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Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy
Report by the Chair

Report by the Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy*

I. Achievements over the past nine months

1. In the reporting period, the Environment subprogramme under the general governance of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Committee on Environmental Policy and the other governing and subsidiary bodies under the Environment subprogramme continued to support countries to enhance their environmental governance and transboundary cooperation as well as strengthen implementation of the UNECE regional environmental commitments and advance sustainable development in the region.

Advancing sustainable development and environmental governance in the region

2. The 24th session of the Committee on Environmental Policy was held in Geneva from 29 to 31 January 2019. Agenda items included sustainable development in the region; mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference; work related to environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting; peer reviews of the environmental performance of Kazakhstan and the Republic of North Macedonia developments in a number of cross-cutting activities (such as: education for sustainable development; transport, health and environment; environment and security; environment and health; green building; and mainstreaming a gender perspective in environmental activities); reform of the United Nations planning and budgeting process; preparations for the fourth session of the United Nations' Environment Assembly (UNEA); and procedural matters of the work of the Committee.

3. Chairs and Vice-Chairs of UNECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) together with the Committee members and observers continued reviewing efforts under each treaty to support the 2030 Agenda. The Committee on Environmental Policy recognized the important role of MEAs in assisting Governments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the need to allocate sufficient resources for that purpose. It encourages UNECE Member States to promote MEAs at the upcoming UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (March 2019) as effective tools to develop strong institutions. The Committee on Environmental Policy stressed that the SDG 16 is instrumental for the implementation of all SDGs, as it addresses strengthening of institutional frameworks, principles and procedures for effective access to information and justice and for the engagement of the public in decision-making related to sustainable development at the national and international levels. In this regard it noted that SDG 16 is not mentioned (i) in the document "on main directions of the UNECE work on further SDG alignment", submitted by the secretariat to 98th meeting of the UNECE Executive Committee, and (ii) on UNECE website dedicated to SDGs, and requested the secretariat to add SDG 16 among priority Goals for the work of UNECE and reflect this accordingly in the above mentioned.

4. The Committee on Environmental Policy welcomed the accession by Chad and Senegal to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) in 2018 and the interest to accede by 20 countries officially expressed at the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Astana, 10-12 October 2018). It expressed support for the request by the Meeting of the Parties to the secretariat to take all necessary measures, including the provision of additional human and financial resources from the regular budget, to ensure effective management and full implementation of the Convention's programme of work at the global level.

* This document was not formally edited.

5. In 2018, the draft mid-term review report on the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) was published in preparation for the twenty-fourth session of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy. The report covers data sharing and access, data practices and quality and information infrastructure in Europe and Central Asia. While revealing some limitations for certain data flows, the report may help to improve reporting on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Activities started for the first phase of a United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on “Improved environmental monitoring and assessment in support of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus”. The work to date included the preparation of gap analysis reviews on environmental data and information needed to produce regional and international environmental indicators (e.g., the UNECE set of environmental indicators and indicators for the SDGs) and on SEIS establishment. The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment met for its twentieth session in September 2018, with one agenda item focusing on the sharing and integration of economic, social and environmental data with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

6. In 2018, the third environmental performance reviews (EPRs) of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EPR of Mongolia were published. The third EPR of Albania was launched in Tirana in September 2018 and the EPR of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar in December 2018. The review mission for the third EPR of Republic of North Macedonia took place in September 2018. Activities started for the first phase of the UNDA project on “Evidence-based environmental governance and sustainable environmental policies in support of the 2030 Agenda in South-East Europe”. In particular, missions to Albania, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia were carried out to develop a review of the implementation of the recommendations coming from EPRs vis-à-vis SDGs and targets. Needs assessments will build on and logically follow from the reviews of implementation. The assessments will identify and address gaps between current conditions and desired achievement of relevant SDGs.

7. The Committee expressed appreciation to countries and organizations supporting financially and in-kind activities carried out under the UNECE Environment subprogramme.

UNECE multilateral environmental agreements – highlights

8. The UNECE MEAs continued their work focusing on improving the implementation and compliance by Parties. Meetings of the governing bodies under four MEAs were organized in 2018 – beginning 2019, namely, the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (December 2018), the session of the Executive Body for the Air Convention (December 2018) and the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (February 2019).

Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention)

9. As a follow-up to the “Towards Cleaner Air - Scientific Assessment Report 2016” under the Air Convention, an ad hoc policy review group of experts was established and tasked with formulating a policy response to the Scientific Assessment Report and further with updating the Long-Term Strategy for the Convention, which was discussed in several official meetings under the Convention and adopted at the session of the Executive Body in 2018. At this session, Parties also held a first informal dialogue with countries from outside the UNECE region to assess common air pollution challenges and solutions. As a result of this discussion, the Executive Body agreed to establish a forum for collaboration on reducing air pollution. As a result of continued capacity-building activities under the Air Convention, Parties in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe improved their emissions reporting

in 2018. Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (BACA) has become a global initiative and is no longer limited to UNECE countries.

Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)

10. In 2018, the global opening of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) has become a reality. Chad and Senegal acceded to the Convention as first countries from outside the UNECE region and around 20 more countries have announced interest in acceding to the Convention. This opens new opportunities at the global level to strengthen the sustainable management of shared water resources, prevent conflicts and promote regional integration.

11. The eight session of the Meeting of the Parties (Astana, 10-12 October 2018) demonstrated that the Convention is turning into a global platform for transboundary water cooperation with an unprecedented level of more than 600 participants from 88 countries. The meeting adopted decisions that provide a strong basis for the global implementation of the Convention: the strategy for implementation of the Convention at the global level and the programme of work for 2019-2021 which addresses the needs of Parties from other regions. Taking into account this new situation and mandate for the secretariat, the Meeting of the Parties requested the secretariat to take all necessary measures, including the provision of additional human and financial resources from the regular budget, to ensure the effective management and full implementation of the programme of work.

12. The need to accelerate accession and implementation of the Convention was underlined by the results of the global baseline on SDG indicator 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation, jointly launched by UNECE and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2018. While participation in the first reporting exercise was very positive (107 countries submitted replies out of 153 countries sharing transboundary waters) demonstrating strong political attention and commitment to the topic, the report showed that the world is not on track to achieve SDG 6 and transboundary water cooperation in all basins by 2030, as only 17 countries reported operational arrangements on all their shared waters. At the same time, the first report on the implementation of the Convention, also prepared in 2018, clearly demonstrated the very positive impact of the Convention in the UNECE region, which is the most advanced worldwide in terms of transboundary water cooperation.

Protocol on Water and Health to the Water Convention

13. In 2018, the Protocol on Water and Health, jointly serviced by UNECE and the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization (WHO), consolidated its role as a powerful tool to advance implementation of the SDGs pertinent to water, sanitation and health in the pan-European region as most of its Parties and many other States have been working to set or revise and implement their national targets on water and health to align them to the 2030 Agenda. In fact, the Protocol provides a practical framework for planning and accountability to help countries translate the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda into tangible national objectives, targets and actions, which take into account national circumstances. It also provides guidance and practical tools, that facilitate implementation of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, as well as technical capacity-building at the national and regional level.

Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention)

14. In 2018, the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents held its tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 4-6 December 2018), which:

- (a) Adopted key strategic documents, including:

- Long-term strategy until 2030, aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the SDGs (ECE/CP.TEIA/38/Add.1);
 - Communication, outreach and engagement strategy (ECE/CP.TEIA/38/Add.1);
 - Decision on strengthening implementation of the sustainable financial mechanism, which had been adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting (Stockholm, 12-14 November 2012, ECE/CP.TEIA/24, annex I) (ECE/CP.TEIA/38/Add.1);
- (b) Reviewed the implementation of the above-mentioned sustainable financial mechanism and held a round-table discussion on financing;
- (c) Held a panel discussion on the impact of assistance activities in the biennium 2017-2018, involving donor and beneficiary countries, and key partners.

15. In 2018, progress towards the Convention's implementation and accession was inspired through the conduct of the following assistance activities:

- (a) The Project on Strengthening Industrial Safety in Central Asia was finalized substantively with the organization of three National Expert Group Meetings (Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 24-26 January, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 7-9 February, and Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 13-15 March 2018), and a sub-regional workshop for Central Asia (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 25-27 September 2018). All countries of Central Asia have, thanks to the Project, developed national self-assessments and action plans under the Convention's Strategic Approach. Furthermore, an Implementation Guide was developed for countries of Central Asia;
- (b) The Project "Strengthening the Safety of Mining Operations, in particular tailings management facilities, in Kazakhstan and beyond in Central Asia" was initiated, with an inception workshop (Astana, 7-8 November 2018);
- (c) A high-level awareness-raising mission to Ukraine was held (Kyiv, 19 April 2018), which significantly fostered progress towards Ukraine's accession to the Convention.

16. Furthermore, in 2018 two seminars were held for all Parties and interested stakeholders:

- Seminar on land-use planning and industrial safety (Mechelen, Belgium, 16-17 May 2018); and
- Seminar on risk assessment methodologies, held in the framework of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 4 December 2018).

