

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Ninety-fourth Meeting
Geneva, 6 November 2017

EXCOM/CONCLU/94

CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS

FORMAL SEGMENT

Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda

1. The provisional draft agenda for the 94th meeting was adopted.

Item 2 – Chair’s conclusions from the last meeting

2. The conclusions from the 93rd meeting of EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/93) were adopted.

Item 3 – Matters relating to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards:

a) Meeting with the Chair of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

3. The Chair of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS), Mr. Tudor Ulianovschi, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of SCTCS over the past year and its plans for the future, including on plans to further align work with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4. The representative of the Russian Federation attached great importance to trade facilitation at both the national level and within the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as in the context of SDG implementation. He welcomed the studies and recommendations developed by SCTCS which simplify administrative rules and procedures, and improve the effectiveness of trade and economic cooperation in the region. He also welcomed the technical assistance projects that aims to simplify regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the CIS countries. Regarding the work on gender-responsive standards carried out by Working Party Regulatory Cooperation & Standardization Policies (WP.6), he noted that this should be based on principles of equality and take into account the specific needs of women and men. Regarding the proposal for renaming WP.6 as “Standards and Regulations for Sustainable Development”, he said this would not precisely reflect the nature of the work and suggested to consider alternatives or to keep the current name.

5. The representative of Belarus stated that he highly valued the technical assistance provided by SCTCS, in particular on analysing information infrastructure in Belarus to implement a paperless system. He agreed with the representative of the Russian Federation that SCTCS improves the effectiveness of trade and economic cooperation in the region and underscored the relevance of its programme of work.

6. The representative of the European Union and its member States thanked SCTCS for implementing its programme of work.

7. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards for the clear and comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the activities and achievements of the Steering Committee and being kept aware of future directions of its work, in particular on efforts to further align its activities to the SDGs.

INFORMAL SEGMENT

Item 4 - Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (A/RES/71/280).

8. The Executive Secretary recalled that General Assembly resolution 71/280 requests the UN regional commissions, in collaboration with other relevant entities of the UN system, particularly the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to examine regional and sub-regional aspects of

international migration and to provide inputs, in accordance with their respective mandates, to the preparatory process of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. The discussion of the agenda item was held pursuant to this request.

9. The secretariat made a presentation about the work of UNECE on migration statistics, specifically on methodological work including the development of guidelines and practical recommendations, capacity development and the UNECE Clearing House on Migration Statistics, which collects official migration statistics from 12 countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia with the aim of facilitating data sharing among countries.

10. The representatives of Belarus, the Russian Federation, Switzerland and the European Union and its member States made interventions.

11. The Chair concluded that EXCOM decides to submit the Chair's summary of the regional discussions held under agenda item "modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration" to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration as input to the global process. (The Chair's summary of the agenda item is contained in Annex I).

Item 5 - Important new developments: briefing by the Executive Secretary

12. Under "cooperation with other organizations", the Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about ongoing work on a Memorandum of Understanding with Sustainable Energy for All. The key areas of collaboration will be the International Fora on Energy for Sustainable Development, and UNECE's work on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

13. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following recent meetings:

- i. 26-28 September, Geneva: 26th Session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy;
- ii. 9-13 October, Warsaw: Las2017 - joint session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission;
- iii. 12-13 October, Prague: European Urban Forum;
- iv. 18-20 October, Venice: Meeting of the Regional UN System
- v. 23 October, New York: Second Committee Dialogue with Regional Commissions
- vi. 30-31 October: First meeting of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings.

14. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following upcoming events:

- i. 7-9 November, New York: Chief Executive Board (CEB)
- ii. 8-10 November, Geneva: 78th session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management
- iii. 14-17 November, Geneva: 23rd session of the Committee on Environmental Policy.

Item 6 – Extrabudgetary projects (for approval)

15. The Chair informed EXCOM that informal document 2017/59 erroneously listed costs in euros rather than US dollars on the first page.

16. Regarding the extrabudgetary project contained in informal document 2017/60 Rev.1 on the organization of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in 2018 and 2019, the representative of Switzerland said his country would be contributing financially to both meetings and also cover the costs related to the use of conference facilities and the receptions. He encouraged other countries to also make contributions.

17. Regarding the same topic, the representative of the Russian Federation expressed regret that the inclusive nature of regional SDG overviews depended on extrabudgetary financing. He inquired as to the selection criteria for speakers whose participation would be financed by the project, as well as the

tasks allotted to the consultant who will provide substantial input into the event. He also asked if the 2018 Forum would have interpretation in Russian.

