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## UNECE Executive Secretary calls for more effort to develop, demonstrate and deploy CCS technology

By Christian Friis Bach

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## About the Author

On 9 July 2014, the Secretary-General appointed Mr Christian Friis Bach of Denmark as the next Executive Secretary of UNECE. Mr Bach brings to the position a combination of deep knowledge in international economy and development affairs coupled with innovative and results-oriented leadership.

Mr Bach came from a position as Member of the Danish Parliament and Head of the Parliamentarian Group for the Danish Social/Liberal Party. He previously served as Denmark's Minister for Development Cooperation (2011-2013) and Special Advisor to the European Union Commission for the United Nations Global Sustainability Panel (2010-2011). He is Honorary Professor of International Economics and Development at the University of Copenhagen (2009-2014) and has been Associate Professor in International Economics and Development Economics, the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (1999-2005).

Mr Bach has a long history with civil society, notably as the International Director for the DanChurchAid (2005-2010) and as Chairman of the Danish Association for International Cooperation (1997-2001). He also has private sector experience from running a start-up company and has worked as a journalist at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation.

Mr Bach holds a Ph.D. in International Economics (1996), a MSc in Agronomy (1992) from the Royal Danish Agricultural University in Copenhagen and a supplementary degree in Journalism from the Danish School of Media and Journalism.



## Focus on CCS - Opinion Leaders Series

*Focus on CCS* is the theme of a series of opinion articles by world leading authorities on carbon capture and storage (CCS) and their perspectives on the role for the technology in reducing our carbon dioxide emissions. The series is published by the Global CCS Institute to contribute to the conversation about CCS within the portfolio of technologies to help tackle climate change. The views expressed remain those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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## ***UNECE Executive Secretary calls for more effort to develop, demonstrate and deploy CCS technology***

**By Christian Friis Bach**

We live in a unique time. Just a few weeks back more than 150 World leaders came together in New York and approved the most visionary and ambitious agenda ever with the Sustainable Development Goals. Now we hope World leaders will come together in Paris and adopt a visionary and ambitious climate agreement.

Energy is at the core and centre of both these ambitious attempts to shape global action. The Sustainable Development Goal Number 7 is the energy goal. However, energy underpins all goals in some way or the other, whether climate action, air pollution, jobs, health, education, cities or transportation. Energy is a golden thread throughout them all.

And when it comes to the sources of energy, fossil fuels will be an integral part of the future energy system for many decades to come. This is why we must not, as often seen, shy away from tackling and discussing the key issues related to fossil fuels. We must openly and actively discuss how fossil fuels – and the companies and countries that rely on fossil fuels - can become part of the solution instead of being seen only as being part of the problem. This is why the CSLF dialogue is so important.

Without addressing the role of fossil fuels in countries' energy systems, a two degree climate target can never be achieved. This is true under any scenario as shown also by our good partner organisation; the International Energy Agency (IEA). Our challenge is to convey this fundamental reality of fossil energy into the climate discussions and to the world at large. If we do not provide clarity, many of the criticisms people have of fossil fuels and the fossil fuel industry will be justified. But if we work together we can turn problems into solutions and devise a coherent pathway to a sustainable energy system that meets both economic, social, and environmental needs.

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is one critical element of the solution set. UNECE's Recommendations on CCS are the first set of recommendations developed in a UN framework by our unique Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Production from Fossil Fuels ... The recommendations were endorsed by our 56 member states, submitted to the UNFCCC before the COP in Lima last year and they were well received.

However, although we have seen quiet progress on CCS — not least due to the leadership provided by the CSLF — we are not making enough progress. I often hear that the technology is not proven, and that the business case is not working. But when I listen to our experts and study the projects I am convinced the technology will work and that the business case will come. And importantly, I know the CCS technology is needed.

However, we must scale-up our efforts to develop, demonstrate and deploy CCS technology, and developing countries and developed countries must find ways to walk down the CCS development pathway together. Here we stand ready to support the CSLF.

We must put in place the commercial-scale demonstration projects and policy support that is equivalent to other low cost solutions. Governments must support the technology, treat the carbon captured equally with carbon saved or avoided from other sources, set up the right institutional framework conditions and industrial policies that can ensure investments in CCS. We must design and develop new and innovative funding mechanisms to finance a much faster deployment of the technology. We must develop our ability to monitor and measure the results.

But the agenda for fossil energy in the sustainable energy system of the future is not just about CCS. It is essential to get advanced fossil technology disseminated as part of both the development agenda and the climate agenda.

Governments, regulators, energy companies, and indeed all stakeholders in the energy system need to think from a systems perspective about integrating all technologies. Each one has its role to play. We must work together to ensure that there is not a choice to make between the climate agenda and rational economics – and enable countries to choose their optimal energy mix on a pathway to sustainable energy systems.

We need properly structured regional balancing markets that can promote and compensate flexible producers and energy sources. This issue is important for the energy dialogue between producers and consumers, not least in Europe with the ambitions for a European Energy Union. In Europe gas-fired power has lost market share to coal in baseload generation, but the best contribution of gas is in flexibility. And also coal technologies should be re-conceived from the outset, not only for baseload operations, but also for flexible operations and integrated energy markets.

The issue of methane management is critically important. Leaks, emissions, venting, and incomplete combustion for all extractive industries need to be better understood and addressed. Methane emissions are not being properly monitored and reported, let alone being managed for economic benefit. We could go a long way toward meeting the 2 degree objective if we just achieved proper methane management. Here I encourage you to use the work done by our experts on methane management.

We have the technology to address these challenges, but in many countries we see sub-critical technologies for fossil fuels being deployed, in part due to difficulty in financing the more advanced power technologies.

I do believe we increasingly will see developing countries take the lead and leapfrog into more flexible, integrated and sustainable energy systems. China is not only the world's largest investor and producer of renewable energy, it has a coal fleet with higher average efficiency than some rich and developed countries.

We need to work together to develop and disseminate the best available and most advanced technology and CCS is an important example. Here also much of the deployment is going to be done in developing countries. This is both a business opportunity and an essential task. We can and must avoid lock-in of old and obsolete technology as it happens today.

And we need to ensure that we invest in the best available energy sources. Here the United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources (UNFC) is a unique tool to classify fossil fuel reserves as coal, oil and gas and to help us to undertake the right energy investments in the decades to come. UNFC is now operational and fully applicable to petroleum and solid minerals including uranium and thorium. Significant progress has been made to broaden application to renewable energy and to injection projects for the purpose of geological storage of CO<sub>2</sub>. The result is a universal resource management tool, suited to corporate decision-making when it comes to managing our resources and managing fossil fuels. We invite you to use it – and to help us to improve it.

And we invite you in general to use the convening power of the UNECE and help to provide an even stronger platform to discuss integrated and realistic energy scenarios and technologies.

The key challenge is to build a bridge between those who say “climate first” and those who say “energy first”. Both goals can and must be pursued at the same time and in an integrated way. We must find common climate and energy solutions using all available technologies.

The progress prior to Paris has been promising. The Intended Nationally-Determined Contributions has allowed countries to determine how they can best get on the pathway to support global climate and development goals. However, the commitments on the table are not enough to meet the long term goals. It has been a long and difficult journey to Paris but the journey ahead of us will be equally difficult and much longer.

If the fossil industry is to be viewed as an honest stakeholder in the climate debate, more action is needed. This is why the CSLF is so important. Together we can prove that fossil fuels are not only to be seen as part of the problem. They can become an important part of the solution.