledge and technology transfer. The panellists emphasized that technological, regulatory and financial barriers could be effectively overcome through consensus building. However, for such a collaboration to evolve, an innovative energy cooperation mechanism in the region, which also involved different stakeholders, including from government, the private sector, industry and financing institutions, would be essential.

B. Review of the work of the Committee
(Agenda item 3)

12. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on the review of the work of the Committee (E/ESCAP/CE(1)/5).

13. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Armenia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; China; Fiji; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Philippines; Russian Federation; and Sri Lanka.

14. Representatives of the following organizations also made statements: Eurasian Economic Commission; International Atomic Energy Agency; Pacific Community; and Economic Commission for Europe.

15. The Committee highlighted the key role it could play as an intergovernmental forum for discussing emerging trends and development issues relevant to supporting access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all in Asia and the Pacific, in line with the 2030 Agenda, and promoting regional energy cooperation.

16. The Committee recognized energy connectivity as a priority area for meeting the growing demand for energy in the region. In particular, the Committee was advised of potential areas that could be addressed by exchanging information and experiences on planning and policy, building capacity, and harmonizing regulations, engineering options and pricing mechanisms. In that regard, there was a proposal that the Committee establish a working group on energy connectivity to develop an overarching regional road map on energy connectivity through the exchange of information and consensus building among member States. The Committee noted the readiness and willingness of the Government of China to lead the proposed working group on energy connectivity and to undertake the necessary communications, coordination, human resources and budget mobilization as necessary. The Committee also noted another proposal for it to establish additional working groups on hydrocarbons, renewable energy sources and nuclear energy.

17. The Committee further recognized other important priority areas for it to address, which included (a) the need to identify good practices for collecting accurate and comprehensive data and establishing a baseline in assessing the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 and (b) building energy infrastructure resilience to reduce the vulnerabilities of energy infrastructure to external risks, such as natural disasters and other threats.

18. One delegation noted that further clarification, details and analysis was necessary with regard to the functioning of the bureau and the overall work plan of the Committee. Cooperation and partnerships needed to be pursued with regard to organizing dialogues and producing analytical works, as the Committee should focus on areas where it could make a contribution.
The delegation noted the lack of detailed information and analysis on the proposed expert group meetings programmed in the 2018-2019 biennium and their relation to the proposed working groups of the Committee. The delegation recommended that the next session of the Committee be organized in 2020, two years after the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, which would be held in 2018 as mandated by Commission resolution 70/9.

19. 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.

20. The Committee noted the outcome of the event comprising a panel discussion on the private sector and a policymakers dialogue on the creation of enabling environments to spur sustainable energy development in Asia and the Pacific, which was held on 16 January 2017. The Committee recognized the importance of engaging the private sector in the efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 at the national and regional levels.

21. The Committee also noted the offer made by the International Atomic Energy Agency to explore the possibility of creating a partnership with it in the field of capacity-building for energy planning.

22. The Committee was informed of the initiative of the Pacific Community to provide reliable energy data on Pacific island States, which could be useful for the work of the Committee.

C. Energy scene and trends in Asia and the Pacific
(Agenda item 4)

23. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on the energy scene and trends in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/CE(1)/1).

24. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; Fiji; Japan; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; and Russian Federation.

25. The Committee recognized that while energy challenges that member States faced were different and country specific, common issues existed, including growing energy demand, reliance on fossil fuels, low energy efficiency, limited use of renewable energy, lack of access to affordable and clean energy, and the need to shift to low carbon development and an environmentally friendly energy future.

26. The Committee highlighted the importance of energy connectivity, which could support the development and optimization of renewable energy, which was currently underutilized, as well as increase resource efficiency and benefit economic and social growth.

27. The Committee acknowledged that the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement would shape the future energy scene and that there was a need for countries in the region to align national priorities with the global agenda.

28. The Committee further recognized that financing was a key challenge for energy transition and acknowledged the need for capacity-building on
mobilizing financial resources and investments and on institutional frameworks to encourage private sector investment.

D. Promoting energy connectivity in Asia and the Pacific
(Agenda item 5)

29. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on promoting regional energy connectivity in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/CE(1)/2).

30. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; Japan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Philippines; Singapore; and Tonga.