17. 2018 also saw the finalization of the safety guidelines and good practices for the management and retention of firefighting water – both general recommendations (ECE/CP.TEIA/2018/12 - ECE/MP.WAT/2018/9). and technical and organizational recommendations (ECE/CP.TEIA/2018/13 - ECE/MP.WAT/2018/10) developed under the auspices of the Joint Expert Group of the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions. The governing bodies of both Conventions, at their meetings in 2018, took note of these guidelines and recommended their use and implementation by countries in order to prevent accidental pollution of soil and water, including pollution causing transboundary effects.

The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)

18. Further subregional and national events held in Central Asia to promote the implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) in the sub-region resulted in the finalization of Revised Guidelines on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context for Central Asian countries, [which were endorsed by the Meeting of the Parties in February 2019]. Parties and stakeholders, represented by environment and energy sectors, held several meetings and a

workshop to clarify the application of the Convention to the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants, and reported on their progress.

19. The technical assistance provided under *the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assistance (Protocol on SEA)* to countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and the Central Asia helped Azerbaijan to introduce SEA in its law that entered into force in July 2018; Ukraine to adopt its law on SEA in March 2018; Kazakhstan to develop draft amendments to its legislation in accordance with the Protocol (and the Convention); and Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to review their national legislation vis-a-vis the Protocol (and the Convention). In addition, as a result of capacity building activities, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine prepared Guidelines to implement the Protocol; Kazakhstan carried out a strategic environmental assessment of its governmental plan for the first time. A European Union funded project (of some 2,7 Mio USD) “EU4 Environment project” was launched in early 2019. Its component on SEA and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will allow UNECE in 2019-2022 to continue supporting more sustainable planning and decision-making in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, (with a budget of some 2.7 million USD) building on the achievements this far.

Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs)

20. Due to their cross-cutting nature and wide substantive scopes, the Convention and its Protocol supported Parties’ efforts for furthering a number of the SDGs, and in particular SDGs 3, 12 and 16. At the twenty-second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to Convention (Geneva, 19-21 June 2018), Parties, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders addressed challenges, shared good practices and outlined key future actions related to e.g.: (a) scope of environmental information, exceptions for its provisions and use of modern technologies for its effective dissemination and (b) promotion of transparency and effective public participation in international decision-making on chemicals, and waste and climate change. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, the meeting also featured a special segment dedicated to the results achieved over the last two decades and to the Youth vision of how Aarhus rights help them to create a sustainable future.

21. The Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (October 2018) provided a platform for building authorities’ capacities in ensuring effective public participation with the focus on decision-making on chemicals and wastes and in promoting safe spaces for environmental defenders.

22. The Global Round Table on PRTRs (Geneva, 7-8 November 2018) provided a platform for peer learning among countries from different continents on the role of PRTRs for promoting informed decisions in the context of achieving SDGs. It fostered sharing of experiences between Governments, private sector, research institutions and other stakeholders thereby helping country’s officials to develop relevant expertise in this area. Participants recognized an urgent need for establishing effective online environmental information systems by integrating PRTRs, environmental monitoring and other relevant systems (e.g. on energy, water and health), and by applying information and communications technologies (ICTs). The event was organised jointly by UNECE and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

II. Major activities planned for 2019 and beyond

23. The Environment subprogramme will continue its work to support countries to enhance their environmental governance and transboundary cooperation as well as strengthen implementation of the UNECE regional environmental commitments and advance sustainable development in the region. An overview of planned activities is contained in the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2018-2019 (ECE/CEP/2017/7). The 25th session of the Committee will be organized in Geneva from 13 to 15 November 2019.

24. In 2019, the implementation of the UNDA project on environmental monitoring and assessment will continue with the finalization of the gap analysis reviews for Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and the Republic of North Macedonia. National training sessions to provide guidance on how to streamline the production of regionally and internationally agreed environmental data flows and indicators will be carried out in the second half of 2019 as well as a “Regional Conference on Environmental Data” on 8 May 2019. The twenty-first session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment will be held on 6-7 May and the sixteenth session of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators on 28–29 October 2019.

25. In 2019, the implementation of the UNDA project on EPRs will continue with the validation of the need’s assessments for the four countries; a mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is planned to perform tasks related to the first phase. The review mission for the third EPR of Uzbekistan will take place from 25 February–5 March 2019. A preparatory and a review mission for the third EPR of Romania will be held in spring and autumn/winter 2019, respectively.

26. The major event for THE PEP in 2019 is the fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment that will be hosted by Austria from 22 to 24 October. Ministers of transport, health and environment are invited to attend. The President of Austria is expected to open the meeting, which will cover issues such as decarbonization, the contribution of sustainable mobility to the economy in terms of job creation and how city planning and transport planning can work in synergy. A pan-European master plan for cycling promotion is expected to be adopted. The first part of 2019 will be devoted to the preparation for the High-level Meeting.

