

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Eighty-seventh Meeting
Geneva, 18 November 2016

EXCOM/CONCLU/87

CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS

FORMAL SEGMENT

Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda

1. The provisional draft agenda for the 87th meeting was adopted.

Item 2 – Chair’s conclusions from the last meeting

2. The conclusions from the 86th meeting of EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/86) were adopted.

Item 3 - Bureau matters: Vice-Chair

3. The Chair informed EXCOM that the delegation of Switzerland will resume its role as the Bureau Vice-Chair of the Commission for the remainder of its current term to the end of April 2017 and welcomed Switzerland back to the Bureau.
4. The representatives of the Russian Federation and the European Union and its member States expressed their appreciation for Switzerland’s continued Vice-Chairmanship.

Item 4 - Matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy

5. On behalf of the Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (CSE), Ms. Stephanie Held from the Sustainable Energy Division made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of CSE over the past year and its plans for the future. She sought EXCOM approval for the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Gas for 2014–2017 as contained in document ECE/ENERGY/2016/1. Further, she requested that the conclusions of the meeting reflect an invitation to member States for the Energy Ministerial to be organized in Astana in June 2017.

6. The representative of Kazakhstan thanked UNECE and the other international organizations involved in the preparation of the 8th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (Astana, June 2017). He also thanked Azerbaijan for assistance in developing the draft concept note and outcome document of the Energy Ministerial, which will precede the Forum. He informed that the title of the Ministerial meeting was “Meeting the Challenge of Sustainable Energy” and its goal was to raise the level of discussions and policy actions relevant to the implementation of the energy-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It would be organized in collaboration with international organizations such as the UN Sustainable Energy 4 All (SE4All), the International Energy Charter etc. The outcome document would be a ministerial declaration with commitments by countries to actions that can accelerate the transition to an affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy system. There was also a proposal to launch a green energy technology centre in Kazakhstan, in line with UNFCCC’s emphasis on the access of developing countries to technologies to support the transition to a low carbon economy.

7. The representative of the Russian Federation said that the focus of CSE should be on energy work as defined in the Review of the 2005 Reform of ECE. Regarding the draft outcome document of the Energy Ministerial, he inquired as to the procedure of consultation for its formulation. He welcomed the recent adoption by CSE of the bridging document linking the Russian Oil and Gas Classification to UNFC, and expressed interest in concluding a similar document for mineral resources. He expressed approval for the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Gas.

8. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated CSE’s work, making special note of recent positive developments related to UNFC. He sought more details on the

Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, and on the Groups of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Production from Fossil Fuels and Gas. Regarding the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Gas, he noted that the 2014–2015 Work Plan had been extended until 2016, and then extended again in April 2016 until 2017. He asked if the same activities and deliverables were covered by this extension, and if there was a particular reason for this request for additional time.

9. The representative of Switzerland requested clarification of the role to be played by the proposed green energy technology centre, and hoped that the centre would not duplicate work carried out under SPECA.

10. The representative of Belarus asked how SE4All would contribute to the Energy Ministerial.

11. Regarding the draft outcome document, the Executive Secretary explained that the draft document was available on the ECE website and member States had been asked for input via e-mail. The other Regional Commissions followed this practice as well. He informed that a partnership agreement would be developed between all Regional Commissions and SE4All on cooperation towards the Ministerial. Regarding the green energy technology centre, he recalled that this was an initiative of Kazakhstan and explained that ECE's engagement had so far been to provide ideas during the design phase. Any formal interaction between the proposed centre and the UN would have to be endorsed by member States. Regarding the work on gas, he explained that the Group of Experts on Gas has been very active through its four task forces but the work has not yet advanced to the point of being ready for presentation to and endorsement by the Committee. However, strong progress is being made. He also noted that delegates could follow progress on various CSE activities via the quarterly activity report available online.

12. Regarding the green energy technology centre, the representative of Kazakhstan said this would serve as a research and expertise base for the modernization of existing energy production and the promotion of alternative sources of energy in the subregion, which was still mostly reliant on traditional energy sources. It would also provide relevant information to potential investors into the region. She noted that the process would be nationally owned but developed in consultation with relevant UN agencies and other international organizations in order to avoid duplication of work.

13. Regarding the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Production from Fossil Fuels, the Executive Secretary explained that the Group had progressed on many best practices and policy recommendations. The work on carbon capture and storage (CCS) was also being continued, focusing on issues related to policy parity in order to promote CCS. Regarding the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, he explained that two co-Chairs had been elected but that a lack of resources prevented even the convening of a meeting. Two countries had expressed interest in financing the work and the secretariat hoped to complete the relevant arrangements soon. He underlined that additional contributions would support further progress on this important work.