18. The secretariat confirmed that Russian interpretation would be provided. Regarding the speakers and consultant, the secretariat informed EXCOM that informal consultations with interested delegations would be held soon to develop the agenda of the event, including the themes for the roundtables, format and structure. She said the speaker selection and consultant's tasks could only be determined after the agenda was developed.

19. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the extrabudgetary projects contained in informal documents 2017/59 through 2017/60 Rev.1.

Item 7 – Other business

20. The representative of the European Union and its member States requested an update on the recruitment of a new director for the Sustainable Transport division.

21. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that the selection process had been carried out in full compliance with relevant UN rules and regulations, and that Mr. Yuwei Li, current Chief of the Transport Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), would take up the post in February 2018.

22. The representative of Germany said this post was of utmost interest to her country due to the importance of the transport work carried out at UNECE. She expressed concern about a recent proposal made in ESCAP to establish an International Road Organization (IRO) and possible duplication of the work done at the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division.

23. The representatives of Italy, France and Switzerland supported the points made by the representative of Germany.

24. The representative of the United States of America supported the statement of the representative of Germany, and asked the secretariat to provide an update about the developments regarding the IRO. He recalled that many countries were members of both ESCAP and UNECE.

25. The representative of the Russian Federation said he was satisfied by the explanations provided by the Executive Secretary.

26. The Executive Secretary stated that she did not consider the proposal for an IRO useful and assured EXCOM that the Sustainable Transport Division would carry out its work as mandated by member States. She further explained that the latest endeavours to establish a double reporting line from ITC to ECOSOC were not a good idea.

27. The representative of Belarus informed EXCOM of an upcoming conference in Minsk entitled "Building partnerships in support of national efforts in the sphere of sustainable development" (21–22 February 2018). The focus would be on national coordinators for sustainable development and there would be guests from various UN organizations, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development etc. The expected outcome was the creation of a network of national coordinators on two main topics: national strategies to combat inequalities and social stratification and the gender factor of sustainable development. He said further details of the programme would soon be provided and hoped EXCOM would decide to hold the event under UNECE's patronage after having received this information. He underlined that the event would not have any resource implications for UNECE.

28. The representative of the European Union and its member States said he was not ready to support the Belarussian proposal and proposed that the issue be discussed during the upcoming informal consultations on the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (RFSD).

29. The representative of the Russian Federation saw value in the Belarussian initiative and said he would be ready to discuss it in the context of the upcoming informal consultations on the RFSD.

30. The Chair requested the secretariat to include the issue on the agenda of the upcoming informal discussions on the RFSD.

31. The Chair informed EXCOM that the next meeting would be held on 11 December 2017.

Annex I - Chair's summary of the discussions under Item 4

Chair's Summary

*Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration:
UNECE input to the stocktaking conference for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*

Introduction

1. In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants¹, Member States committed to negotiating and adopting a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration that would set out a range of principles, commitments and understandings regarding international migration in all its dimensions. General Assembly resolution 71/280, adopted on 6 April 2017, “requests the regional economic commissions and invites their subregional offices, in collaboration with other relevant entities of the United Nations system, particularly the International Organization for Migration, to organize discussions among States Members of the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders to examine regional and subregional aspects of international migration and to provide inputs, in accordance with their respective mandates, to the preparatory process of the global compact”².

2. At its 94th meeting, convened on 6 November 2017, the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) held a regional discussion to provide input to the global process. In view of UNECE's limited mandate on migration issues, and given the importance of better data and statistics for evidence-based migration policies, EXCOM decided to focus its discussion on the work of UNECE on migration statistics, in particular on how to measure migration, key measurement issues in the region, and capacity building activities in support of its member States. Representatives from the International Organization for Migration were in attendance.

3. This Chair's summary, with the annexed background document that was provided to EXCOM for information, constitute UNECE input into the intergovernmental stocktaking conference for the global compact taking place in Mexico in December 2017.

Key outcomes of the discussion

4. EXCOM recognised that important challenges exist in collecting data and producing statistics on many aspects of migration, including the measurement of change in the socio-economic conditions of migrants, circular migration, labour mobility, remittances, and migration issues related to asylum seekers and refugees. Better use of administrative sources for statistical purposes and integration of data from different sources have been identified as main avenues for tackling these challenges.

5. EXCOM noted that the joint development of methodological guidelines, knowledge sharing, peer learning, and capacity building provide successful approaches to address these challenges and to enable member States to better measure migration. In this regard, EXCOM

¹ Resolution A/RES/71/1, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2016

² A/Res/71/280, para 22a.

welcomed the efficient work and concrete results in migration statistics achieved by the UNECE Statistics subprogramme guided by the Conference of European Statisticians and its related working group. Furthermore, EXCOM expressed appreciation for the platform provided by UNECE for country experts to exchange experience, learn from each other and advance the implementation of the methodological guidance developed by UNECE. This has been achieved in close collaboration with the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) by holding jointly organised sessions and in cooperation with other relevant organisations like European Free Trade Association (EFTA), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Bank. Member States noted that the outcomes of UNECE statistical work on migration have been of interest and use to the global statistical community and its results have reached out to countries from outside the UNECE region. Over the last several years, a number of countries from outside the UNECE region have contributed to these activities.