27. The implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) will continue in accordance with the “Batumi Framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD” (adopted at the High-Level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries in Batumi, Georgia, 08 June 2016). The fourth mandatory reporting of national implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD has been initiated; the summary evaluation report will be finalised in 2019. The first meeting of the Ad hoc group for Strategic Planning, established by the previous meeting of the Steering Committee, was held on 27-28 November 2018 in the Hague, the Netherlands; the result of its work - the draft concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework, elaborated by the members of the Ad hoc group - will be discussed at the 14th meeting of the Steering Committee. The series of annual capacity-building workshops will also continue with the support of the Swiss Government.

28. The UNECE MEAs will continue their work focusing on improving the implementation and compliance by Parties. Meetings of the governing bodies under several MEAs take place in 2019, namely the intermediary session of the Meetings of the Parties to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA (Geneva, 5-7 February 2019), and the thirty-ninth session of the Executive Body to the Air Convention (9-13 December 2019).

29. In 2019, the Air Convention will celebrate its 40th anniversary. Several events are planned throughout the year and during the thirty-ninth session of the Executive Body to mark the anniversary, including a segment involving high-level representatives.

30. Under the Protocol on Water and Health, the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Belgrade, 19–21 November 2019) is expected to adopt the programme of work of the Protocol for 2020–2022. The proposed future areas of work and activities under the Protocol reflect core priorities in the water, sanitation and health domain in the pan-European region, as expressed by Parties and other States, and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. They include improving governance for water and health through setting targets and implementing measures, strengthening of surveillance to combat water-related disease, promoting universal and equitable access to safe water for all, including in rural areas, schools, hospitals and workplaces, ensuring safely managed sanitation that protects health and the environment, fostering climate resilient water and sanitation services and promoting sustainable management and the conservation of water resources. The fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties will also feature a new publication in support of joint implementation of the Protocol and the 2030 Agenda – *Protocol on Water and Health and the 2030 Agenda: a practical guide for joint implementation* (forthcoming).

31. Under the Water Convention, new programme areas will be started in 2019, such as on facilitating financing of transboundary water cooperation and on water allocation in the transboundary context. In addition, the Convention's global opening will be further promoted, with several national workshops planned in countries interested in accession.

32. In 2019, the Industrial Accidents Convention will continue to support progress towards the implementation of the Convention's vision, as set out in its long-term strategy: to significantly increase industrial safety and reduce the risk of technological disasters by ensuring its full implementation, its wide recognition as a legal instrument for risk reduction under the Sendai Framework and its contribution to achievement of the SDGs. Activities will support implementation of the Convention by all Parties, in particular in the areas of risk assessment and land-use planning and provide dedicated support to beneficiaries of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme (see para 59).

33. In 2019, the work under the Aarhus Convention will continue strengthening transparency and effective public participation with the focus on genetically modified organisms, trade- and climate- related negotiations and on promoting safe space for environmental defenders and access to justice with particular focus on cases related to air quality. To further assist countries in achieving environmental dimension of SDG 16, two thematic events will be organised: the Judicial Colloquium for judges and representatives of judicial institutions and other review bodies for the UNECE region (February) and a peer-learning round table at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (March). The work under the Protocol on PRTRs will focus on strengthening capacities of interested countries to ratify it and also on reviewing the Protocol's provisions, taking into account developments under relevant international treaties and initiatives, and preparing a proposal aiming to enable the Protocol to respond to modern challenges and needs.

34. In 2019, capacity building on strategic environmental assessment in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine will continue with the funding from European Union under the new EU4Environment project. The secretariat to the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA will also pursue its technical assistance to Central Asia in collaboration with OSCE and with funding from Germany and Switzerland. With funding from the European Investment Bank, UNECE and WHO will hold a workshop and develop guidance on the incorporation of health aspects in strategic environmental assessment and the involvement of health authorities. Based on the reporting by the Convention and the Protocol Parties due in March 2019, the secretariat will prepare new

reviews of implementation of the two treaties. The work for the preparation of the application of guidance on the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants will continue. Both guidance documents are foreseen for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol in 2020.

III. Any proposed change to the subsidiary structure of the Committee

35. The Committee on Environment Policy appreciated the work of the UNECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for the period 2015–2018 and adopted the renewed mandate of the Expert Group for 2019–2022 (ECE/CEP/2019/12, annex) at its twenty-fourth session, and requested the secretariat to submit the renewed mandate to the Executive Committee for approval.

