



The origins of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) can be traced to the First Meeting of Ministers held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, on May 19-20, 2001. This 1st Ministerial Meeting was convened by the Minister of Petroleum of Iran and was attended by the governments of Algeria, Brunei, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Norway (Observer).

During this 1st Ministerial Meeting it was agreed that the aims of the Forum will be to foster the concept of mutuality of interests by favoring dialogue among producers, between producers and consumers and between governments and energy-related industries; to provide a platform for research and exchange of views, and to promote a stable and transparent energy market. These and other goals were outlined in a document prepared by the Expert Meeting and approved by the Ministers as a mandate of the GECF.

Between the years 2001 and 2003 the basic structure of the Forum consisted of a Ministerial Meeting as the highest decision making instance and an Expert Meeting as a technical advisor. The Ministerial Meetings were held annually: in 2002 in Algeria and in 2003 in Qatar. The 2nd Ministerial Meeting in Algiers emphasized the importance of dialogue and co-operation between producers and consumers to ensure the development of the gas industry, to meet the requirements of the world markets under the best possible conditions without any prejudice to the interest of any of the parties. Additionally the Expert Meeting was instructed to develop a database of gas projects and contracts terms and conditions and studies such as new gas utilizations and associated costs.

The 15 countries which met in Doha for the 3rd Ministerial Meeting in 2003 agreed to create a Liaison Office as a focal point for gathering of data and for the supervision of the GECF projects; this event was also an opportunity to follow up the study on new gas utilizations, stress the relevance to develop a world supply and demand gas model and evaluate gas pricing.

During the period 2004-2006 the Forum advanced steadily towards the goal of developing a more integrated discussion platform; the 4th Ministerial Meeting in Cairo, Egypt and the 5th Ministerial Meeting in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago created the Executive Bureau (which would transform later in to the Executive Board) and consolidated the Liaison Office.

In Cairo the Ministers highlighted the importance of fair prices for natural gas and the need of joint investments and research between Member countries as means to enhance cooperation, as well as the necessity to exchange information and data.

The 2005 meeting in Trinidad and Tobago was an occasion to agree on the general framework, the objectives and the structure of GECF (Ministerial Meeting, Executive Bureau, Experts Meeting and Liaison Office). Additionally the Ministers also decided to start developing the world supply and demand gas model. Ministerial Meeting was not held in 2006 but the Executive Bureau met in Qatar to continue working on the relevant subjects of the GECF.

During the years 2007 and 2008 the definite establishment of the GECF institutional base took place. In this regard, during the 6th Ministerial Meeting held in 2007 in Doha, Qatar, the achievements of the previous meetings were reviewed and it was recommended to develop a Statute for the Forum, to expand the Liaison Office so that it could become the Secretariat of the organization and to draft its internal regulations. For this purpose the Ministers created the High Level Committee, which held meetings in Qatar, Egypt, Iran, Venezuela and Russia throughout 2007 and 2008.

As a result of the work of the High Level Committee, the Ministers held on December 23, 2008 in Moscow, Russian Federation, one of their most important meetings, alongside with their 1st Meeting in Iran. The 7th Ministerial Meeting established the Gas Exporting Countries Forum as an International Governmental organization with the approval and signing of the Agreement on the functioning of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum and the Statute of the GECF, the documents that constitute the legal basis for the Forum, thus transforming it into a full-frame international organization. Still in the name of the organization the word "Forum" was kept to reflect its open and democratic nature. The GECF Agreement and Statute were signed by the Ministers of the current Member countries of the Forum: Algeria, Bolivia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela. Kazakhstan and Norway were accepted as Observer Members. The city of Doha, Qatar, was selected as the Headquarters of the Forum.

Furthermore, the Ministers highly praised the findings of the study on gas prices, which was called for at the 6th Ministerial Meeting, and discussed the latest developments and trends in the gas industry.

The recent years (2009-2011) have witnessed the progress of the Forum in the consolidation of its internal structure and the further discussion of the key aspects of the gas industry. During the 8th Ministerial Meeting in Qatar the budget for the organization for 2009 was approved and provisional authorities were appointed.

