**Suggested talking points for the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy**

**by Yaroslav Demchenkov, Deputy Minister of Energy of Ukraine**

**31st Session, High-Level Segment**

**September 21, 2022, 10.00-12.00 (Geneva time)**

Dear Chair, excellencies, distinguished colleagues, except for russian representatives!

Thank you for supporting Ukraine in these tough times.

Thank you for your important statements on building a more secure, affordable & sustainable energy system in the region.

However, I have some straightforward messages for our audience.

Colleagues, friends,

Talking about secure and sustainable energy development, we all suddenly turned in the wrong direction.

When was the mistake made that today threatens further sustainable development? And how to correct it?

It cannot be said that russia’s aggression caught the civilized world by surprise.

To be more precise, it did catch the world by surprise precisely because, for a long time, some leaders wanted to ignore threatening signals and conduct business as usual with russia.

It was not because they believed it would work. Rather, they did so because it was convenient.

In 2008, russia attacked Georgia, testing the international community’s response.

The international community responded by allowing russia to begin constructing the Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline in 2010.

This was not the first, but also not the last huge mistake.

In 2014, russia annexed Ukrainian Crimea and occupied parts of the Ukrainian Donbas with the same goal in mind.

The world responded with half-hearted sanctions on the one hand and the start of the construction of Nord Stream 2 on the other.

Today we have a war that russia started in Ukraine and opened a separate energy frontline in Europe.

Energy is, without doubt, another frontline for russia in Europe.

Currently, russia is destroying Ukrainian cities, killing civilians, and destroying critical civilian energy infrastructure.

One day more than 5 million people remained in darkness and cold with no chance to call their relatives, asking them if they were alive or safe. With no access to the internet to real news or warning about airstrikes. With no possibility to cook hot food and have heating in their homes and shelters.

russia has occupied Europe’s largest nuclear power plant in Ukrainian Zaporizhzhia and is bombing other nuclear energy facilities in Ukraine, creating threats of a nuclear catastrophe in Europe.

When did we turn the wrong way? When did we make this mistake?

When European energy regulatory bodies failed to see how russian business cemented its position in the European energy system.

Just a couple of years ago, every fourth passenger in Germany was carried with the help of bloody russian fuel.

Every fourth kilowatt of electricity in Italy was produced with the help of Russian gas and coal.

Half of Hungary’s property was heated with russian gas use.

russia aimed to make Europe addicted to its energy.

And poisoned it through the needles of Nord Streams.

Today the kremlin wants to bring new Dark Ages to the world using its energy sources as a weapon. It prefers burning its gas to create an artificial energy crisis than selling it on the market.

The main mistake is that business, as usual, does not work with murderers and terrorists. For russia, it has long been not a business but an instrument of an energy war.

With attacks on Georgia and Ukraine, putin warned others of his intentions, but many politicians wanted to believe in the illusion of cheap energy and to do business with russians based on civilized practices. Today, Europe is paying for this knowledge with rising prices, and Ukraine with tens of thousands of lives.

Civilized people must resist evil, which is trying to mould the world order to fit its imperial ambitions.

This is russia’s war on the civilized world. And its repercussions are felt globally.

There are no purely russia’s economic goals – these are imperialistic goals that can be dressed in loans, cheap gas or quasi-infrastructure projects like the Nord Streams.

As energy sector leaders, our main goal is to deliver affordable and sustainable energy to our citizens and stave off energy poverty.

We have to use our power to resist the russian invasion of Ukraine and the russian invasion of a sustainable energy future.

We must call all parties to action:

- Keep going sustainable and green; We must be oriented on creating domestic clean energy generations and manufacturing. Wind and solar couldn’t be weaponized.

- The aggressor cannot be stopped with concessions or concerns. It can be stopped only with a show of force.

russia and its representatives should become outcasts in a civilized society and have no place in the UNECE.

- We have to be more persistent in our joint actions. We have to support the refusal of russian fuel.

russia’s most significant export items are oil and gas. It’s the kremlin’s income to keep repressive institutions that are killing democracy in their country, and it’s to support an army that is killing civilians in Ukraine.

This year, it is likely that russia will lose first place as a gas exporter.

The USA made a fantastic leap from being a net importer of gas to one of the world’s largest (or perhaps the largest) exporters of gas.

It is essential to continue developing long-term US - EU gas relations, mainly through joint LNG delivery projects and the construction of new LNG terminals. And also in the process of abandoning fossil fuels.

Europe is now very quickly getting rid of its dependence on russian energy carriers, and it needs the support of the US and other energy partners of our region.

Despite russian rockets and bombs, we continue ensuring the resilience of our energy system.

We are looking into the future and planning a post-war sustainable recovery.

Nowadays, Ukraine can even support the EU to replace russian fuels in the EU energy mix by exporting its electricity which is more than 70% produced without a carbon footprint.

Ukraine will liberate the rest of its territories.

And the world must liberate itself from russia’s deadly energy grip.

Renewable energy, clean and affordable, nowadays has a new meaning. It means that no one will be able to weaponize such energy.

The power of russia’s fossil dictatorship must come to an end.

Chat message to all participants from Deputy Minister of Energy of Ukraine Mr Yaroslav Demchenkov:

russia’s participation in any event, as well as in the organization, discredits this organization.

We consider it unacceptable to talk about sustainable development with a country that is causing an energy crisis in the region with its military actions.

This is not just military aggression, but a long-term planned activity to increase the dependence of European countries on russian fossil fuels, which thus unleashed the war.

It is unacceptable to talk about the continent’s future with russia, which is killing our people.

The russians are killing entire Ukrainian families. We have found Izyum city. Olesya, 6 years old. The russian uniformed terrorists murdered her. Her parents are buried nearby.

russia makes genocide in Ukraine. They are killing civilians just because they are Ukrainians.

How can you permit to participate in this organization to a country that occupied the largest nuclear power plant in Europe and caused the threat of a nuclear disaster?

How can you give the floor to the representatives of a country that destroys and bombards civil infrastructure objects of another country on the eve of the winter period, endangering the delivery of energy power to Ukrainians, not making it possible to cook food, provide water supply during wartime?

Therefore, after my speech, I will not participate in this event if a representative of russia is there.

Normal people cannot talk to murderers and nuclear terrorists. russia is a state of terrorism and we all must stop it!