36. The mandate and terms of reference of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for 2019–2022, as contained in document ECE/EX/2019/L.3, are submitted to the UNECE Executive Committee for approval.

IV. Follow-up to the 2017 session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

37. In accordance with Commission Decision A (65), the Environment subprogramme, the Committee and its related subsidiary bodies, as well as other governing and subsidiary bodies under the subprogramme, will continue working within current mandates in an efficient way, producing concrete results that have a clear value-added for the region and beyond. In line with its objective, the Environment subprogramme fosters a country needs-based approach and focuses on developing the capacity of Caucasian, Central Asian and Eastern and South-Eastern European countries in environmental policy and management, including for the effective implementation of environmental legislation.

38. Concerning resources for the Environment subprogramme, Commission Decision A (65) stipulated that, in allocating regular budget resources, full account should be taken of the increasing number of instruments administered by the subprogramme and the Environment Division so that they could continue, without a reduction in their resources and capacities, to do their work and service all the subsidiary bodies in an efficient way in the future, while fully recognizing the obligation of UNECE to service the MEAs. In view of several MEAs becoming global, the Committee also discussed possible implications of their broadened coverage on the increased need for human and financial resources.

V. Intersectoral activities: new activities and/or progress in existing intersectoral activities

39. The Environment subprogramme is supporting the cross-sectoral work under the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), the Protocol on Water and Health and the EPR Programme. Under the Water Convention the work is on-going on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus. Under the Industrial Accidents Convention, the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA work has continued on land-use planning and industrial safety. Under the Environment for Europe (EfE) process together with UNEP, OECD and other partners, the Environment subprogramme is supporting the implementation of the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy. Furthermore, the subprogramme

is also actively participating in the activities under the European Environment and Health Process.

40. In the reporting period, the work under the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) focused on the promotion of SDG 4 and its target 4.7 in the region, via the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD. 14th meeting of the Steering Committee (Geneva, 02-03 May, 2019) will consider the outline of the directions of its work for the next period of the implementation, taking into consideration the results of the work on post-2019 implementation framework, elaborated by the members of the Ad hoc group for Strategic Planning. UNECE continues its cooperation with UNESCO to align its work to the global framework of actions on ESD. At its 24th session, the Committee encouraged its members from the countries participating in the Strategy to establish and maintain working contacts with the Steering Committee members and focal points from their national administrations and non-governmental organizations;

41. The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) is intrinsically an intersectoral activity. The secretariat is a collaboration between UNECE (Environment and Sustainable Transport Divisions) and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. THE PEP secretariat organized the 2018 Almaty workshop in cooperation with the UNECE Air Pollution Convention secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kazakhstan and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC). The objective of the event was to strengthen capacities of national authorities of countries in Central Asia on integrating THE PEP, its Priority Goals and the relevant Sustainable Development Goals in national policies. Furthermore, THE PEP secretariat is cooperating with the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit on a UNDA project.

42. The work under the *Protocol on Water and Health* serviced jointly by UNECE and the WHO Regional Office for Europe requires the health, environment and water communities to strengthen their cooperation to improve human health and environmental outcomes. Recent work under the Protocol has also promoted cooperation and integration of policies with other sector: for instance, work under the Protocol to promote equitable access to water and sanitation supports intersectoral analysis of the equity gaps, bringing together not only the water and health sectors but also finance, education, municipal authorities and water supply and sanitation suppliers. As the 2019 edition of World Water Day will focus on “Leaving No One Behind”, several events are planned that will allow to present the tools developed under the Protocol and achievements in countries to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation.

43. With its unique focus on the transboundary and regional dimensions, the Water Convention’s work on the water-food-energy-ecosystem supports implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development with an intersectoral and integrated approach. Cooperation with other sectors that depend on or impact on water resources was progressively strengthened, in particular with the energy sector. The energy sector is in a key role in the projects in the Drin and Drina River basins and the North-Western Sahara Aquifer System, contributing to the joint definition of actions for progress in the basins. In 2018, in cooperation with the Sustainable Energy Division, Renewable Energy Hard Talks were organized with Bosnia and Herzegovina to identify obstacles to investments and synergies with water management using a nexus approach. Further such multi-stakeholder talks are planned in the Drina Basin riparian countries in 2019.

44. The National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), carried out by UNECE in cooperation with OECD and within the framework of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI), serve as an important platform to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the integration of sectoral policies.

45. Finally, together with UNISDR, a “*Words into action Implementation Guide for Addressing water-related disasters and transboundary cooperation*”, was prepared in 2018, aimed to support implementation of the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction.