6. EXCOM recognised that further measurement challenges are related to the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals, which include ten targets on migration. It noted that the United Nations Statistical Commission recommends that all Sustainable Development Goal indicators be disaggregated by migratory status where relevant, and target 17.18 calls to enhance capacity-building support for achieving this.

7. Member States concurred that in certain cases, methodological guidance alone is not sufficient for better measurement of migration and stressed the importance of related capacity-building activities. The Conference of European Statisticians holds capacity-building workshops, focusing in particular on the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucuses and Central Asia, to support these countries in improving their migration statistics. Additionally, regular workshops have been organised to promote the use of the methodological guidance in these countries and facilitate the communication between the producers and users of migration data at national level. The work has been done with the support of extrabudgetary funds and countries' donations.

8. EXCOM affirmed that the Statistics subprogramme and the Conference of European Statisticians should continue its work on developing methodologies, recommendations and guidance, providing the platform for exchanging experience in migration statistics and addressing the measurement challenges arising from the 2030 Agenda. UNECE should carry out this work under the overall guidance of the Conference of European Statisticians and in close cooperation with partner organizations such as Eurostat, EFTA, ILO, IOM, UNFPA, UNDESA and World Bank.

9. EXCOM recognised the importance of capacity development and noted that UNECE activities have led to improved capacity for producing statistics in national statistical offices and better cooperation among the national agencies involved in collecting migration data. Member States observed that the specific methodological guidance and tools for data collection, as well as the platform for data exchange (UNECE Clearing House on Migration Statistics) provided great value added to the National Statistical Offices in the UNECE region. EXCOM welcomed the voluntary contributions from member States and the support from donor agencies, which is necessary for these activities. The Statistics subprogramme should continue to mobilise resources and carry out capacity-building activities in migration statistics that have proven benefits for many countries in the region.

Interventions made by delegations

10. The representative of Belarus noted the importance of reliable and objective migration data in decision-making. He recalled that, during the thematic consultations on the global compact, member States, international organizations, civil society and the private sector had all noted the need to further strengthen the migration statistics component in the future agreement.. He said the contributions of the regional commissions to the global compact were important and supported the proposed input on UNECE's work on migration statistics. He noted positively the work of UNECE's Statistical Division and supported regular interaction between IOM, UNECE and other international partners in the context of the global compact. He hoped UNECE would participate in the January 2018 International Forum on Migration Statistics organized by IOM, UNDESA and OECD. Belarus will take all necessary steps in support of the above activities.

11. The representative of the Russian Federation said migration was an important issue to consider in States' development, and carried significance for addressing slowing population growth and the ageing of populations. The Russian Federation advocated for a comprehensive approach to migration, taking into account its political, socioeconomic, demographic and human rights aspects. Reliable statistical data was key for effective migration policies. He noted that methodological documents did not always differentiate between migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees, and that this distorted the issue. Statistical data should be based on internationally agreed and comparable terminology. To ensure the verifiability of data in an international exchange, only data from official national statistics should be used. In this context, member States should refer to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics endorsed by General Assembly Resolution 68/261. Finally, in efforts to increase the effectiveness of monitoring national migration flows, he called for more attention to be paid to countries who need assistance in developing new methods of statistical data monitoring. This could include the deployment of new information technologies such as big data, the use of administrative data by statistical agencies and the integration of the broadest range of information sources into the work of national statistical services.

12. The representative of Switzerland noted that migration is a complex, continually evolving and potentially sensitive topic with implications for a wide range of policy areas. The challenge for any National Statistical Institute (NSI) is to statistically measure the increasingly diversified and newly emerging types of migration – from long-term and permanent to more temporary and fluid. – He noted that comparability of data was occasionally limited, citing as an example the recognition rate in the field of asylum according to different types of asylum statuses applicable in different countries. Further, counting mechanisms could differ, as certain countries count children or babies born to people in the asylum process as claimants whereas others don't. Repeated applications were also treated differently in different countries. On aggregation of data, he cited the example of Eurostat, which tries to aggregate data to make it comparable. However, as a result the data published by Eurostat sometimes differs from the data published by national authorities. To address these challenges, he said that Switzerland tries to better use the potential of existing data sources. Introduced in 2010, the new integrated census system combines the use of administrative registers and sample surveys and enables the production of annual statistics. A nationwide common identifier (PIN) allows for linking data from different sources at the individual record level. Various data sources have been combined into reliable and integrated information on migration that cover the two pillars of international migration statistics:

migrant stocks and migratory flows to and from the country, as well as information on the socio-economic characteristics of migrants and their descendants, and their adjustment in the host society. Another feature of a more extensive use of existing data sources was the construction of a longitudinal database which, in addition to the registers and surveys of the census system, utilizes other register data (such as the Social Security Register). Longitudinal statistical indicators and key data about migrant cohorts would complement cross-sectional measurements and would thus provide further insights into migration stocks and flows. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) would soon start producing migration-relevant data from yet another administrative data source: the Register of Swiss Abroad. The incorporation of this database into the integrated system of registers would provide more detailed information about the international mobility of a migrant group that thus far has eluded sufficient statistical measurement. He also noted that FSO was continuing its efforts at inter-agency cooperation at the national level by harmonizing definitions, concepts and the statistical output with the State Secretariat for Migration, one of the main producers of administrative migration data.

13. The representative of Switzerland acknowledged that international organisations have carried out substantial work on capacity building for better measurement of migration and are pursuing efforts towards improving the availability, harmonisation and international comparability of migration flow and stock data, including key socioeconomic characteristics of migrants. Nonetheless, significant weaknesses and gaps remained in the available data. Switzerland supported any future coordinated activities in capacity building and was willing to contribute the knowledge acquired by FSO over the last decades in producing migration data based on administrative registers. Switzerland strongly recommended a closer cooperation between international organisations to make better use of existing complementary expertise, collection instruments and technical assistance. The representative of Switzerland requested that the UNECE input into the global process contain a reference to the 2017 report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration (A/71/728), specifically to its Recommendation 12 on improving data for fact-based migration policies and accountability.

14. The representative the European Union (EU) and its member States noted that the EU was fully engaged in the process of preparation of the Global Compact on Migration and had presented its views in its six thematic meetings in New York, Vienna and Geneva. In particular he touched on two topics: the work of the recently created Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography (KCMD) and the outcomes of the September 2017 Conference of the Director Generals of the National Statistical Institutes (DGINS). KCMD, launched in 2016, is a European Commission initiative that aims to be the point of reference to support the work of Commission services and EU Member States on migration and related issues. He said that one of the main challenges when addressing migration was to capitalise on the wealth of existing knowledge at all levels – local, national, European and global – that was not always easily accessible. Another challenge was to better anticipate future migration flows and population trends and their impact. Therefore, enhancing the knowledge base was necessary. He noted that in December 2016, the KCMD together with other partners and under the auspices of IOM had organized the Global Conference “Improving Data on International Migration”, with a focus on practical steps that could be taken to address data gaps, build data capacities and highlight innovative practices globally. Moving onto the DGINS conference, he noted that this was an annual initiative held to discuss topics related to the statistical programme and methods and processes for the production of community

statistics. The 2017 edition had featured a session called “Population Movement and Integration Issues – Migration Statistics” that had addressed the following concepts:

- i. Migration is a relevant, complex and continually evolving topic, with implications for a wide range of policy areas;
- ii. The needs for statistics relate not just to the origin, destination and demographic characteristics of migrants, but also to their education, health, employment and social integration;
- iii. In the production of statistics on population and migration, many countries are increasing their use of administrative data sources – and there is potential for the use of new data sources, including, where appropriate, Big Data;
- iv. The effects of migration take place not only at national level but also at local level, and greater geographic detail is required in migration statistics to allow appropriate analyses;
- v. New technologies for data collection allow additional information to be collected, such as the efficient geo-referencing of data.

The representative of the European Union and its member States stated that the DGINS Conference had agreed on the following action points:

- i. To continue efforts to mainstream migration-related topics in a wider range of social and economic statistics. These efforts should also target the provision of data, including statistics on longitudinal aspects, which further support the analysis of the integration of migrants and their descendants in their destination countries;
- ii. To support and promote efforts to develop and implement common population and migration-related definitions in order to further harmonise and standardise migration statistics across the European Statistical System;
- iii. To support the identification, assessment and adoption of new methods and data sources, particularly the increased use for statistical purposes of administrative data sources of appropriate quality;
- iv. To develop and promote an incrementally expanding annual compilation of census-type data as a source of information on the demographic, social and economic characteristics of migrants and of the wider population;
- v. To develop a basic set of census-related geo-referenced data covering a limited range of demographic and socio-economic characteristics, as a source of geographically detailed regional data on migrants.