The signing of the GECF Host Country Agreement between the State of Qatar and the GECF, the inclusion of the Netherlands as an Observer Member, the appointment as per the Statute of the authorities for 2010 (President and Alternate President of the Ministerial Meeting: Algeria and Venezuela; Chairman and Alternate Chairman of the Executive Board: the Venezuelan and Algerian EB members, respectively), and the election and appointment of Mr. Leonid Bokhanovskiy as the Secretary General of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum were the main outcomes of the 9th Ministerial Meeting which was held in Doha, Qatar on December 2009.

The first Secretary General of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum Leonid Bokhanovskiy took office on January 1st, 2010 and set as his main duty to launch Secretariat activity in Doha, to develop a platform for GECF Member Countries to exchange information and to start in-house research activity by developing research and analytical capabilities. The registration of the GECF with the United Nations Organization and the meeting between the Secretary General of the UN and the Secretary General of the GECF was a truly important step to worldwide recognition of the GECF and opened doors to closer dialogue between two organizations.

Cooperation with international energy organizations is one of the priorities in our agenda. In this regard, the Secretariat has maintained working contacts with IEF and IEA as well as with major independent and governmental energy research institutes.

In 2010, the GECF held two Ministerial Meetings - in Oran, Algeria in April and in Doha in December. The 10th Ministerial Meeting was an opportunity to exchange views on the latest and mid-term developments in the natural gas market, assess their impact on the GECF countries and provide guidelines for the newly established Secretariat.

The ministers agreed that ensuring adequate and reliable supplies of gas at prices reflecting parity with oil prices is a challenge, considering that natural gas is an essential part of the fuel mix and plays an important role in satisfying the global need for an environmentally friendly energy source.

They also supported the increase of energy security by means of cross investments and technological exchange without unjustified barriers (especially those related to carbon taxation) between consumers and producers based on their growing mutual interdependence; therefore, the Ministers encouraged a model in which a gas consumer may participate in upstream and gas infrastructure development projects in a producer-exporter country, while a gas exporter may invest in mid and downstream networks and other gas facilities on a consumer side.

The acknowledgement of the relevant results of the report on the “International Gas Market Outlook to 2015” presented by Algeria, the assessment of the possibility of organizing a future Gas Summit of the GECF and the invitation to other gas exporting states that support the GECF Statute to become part of the organization as Members and Observer Members were part of the decisions of the 10th Ministerial Meeting.

One of the main conclusions of the 11th meeting of the GECF Ministers in Qatar was to hold the 1st Gas Summit of the Forum in 2011 in Doha and the creation of a High Level Ad Hoc Group to prepare this event.

Furthermore the 11th Ministerial Meeting agreed on the creation of a Steering Committee to study the Evolution of the gas market and the outcomes of the global gas model; followed up the status of the studies requested on important aspects of the gas industry. Additionally they overviewed the latest developments in the international gas market and their impact on the Member countries; discussed the most effective ways and means of enhancing cooperation among the members of the Forum as a prerequisite for developing a stable and transparent gas market; expressed concern about the current gas prices threatening investments in new fields and gas infrastructures; stressed that the gas prices should reflect the parity with oil considering the advantages of natural gas; made reference to the European Union’s plans to introduce new gas-market related legislation, and confirmed the authorities of the GECF for the following year (Egypt as President of the Ministerial Meeting and Trinidad and Tobago as Alternate President; the respective Trinidadian and Egyptian EB Members as Chairman and Alternate Chairman of the Executive Board).

During the 12th Ministerial Meeting held in June in Cairo, the Ministers emphasized the importance of dialogue between producers and consumers for the purpose of achieving stable gas market; the timeliness of a mechanism to achieve balanced and fair gas prices for both parties, and the necessary cooperation between producers and consumers to support and sustain the required investments to develop the gas reserves in the producing countries and exchange of know-how and technologies in that regard, at the same time taking into account that meeting local demand for natural gas in the producing countries is a priority. The Ministerial Meeting recognized the growing consolidation of the organization and its importance as a space for the exchange of views and coordination and, considering the short-term gas market developments and the challenges facing the natural gas industry, as well as the current economic and political world scenarios, underlined the role of the GECF as a factor of stability and cooperation among Member Countries of the Forum and consumer countries. The Ministers stressed the importance of long-term contracts and fair pricing for natural gas, at levels reflecting market fundamentals and parity with oil prices.