46. The Industrial Accidents Convention will continue to closely cooperate with the Committee on Housing and Land Management and, as relevant, also with the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessments and the Aarhus Convention, in the organization of a sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (Republic of Moldova, 22-24 May 2019). It will furthermore cooperate the Transport Division in the provision of inputs to a special session on the transport of dangerous goods, envisaged to be organized by the OECD Working Group on Chemical Accidents (Paris, October 2019), in which the Industrial Accidents Convention regularly participates.

47. The UNECE Environment Division (Environmental Monitoring and Assessment programme) and UNECE Statistical Division co-service the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators. The Joint Task Force continues to assist countries with economies in transition to understand indicator methodologies and supports them in applying the methodologies to produce and share specific environmental indicators.

48. Energy and environment sector representatives joined forces under the Espoo Convention to prepare guidance on the Convention’s application to the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants. In 2018, the secretariat to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA also cooperated with the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division to assist Kazakhstan in the pilot application of SEA procedure to the national strategy until 2030 regarding fuel and energy. This significantly facilitated mainstreaming of environmental considerations in energy planning in Kazakhstan. The funding from the European Investment Bank (EIB) will allow UNECE and WHO to prepare joint guidance on health in strategic environmental assessment. The EU4Environment project 2019-2020 will bring together ministries of Environment and Economy of the beneficiary governments in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The capacity building activities on SEA implemented under that project, such as pilot projects, training and development of sectoral implementation guidance will involve various economic sectors. The Convention and its Protocol continued to cooperate with the Industrial Accidents Convention and the Committee on Housing and Land Management in the context of a joint workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety was held in May 2018.

VI. Technical cooperation activities

49. Technical cooperation activities in the Environment subprogramme include activities carried out by the UNECE Regional Adviser on Environment as well as a number of other activities undertaken under MEAs and policy programmes.

50. The Regional Adviser develops, raises funds for and implements technical cooperation activities and provides policy advice in close collaboration with the secretariats of the UNECE MEAs. The work aims at supporting ratification and implementation of the MEAs and strengthening cooperation on common environmental problems in the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

51. The work undertaken by the Regional Adviser in the reporting period resulted in the implementation of the transboundary water cooperation projects in Drin basin (South-Eastern Europe) and in the Dniester basin (Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), and continuation of the green economy project in Kazakhstan.

52. Further support was provided to promote transboundary EIA and SEA in Central Asia by co-organizing sub-regional capacity building workshop and raising awareness on the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA among decision makers in the Central Asia region.

53. A peer-learning workshop “Policies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: exchange of best practices on the basis of UNECE Environmental Performance Reviews”, for the sharing of lessons learned in integrating the relevant SDGs and targets in recent environmental performance reviews, was held in Minsk in November 2018. The workshop was co-funded by the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation.

54. Technical cooperation projects were implemented in more than 15 countries in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

55. With the funding from the European Union under the Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighborhood (EaP GREEN) project, which extended until April 2018, UNECE Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA secretariat assisted Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to build capacity on the implementation of strategic environmental assessment. In 2018, it also secured new funding from “EU4Environment” project that will allow it to continue supporting the same countries in 2019-2022 to sustain and to build in the achievements this far. With donor funding, the secretariat also provided further support on transboundary EIA and SEA to Central Asian countries by co-organizing a sub-regional capacity building workshop in Uzbekistan and 11 in Central Asia (6 in Kazakhstan, 3 in Uzbekistan, 2 in Tajikistan).

56. Under the Water Convention, technical cooperation activities are implemented in numerous basins inside and outside the UNECE region such as the Chu Talas in Central Asia, the Drin, Drina, Dniester and Neman-Bug basins. The Convention already supports transboundary water cooperation worldwide, such as negotiations between Colombia and Peru and Kenya and Uganda, and between the riparian countries of the Comoé-Bia-Tanoé basin in Western Africa. In 2019, a dialogue is starting on the Sénégal-Mauritanian aquifer.

57. Under the Protocol on Water and Health, several countries, such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have been supported in setting or revising their national targets under the Protocol, and support was provided to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria and Serbia to develop self-assessments and/or action plans of equitable access to water and sanitation.

58. The Industrial Accidents Convention will continue to foster progress by non-Parties towards accession under its Assistance and Cooperation Programme, and seek to support beneficiary countries of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme in enhancing inter-institutional cooperation, through the establishment of National Policy Dialogues on Industrial Safety. A major focus of the technical cooperation activities will be on the strengthening of tailings safety in the Caucasus and in Central Asia, including through the initiation of a new Project, focused on Tajikistan.