14. Ms. Held added that the secretariat had already received comments on the draft ministerial declaration and that a version with comments incorporated would be circulated on 9 January 2017 in advance of the next CSE session on 19 January.

15. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the representative of the Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy for the clear and comprehensive report. The EXCOM appreciates being informed about the activities and achievements of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and being kept aware of future directions of its work. EXCOM approves the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Gas for 2014-2017, as contained in document ECE/ENERGY/2016/1.

Item 5 - Matters relating to the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships

16. The Chair recalled that at its last session, the Chair of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships had requested EXCOM to approve the establishment of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and its terms of reference to replace the Team of Specialists on Public-Private Partnerships (TOS-PPP) as of its first session to be held in 2017. The decision had been postponed to the 87th meeting of EXCOM at the request of member States. The Chair noted that the annex of ECE/CECI/2016/6 outlined the Committee's rationale for this request, and said this change would be resource-neutral.

17. The representative of the European Union and its member States expressed approval for the establishment of the Working Party on PPPs. He noted that the Bureau of the TOS-PPP had been elected recently and recommended that this Bureau composition be maintained under the new Working Party to avoid delaying work.

18. The representative of the Russian Federation also expressed approval for the establishment of the Working Party and supported the recommendation of the European Union and its member States regarding the composition of the Bureau.

19. The Executive Secretary clarified that, as per the Rules of Procedure, each ECE subsidiary body must elect its own bureau and noted that a recommendation regarding the Bureau composition could be included in the Chair's Conclusion of the EXCOM meeting.

20. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the establishment of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships and its terms of reference, as contained in document ECE/CECI/2016/6, Annex, to replace the Team of Specialists on Public-Private Partnerships as of its first session to be held in 2017. To ensure continuity, EXCOM recommends to the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships to consider electing as its Bureau the members of the Bureau of the Team of Specialists on Public-Private Partnerships that were elected in October 2016.

INFORMAL SEGMENT

Item 6 – Preparation for the seventieth anniversary of the Inland Transport Committee

21. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that an informal consultation had been held on 20 October regarding the preparations for the anniversary session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) to take place in February 2017, including the Ministerial Meeting and its planned resolution. The draft resolution has been developed in close consultation with and under the guidance of the ITC Bureau, as well as with the input of the Working Party and Administrative Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs. The first comments to the draft resolution had been received from Governments by 15 November. The revised draft was circulated again by 21 November. The ITC Bureau meeting would be on 29-30 November and would discuss the preparations for the session and the draft resolution. It was hoped that the resolution would be endorsed and signed by the participating Governments in the ministerial meeting during the ITC session, then subsequently endorsed by ITC and tabled for consideration at the Commission session. He hoped member States would participate at high level.

22. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed interest in further regular briefings on the preparations for the ITC session. He said that work on the ministerial resolution should remain under the purview of the ITC Bureau.

23. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on the preparations for the 70th anniversary session of the Inland Transport Committee, and looks forward to further regular briefings on this matter.

Item 7 – Preparations for the Commission session

24. The Executive Secretary introduced the annotated provisional agenda for the 67th session of ECE, as detailed in informal document 2016/57. He noted that the Secretary-General had been invited to deliver a keynote address and that the Chair of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) would brief the session on the key outcomes of the 2017 RFSD that would precede the Commission session. He hoped for high-level attendance (at the level of Minister of Foreign Affairs) from member States. He noted that various items could be proposed for decision by the Commission, including:

- i. Renaming ECE to allow for the use of the acronym UNECE;
- ii. Decisions arising from Inland Transport Committee (incl. the ministerial declaration currently under preparation; and possible other decisions arising from ITC);
- iii. Geospatial Information Management;
- iv. Regional Forum for Sustainable Development

Further, he noted that member States may wish to draft a declaration on the ECE's 70th anniversary, highlighting areas of particular interest for future work. The Executive Secretary said that the secretariat would be pleased to convene informal consultations for interested delegates to brainstorm on the above matters.

25. The Chair expressed her readiness to coordinate discussions on a declaration, should member States wish to pursue the idea, which, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNECE, she deemed a very timely proposal.

26. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed interest in the informal consultations. He supported the proposed general theme of the Commission session. He thought the agenda should address harmonizing integration processes in the region, as discussed at the Minsk Conference of October 2016. On the renaming of ECE, he said he would like more details, taking into account the explanations received from the Office of Legal Affairs earlier in the year.

27. The representative of the European Union and its member States said the proposed agenda should be further refined through informal consultation. Regarding item 3b of the provisional agenda, he said it might be premature to address mobilizing resources in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, bearing in mind the time constraints of the high-level segment.