Preparations for holding of the First Gas Summit of Heads of State and Government of the GECF Member Countries stayed as one of the main topics of discussions for the 13th Ministerial Meeting held in Doha in November 2011. During this meeting the Ministers approved the Program of Work and Budget of the GECF for year 2012 and the appointment as per the Statute of the authorities for 2012 (President and Alternate President of the Ministerial Meeting: Equatorial Guinea and Russia; Chairman and Alternate Chairman of the Executive Board: the Russian and Equatorial Guinea EB members, respectively). The Ministers welcomed Oman as new Member of the GECF, highlighting the reinforced position of the Forum in the international energy community and re-elected HE Leonid Bokhanovskiy as the GECF Secretary General for the years 2012-2013.

The 1st GECF Gas Summit was held in Doha on December 15th 2011 and was unprecedented for the meeting of the organization in terms of level of participants and the scope of its concerns. The Summit was attended by the Sovereigns, Presidents, Heads of State of Algeria, Iran, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Bolivia, Russia, and Oman. Kazakhstan, Norway, the Netherlands and Venezuela were represented by the Ministers of Energy. The Summit participants stressed that the Gas Exporting Countries Forum is nowadays actively working towards elaborating best ways to meet the actual challenges of the regional and global gas markets, harmonizing in the long run the relations between gas producers and consumers, launching an adequate dialog between them.

One other main issue under discussion was definition of the place and role of natural gas in the construction of the low carbon economy, the pairing of gas with the development of alternative energy and the promotion of its environmental advantages. The outcome document of the Summit underscored the common desire of the GECF Member countries to constructively contribute towards development of transparent, efficient and competitive regional and global gas markets able to withstand current and future risks and challenges.

Between 2009 and 2012 the Executive Board has met 10 times with concrete and fruitful results related to the development of the internal structure of the Forum and the strengthening of its capabilities. Additionally, several meetings of Working Groups or Specialized Bodies created in accordance with the Statute have contributed in fulfilling the mandates of the Ministers in such areas as Long-Term Strategy, 5-Year Working Plan for the Secretariat, Data Reporting Mechanism, and Gas Summit.

This year, 2012 is marked by the Forum full-frame engagement in research and gas market modeling activity. Currently Secretariat is preparing forecasts for the market developments for the short term on regular basis and conducting several studies and research projects. Completion of the first phase of the GECF Global Gas Model development is a significant

contribution to in-house research activity and long term scenario development. Also, a lot of effort is made to establish data exchange between the GECF Member countries to improve the quality of data available.

The 2nd Gas Summit of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum convened in Moscow, the Russian Federation on July 1st, 2013. Hosted by HE Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, the Summit was attended by Algeria, Bolivia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Libya, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela as well as Iraq, the Netherlands, and Norway as Observers and IEA, IEF and OPEC as guest international organizations.

The Summit reinforced the commitment of the GECF to its mission and objectives. The outcome of the Summit is the 'Moscow Declaration', in which Member countries unanimously affirmed to strengthen GECF, enhance global scale coordination to protect the interest of GECF, preserve principles of international trade as well as uphold the fundamental role of long-term gas contracts and continue to support gas pricing based on oil/oil products indexation.

The Heads of State and Government also committed to foster the consistent growth of natural gas usage, promote the expansion of natural gas utilization in different sectors, and encourage GECF dialogue with all market players and stakeholders, to promote gas as a driver for environmentally friendly economic growth and social development.

In November 2013, the 15th Ministerial Meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) was convened in Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Petroleum, HE Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, President of the Ministerial Meeting, and HE Mohammed Bin Saleh Al-Sada, Minister of Energy and Industry of Qatar, as Alternate President.

The Meeting was attended by representatives of Algeria, Bolivia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Libya, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela, as well as Iraq, the Netherlands and Norway as Observers.

In his opening remarks the President of the Ministerial Meeting gave an overview of developments in the gas markets and outlined the challenges facing the GECF and its Member countries.

The Ministers appointed HE S.M. Hossein Adeli, Iranian national, as the Secretary General of the Forum for a period of two years and expressed their appreciation to HE Leonid Bokhanovskiy for his service and achievements during his tenure.

In 2014, HE S.M. Hossein Adeli, commenced his tenure as the second Secretary General of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum for a tenure of two years in accordance with the GECF Statute.

Dr. Adeli is currently embarking on a number of new initiatives and activities such the Monthly GECF Lecture Series and other similar activities to transform the GECF to a credible international platform for gas and to foster dialogue with key stakeholders in the global gas market.