31. Representatives of the Asian Development Bank and the Pacific Community also made statements.

32. The Committee was informed of member States’ efforts and experiences in energy connectivity, including promoting cross-border electricity infrastructure development and trade, developing a terminal access code to provide open access and transparency of rules for liquefied natural gas, and establishing a superhighway grid for primary energy trade.

33. The Committee acknowledged that the current energy transition was taking place in the region due to increasing energy demand and environmental constraints and recognized the linkage between energy connectivity to integrate large scale renewables and sustainable energy development.

34. With regard to making the shift from bilateral to multilateral energy trade, the Committee emphasized the importance of cooperation in developing a pilot model for enhanced regional energy connectivity. The Committee highlighted the role of ESCAP as an intergovernmental platform for collaboration and dialogue, with a focus on sharing good practices and building consensus.

35. The Committee recognized the importance of technology and infrastructure development in facilitating the promotion and evolution of energy connectivity. The Committee acknowledged the broad definition of “energy connectivity” and the need for an inclusive approach to include member States that are small island developing States.

36. One delegation noted the ambitiousness of the ideas contained in the document, including the development of an Asia-Pacific energy charter, a regional mechanism and a master plan. Such ideas would require further discussions at the intergovernmental and expert-level and long-term endeavours among member States, as well as strategic thinking and concrete road mapping with support from the secretariat.

37. The Committee took note of the following initiatives on energy connectivity and welcomed opportunities for further collaboration: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Power Grid; Asian energy super ring; Asia Super Grid; Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal Power Initiative; Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation; Belt and Road Initiative; Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000); Gobitec; Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline; North-South Energy Corridor; South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation energy ring; Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline; and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline.
E. Progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7 and other Goals in relation to energy
(Agenda item 6)

38. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7 and other Goals in relation to energy (E/ESCAP/CE(1)/3).

39. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Fiji; Georgia; India; Indonesia; Japan; Kazakhstan; Maldives; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Singapore; and Uzbekistan.

40. Representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Pacific Community also made statements.

41. Member States shared examples of initiatives in support of Sustainable Development Goal 7, including international energy cooperation, expansion of energy infrastructure and strengthening the means of implementation. It was stressed that strengthened regulatory frameworks, access to finance and investment, and technological innovation were necessary to achieve Goal 7.

42. The Committee underscored that access to energy services remained a major challenge for many countries in Asia and the Pacific. To promote expanded access to energy, clean and affordable energy for communities were key factors for most of the countries. The Committee was encouraged to note that a number of countries in the region had set targets to improve access to energy.

43. The Committee was further encouraged to recognize good practices by member States in energy efficiency, including the introduction of tax incentives and regulations on energy efficiency and energy conservation across sectors of the economy; the gradual exclusion of energy-intensive technologies and transition to best available technologies; and the promotion of energy efficiency standards and labelling, in particular for buildings, lighting and appliances.

44. The Committee noted with concern that the share of renewables in the energy mix was declining against continued increase in energy demand in Asia and the Pacific. Member States highlighted their national targets for renewable energy deployment and measures for supporting renewable energy development, including new legislation, innovative financing and economic instruments.

45. The Committee noted that most of the member States had already introduced their nationally determined contributions, which included sustainable energy programmes and projects in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

46. The Committee took note of the fact that fossil fuels would remain a part of the energy mix despite remarkable achievements in renewable energy technology deployment in Asia and the Pacific.

47. The Committee highlighted the need for closer collaboration between private and public sectors in terms of investment and technology development, together with cooperation within the region through multilateral platforms. It also stated that the creation of strong energy
campaigns through public-private partnerships were instrumental in developing sustainable energy initiatives.

48. The Committee emphasized that high-quality data were vital so that Governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and the general public could make informed decisions and also vital to ensuring an accurate review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Further, the Committee acknowledged that progress needed to be made in supporting countries with special needs in order to overcome challenges to the effective implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7.

49. The Committee further recognized the need for enhanced regional collaboration on capacity-building to implement Sustainable Development Goal 7.

50. The Committee recognized the efforts of the secretariat in providing a web-based tool – the Asia Pacific Energy Portal – which offered access to comprehensive statistical data and national policy programme documents. The Committee noted the proposal for the secretariat to develop a monthly bulletin based on information from the Portal. The Committee also noted the concern regarding the additional burden of collecting data and reporting arising from additional indicators for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, including Sustainable Development Goal 7.