28. The representative of Belarus stated that the results of the Minsk Conference could be more clearly reflected in the agenda. He had doubts about the inclusion of the topic of cross-sectoral action in the high-level thematic discussions. He wondered if resource mobilization was an appropriate topic for the high-level segment given that it would already have been discussed at the RFSD that would precede the session.

29. The representative of the United States said that it would be useful for the session to include concrete examples of how ECE was realigning its work to help countries achieve the SDGs. He said UN organizations should be reprioritizing existing resources rather than calling for new ones. If there was to be a discussion of resource mobilization, ECE should demonstrate that it was doing its best to align with the SDGs.

30. Regarding the renaming of ECE, the Executive Secretary recalled that the Office of Legal Affairs had confirmed that this would not bring about any resource implications or changes in the organization's legal status. On resource mobilization, he noted that various aspects of ECE's work were relevant to help member States facilitate investment into achieving the SDGs, including UNFC, PPPs and impact investments for innovation. On aligning ECE's work with the SDGs, he noted that this was already being done and that a mapping exercise had been undertaken to improve even further. In response to the delegate of Belarus, the Executive Secretary considered cross-sectoral action to be important in terms of achieving the SDGs and hoped discussions at the session would help to

overcome silos and create synergies between sectoral work streams. Regarding resource mobilization, he noted that there would be no overlap with the RFSD: It has been proposed to include this topic in the Commission's high-level segment rather than in the RFSD.

31. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on the preparations for the 70th anniversary of the Commission and looks forward to further regular briefings on this matter. EXCOM requests the secretariat to convene informal consultations with interested delegations on the provisional agenda of the 67th session of the Commission and encourages member States to actively engage in the discussions.

Item 8 - Mapping of inter-sectoral and inter-divisional activities in ECE

32. The Executive Secretary introduced the mapping of inter-sectoral and inter-divisional activities in ECE as contained in informal document 2016/58, recalling that it had been elaborated following the recommendation of a recent OIOS evaluation of ECE.

33. The representative of the Russian Federation noted the increase in inter-sectoral and inter-divisional activities and in interactions with the other Regional Commissions. He said these could lead to better results towards SDG implementation, giving the example of SPECA. He noted that ECE should not establish any additional coordinating structures with budgetary implications.

34. The representative of the European Union and its member States said that a second step in this exercise, relating to identifying changes and opportunities in enhancing cross-sectoral work, was necessary. He would welcome a follow-up document on concrete measures to improve ECE's inter-sectoral and inter-divisional activities with due regard to the needs for the implementation of the Agenda 2030.

35. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the mapping of inter-sectoral and inter-divisional activities in UNECE, undertaken further to a recommendation by the Office of Internal Oversight, and appreciates the breadth of such collaboration. EXCOM requests the secretariat to prepare a follow-up document to further explore opportunities to deepen such inter-sectoral and inter-divisional activities.

Item 9 - Important new developments: briefing by the Executive Secretary

36. The Executive Secretary summarized the current state of preparations for the 2017 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, as detailed in the discussion paper circulated to EXCOM prior to the meeting. He noted that extra-budgetary resources would be needed for the participation of experts from Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. He also recalled that it had been agreed during the informal consultations to prepare a draft decision for adoption by the Commission, outlining in general the functions and modalities of the RFSD for the region up to 2019. The secretariat would prepare a first draft of this decision for EXCOM's consideration at its next meeting.

37. The representative of the Russian Federation said that the reviews at the 2017 RFSD should be a voluntary, inter-country process. Relevant UN agencies could be involved provided they observed the appropriate division of labor. He supported the aligning of the RFSD's contents with the programme of work of the High-level Political Forum.

38. The representative of Belarus supported the proposed format. He informed EXCOM that Belarus would like to carry out a national voluntary review and was interested in roundtables for exchange of national experience.

39. Regarding the RFSD, the Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on the informal consultations on the RFSD for the ECE region held on 2 November 2016. EXCOM requests the secretariat to prepare the 2017 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held

on 25 April 2017, in line with the outcomes of the informal consultations. EXCOM further requests the secretariat to prepare a draft decision, for consideration at its next meeting and for onward transmission to the Commission, on the functions and modalities of the Regional Forum in 2018 and 2019, which should be aligned with the respective themes and sets of Sustainable Development Goals under in-depth review in the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

40. Regarding the Secretary-General's report on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Executive Secretary informed of his discussions at UN Headquarters with the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The Chair had indicated that the resource requirements identified by UNECE, which had been included in the first Secretary-General's report but not reflected in the second report, would be referenced in the ACABQ report that was to be submitted to the Fifth Committee. Supplementary information had been furnished to the ACABQ upon their request.