59. THE PEP secretariat organized a subregional workshop in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in November 2018. Participants expressed appreciation for the workshop. They asked that the secretariat continue the practice of organizing regional seminars, especially with more targeted topics. Even more targeted sessions could be organized at national level, at the invitation of member States. Such sessions should be organized in cooperation with local and regional actors such as UNDP, CAREC and other stakeholders involved in the various topics.

VII. Cooperation with other organizations

60. The Environment subprogramme is working with a number of organizations in and outside the United Nations system with the aim of combining efforts, ensuring mutual

benefits and avoiding overlap and duplication. Cooperation takes place through information and communication technology tools, internal coordination meetings and the organization of joint events, as well as involving relevant partner organizations in various activities. Among the many organizations involved in the work of the Committee and of other governing bodies under the Environment subprogramme, the following activities mark highlights of cooperation during the reporting period:

United Nations Regional Commissions

61. The UNECE Water Convention is cooperating with the other regional commissions, in particular the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to exchange experiences in areas of common interest such as the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus. In the framework of the Convention's global opening, cooperation has been increased with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in particular. ESCAP and UNECE organized a session on transboundary water cooperation and the Water Convention during ESCAP's Committee on Environment and Development meeting in November 2018.

62. The Aarhus secretariat is providing continuous advisory support to ECLAC, notably assisted in the development of a regional instrument on environmental rights in the ECLAC region and cooperates on the establishment of PRTRs. UNECE has also continued its joint efforts with ESCAP to promote the cooperation on transboundary air pollution in North-East Asia as part of Air Convention's outreach activities, including during the informal dialogue with countries from outside the UNECE region at the thirty-eighth session of the Executive Body. The review also contributed to the ESCAP-led Sustainability Outlook for Mongolia and aims to feed eventually into the Pathways for Implementation of the Internationally Agreed Commitments of Mongolia.

United Nations Environment Programme

63. The Environment subprogramme has long-standing cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through many joint activities and partnerships.

64. The work of UNECE and UNEP is complementary: UNECE provides the regional political platform, expert and intergovernmental bodies and policy expertise; UNEP brings its global policy leadership, specific technical expertise and country and regional policy and programmatic engagement. Such a symbiosis enables the two organizations to address in an effective way the existing and emerging environmental concerns across the UNECE region.

65. UNEP is a key partner in the EfE process. In particular, UNEP contributed to the preparation of the mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Batumi Conference (January 2019). The UNECE secretariat jointly with UNEP prepared mid-term review reports on progress achieved in implementing the Strategic Framework and the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy and on activities to support countries in their efforts to green their economies and achieve sustainable development.

66. At its 24th session, the Committee welcomed the information provided by UNEP about developments in preparing the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4), and invited UNEP to continue informing the Committee about relevant developments under the Assembly, and in particular about the outcomes of UNEA-4 at the next session of CEP.

67. The United Nations Development Account (UNDA) 11th Trench - 615.2b Enhancing sustainable public procurement for the regional transition to inclusive green economy in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) is being jointly implemented by UNECE and UNEP. A Regional Workshop on Good Practices and Lessons Learned on

Sustainable Public Procurement will take place on 19-20 March 2019 back-to-back with the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

68. UNEP is involved in all relevant activities of the UNECE-led UNDA project on environmental monitoring and assessment. UNEP is also actively involved in the activities of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, including, but not limited, to the monitoring of SEIS establishment in Europe and Central Asia and the recently published SEIS mid-term review report. In addition, UNEP is engaged, as part of a common approach between UNECE, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and UNEP, in supporting national, regional and global reporting on the state of the environment. Representative of the three organizations meet regularly at senior (including April 2018 and January 2019) and operational levels.

69. UNEP provided expertise for the third EPRs of Kazakhstan, the Republic of North Macedonia and Uzbekistan on the chapter related to environmental monitoring and information.

70. THE PEP cooperated with UNEP in the past in one phase of a study on green jobs in green transport. The UNECE secretariat looks forward to continue the cooperation in other phases of the work.

71. The United Nations Environment Programme is also actively contributing to the implementation of many UNECE MEAs. The secretariat of the Aarhus Convention cooperates closely with UNEP on global promotion of Principle 10, of the participatory international decision-making, of access to justice and of PRTRs. Since 2013, the secretariat of the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA has promoted greening the economies of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in partnership with United Nations Environment Programme, OECD and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), with funding from European Union's Greening the Economies in Eastern Neighbourhood (EaP-GREEN) Programme. In 2018-2020, it will continue to assist the same countries in cooperation with the UN Environment, UNIDO, OECD and the World Bank under the European Union's follow-up programme EU4Environment.