F. **Implementation of the outcomes of the first Asian and Pacific Energy Forum**
(Agenda item 7)

51. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on the report to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on progress in the implementation of its resolution 70/9 (E/ESCAP/CE(1)/4).

52. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Iran (Islamic Republic of); Russian Federation; and Tonga.

53. The Committee noted the status and progress of the implementation of the outcomes of the first Asian and Pacific Energy Forum and further noted that the secretariat would report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the topic.

54. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of the Russian Federation for its continued financial and technical support for the activities in support of the implementation of the outcomes of the first Asian and Pacific Energy Forum.

55. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of Tonga for reaffirming its commitment and for its efforts to host the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, which would be held in 2018.

G. **Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme**
(Agenda item 8)

56. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on the review of implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 (E/ESCAP/CE(1)/6) and the document entitled “Draft programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019: subprogramme 9 on energy” (E/ESCAP/CE(1)/INF/4).
57. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Japan; and Mongolia.

58. A representative of the Eurasian Economic Commission also made a statement.

59. One delegation highlighted the importance of regional interconnection in balancing energy supply and demand centres and efficiently utilizing domestic renewable resources and noted the Asian Super Grid initiative was a regional example. The delegation emphasized the need to prioritize renewable energy while acknowledging that a diversity of resources existed among member States and that there was a need to efficiently utilize indigenous resources in support of regional stability and reliability of energy supply. In that regard, the delegation proposed, for inclusion in the Committee’s subprogramme, additional research on the potential development of zero emission and carbon-capture coal-fired power generation.

60. Another delegation noted the need to consider streamlining high-level meetings taking place over the next two years; the first session of the Committee was held in 2017, the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum would be held in 2018 and the second session of the Committee would be held in 2019.

H. Consideration of draft resolutions, recommendations and decisions for submission to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-third session
(Agenda item 9)

61. The Committee was invited to discuss and review topics to be considered for draft resolutions that could be proposed to the Commission for further deliberation and endorsement at its seventy-third session.

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

I. Other matters
(Agenda item 10)

63. The Committee had before it the note verbale dated 9 November 2016 from the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Thailand addressed to the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/CE(1)/7).

64. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; and Russian Federation.

65. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Government of Kazakhstan on the organization of EXPO 2017 with the theme “Future energy” and the Energy Ministerial as well as the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Astana in June 2017. The Committee encouraged member States to participate in those events.

J. Adoption of the report
(Agenda item 11)

III. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

67. The Committee on Energy held its first session in Bangkok from 17 to 19 January 2017. The session was opened by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP; Mr. Areepong Bhoocha-oom, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Thailand; and Mr. Kirill Molodtsov, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy, Russian Federation.

B. Attendance

68. The Committee session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of ESCAP: Armenia; Australia; 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; Macao, China; Maldives; Mongolia; Nauru; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Tuvalu; Uzbekistan; and Viet Nam.


71. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: Asian Development Bank; and Pacific Community.

72. Observers from the following organizations attended: Eurasian Economic Commission; and Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization.

C. Election of officers

73. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Ajith P. Perera (Sri Lanka)
Vice-Chairs: Mr. Areepong Bhoocha-oom (Thailand)
Mr. Talyat Aliev (Russian Federation)
Mr. Bhagwati Prasad Pandey (India)
Mr. Vijay Nath (Fiji)
Mr. Fengquan An (China)
Rapporteur: Mr. Ali Gholampour (Islamic Republic of Iran)

D. Agenda

74. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
   (a) Opening statements;
   (b) Election of officers;
   (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. High-level panel discussion on the theme “Opportunities and challenges of energy system transformation in Asia and the Pacific: how far and how fast can the region go?”

3. Review of the work of the Committee.

4. Energy scene and trends in Asia and the Pacific.

5. Promoting energy connectivity in Asia and the Pacific.

6. Progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7 and other Goals in relation to energy.


8. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme.

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

10. Other matters.

11. Adoption of the report.

E. Other events

75. The following events were held in conjunction with the Committee session:

   (a) 16 January 2017: Policy Dialogue on Energy for Sustainable Development;

   (b) 19 January 2017: Side event on the Asia Pacific Energy Portal.
Annex

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