41. The representative of the Russian Federation said that ECE needed additional resources to support the implementation of the SDGs, especially given the fact that many states and subregions in the ECE region require technical assistance.

42. Regarding the Secretary-General's report on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update and encourages all delegations to engage with their counterparts in New York who cover the Fifth Committee to represent the interests of the ECE region.

43. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about cooperation with other entities:

- i. e-Trade for All Declaration (Joint declaration by ECE, UNCTAD, WTO, ITC, ITU and other agencies working on electronic trade;
- ii. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Coal Association;
- iii. MoU with the African Mineral Development Centre;
- iv. MoU with the Oil and Gas Institute - National Research Institute of Poland;
- v. Cooperation agreement with the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States;
- vi. MoUs with the Governments of Albania, Estonia and the United Kingdom on the establishment of Centres for the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing;
- vii. MoU with the Government of Kazakhstan on an International Water Centre.

44. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on upcoming Memoranda of Understanding and looks forward to future updates on the topic.

45. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following recent missions and meetings:

- i. 19-23 September, New York: General Assembly
- ii. 28-29 September, Geneva: 25th session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy
- iii. 17-20 October, Quito: HABITAT III
- iv. 18-20 October, Geneva: 74th session of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry
- v. 18-21 October, Baku: Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development
- vi. 26-27 October, Minsk: UNECE Conference "Laying the foundation in the UNECE region for economic integration and sustainable development towards 2030"
- vii. 14-16 November, Geneva: 4th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health
- viii. 15-17 November, Marrakech: COP22

46. Regarding the Minsk Conference, the Executive Secretary thanked Belarus for hosting, the Russian Federation for the financial support, and all member States who participated. He said the discussions had demonstrated the need to promote dialogue on questions of harmonization and

interaction among organizations. While links between organizations are a matter of long-term planning, tangible issues such as transport, green economy, energy etc. can already be discussed at expert level. ECE would be a suitable forum for these discussions in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

47. The representative of Belarus appreciated the significant contribution of the UNECE secretariat in the organization of the conference. He also thanked the Russian Federation for its financial contribution. He welcomed wide participation in the conference of the UNECE member States, integration structures and international organizations. He underlined that the outcome of the Minsk Conference clearly pointed to the need to build on the harmonization of policy dialogue, develop common approaches to cooperation in such areas as trade, transport, logistics, customs, agriculture, the green economy, energy etc. to address the systemic problems of economic development. He said it was necessary to continue the dialogue launched in Minsk and expressed the view that the upcoming 67th session of the Commission will give new impetus to the work of the UNECE on economic integration, including in the context of sustainable development by 2030.

48. The representative of the Russian Federation said the Minsk Conference had confirmed the importance of examining questions of integration using ECE as a forum. The Russian representative said that the Belarusian side initiative focused on establishing in ECE a format aimed at elaborating recommendations on deepening cooperation between the organizations of integration was worthy of special attention of the Commission. He hoped for continuation of the dialogue started in Minsk on these questions, in order to pre-empt the formation of new dividing lines in trade, harmonize integration processes and foster the formation of a common economic space in the region. He underlined that harmonization of integration processes in the ECE region should be addressed by the Commission.

49. The representative of the European Union and its member States recalled that the Minsk Conference was one of many contributions that would feed into the Commission session, and said its incorporation into the session should be examined during the informal consultations.

50. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following upcoming events:
- i. 22-23 November, Ganja: 2016 SPECA Economic Forum and 11th session of the SPECA Governing Council
 - ii. 26-27 November, Ashgabat: Global Sustainable Transport Conference
 - iii. 28-29 November, Ljubljana: 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention
 - iv. 28-29 November, Budapest: Budapest Water Summit
 - v. 5-6 December, Vienna: Meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and Regional UNDG
 - vi. 15-16 December, Geneva: 36th session of the Executive Body of the Air Convention

51. Regarding the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention, the representative of Slovenia said there would be a dedicated seminar on fostering implementation of the 2030 Agenda for industrial accident prevention, preparedness and response, to be organized in cooperation with the OECD Working Group on Chemical Accidents. The Parties to the Convention will also discuss amendments, including one that will allow accession to the Convention by all UN Member States.

Item 10 – Other business

52. The representative of Switzerland thanked member States for their endorsement of Switzerland continuing as Vice-Chair of the Commission. He invited all delegates to an event co-hosted on 9 December by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland, titled “How can evaluation help international organizations grow wiser?”

53. The Chair informed that the next EXCOM meeting would be held on 16 December 2016 at 3 pm, to be followed by an end-of-year reception.