72. As regards the Air Convention, there is an ongoing active exchange of information between the Convention and relevant UNEP MEAs and subregional initiatives, including the East Asia Acid Deposition Network and the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership and with regards to the resolutions on air quality of the first and the third meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly (2014 and 2017, respectively).

World Health Organization (WHO)

73. UNECE and WHO/Europe continue to jointly provide secretariat services for the Protocol on Water and Health and THE PEP. The UNECE and WHO/Europe secretariats are in constant communication to coordinate the activities under THE PEP. UNECE is also represented in the Bureau of the European Environment and Health Task Force, serviced by WHO under the European Environment and Health Process.

74. WHO provided expertise for the third EPRs of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on the chapters dealing with health and environment.

75. WHO/Europe also leads the Air Convention's Joint Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution, which is currently contributing to the update of the WHO Air Quality Guidelines. UNECE was also a co-organizer of the First WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health (Geneva, 30 October-1 November 2018). The UNECE Environment subprogramme is also actively working with WHO/Europe in the European Environment and Health Process and the EPR Programme, where WHO provides an expert to draft a chapter

in some country reviews. In 2018, WHO has hosted the Inter-agency coordination meeting on Industrial Accidents, which resulted in the agreement on synergies and future joint activities between the organizations members of the Group (comprising the EU, OECD, WHO, the Joint Environment Unit of UNEP and United Nations Office of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)). Among others, the Inter-agency coordination group discussed its contribution to the 2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction produced by UNISDR, in view of its coverage of technological hazards, included in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. With funding from the European Investment Bank, the secretariat to the Protocol on SEA and WHO will prepare joint guidance on health in SEA.

76. The Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA secretariat cooperates with WHO for the development of guidance for the assessment of potential health impacts of plans and programmes and for the involvement of health authorities. The work is funded by European Investment Bank.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

77. The UNECE Strategy for ESD is implemented in close cooperation with UNESCO, the lead agency for the Global Action Programme, as a key partner in the Partnership Network for its implementation, including the joint activities carried out in the framework of the first priority action area on advancing policy. For the reporting period UNESCO also continued to participate in the work of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD and its Bureau. Furthermore, UNESCO contributes its expertise in transboundary groundwaters to a close cooperation with the Water Convention. Moreover, UNECE and UNESCO are the custodian agencies for SDG indicator 6.5.2 and have jointly carried out in 2017-2018 the first data gathering exercise, establishing a baseline for this indicator. This work was carried out in the framework of a broader UN-wide cooperation on SDG 6 monitoring which led to the joint production of a UN-Water synthesis report on SDG 6.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

78. UNDP offices in Kazakhstan, the Republic of North Macedonia and Uzbekistan supported the EPR Programme in substantive and logistics matters. UNDP Kazakhstan was one of the partners in THE PEP event in Almaty, provided a speaker, moderated one of the sessions supported logistical arrangements, in cooperation with the UNECE secretariat. Also, UNDP is supporting organization of activities on the national level, in particular implementation of the UNECE MEAs and other environmental policy instruments.

United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD)

79. Cooperation with the UNSD continues on the monitoring and reporting of SDG indicator 6.5.2 for which UNECE will act as custodian agency, together with UNESCO.

80. UNSD participates in the activities of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators and the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment. Most recently, UNSD provides an update on environment-related SDG indicators (6.3.1, 6.4.1, 6.4.2, 11.6.1, 12.4.2 and 12.5.1) during the twentieth session of the Working Group.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

81. For the capacity building in Central Asia, the UNECE treaty secretariat has worked closely with OSCE including to assist (a) Kazakhstan in introducing a SEA system and in enhancing its EIA system through preparing amendments to its national legislation; (b) Uzbekistan in reviewing its national legislation vis-à-vis the Convention and the Protocol on SEA. As of 2019, the secretariat and OSCE will continue their cooperation to support Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in preparing the necessary primary and secondary legislation in

accordance with the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA. They will also jointly promote SEA in the five Central Asian countries.

82. Since 2002, the OSCE in partnership with UNECE has been supporting the establishment, operation and networking of Aarhus Centres that assist the governments in implementing the Aarhus Convention. The network reached now a total of 60 Centres in 14 countries.

Other partners

83. Under the European Union funded EU4Environment project 2019-2022 UNECE (the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA secretariat) will cooperate with the European Commission, OECD, UN Environment, UNIDO, UNDP and the World Bank.

84. The treaty secretariat also cooperated with CAREC for the development of Revised Guidance on transboundary environmental impact assessment in Central Asia.

85. The Industrial Accidents Convention will continue to foster inter-agency cooperation with a range of international organizations, through the Inter-agency coordination group on industrial accidents and its contributions to the inter-agency coordination group on chemicals management. It will continue to closely cooperate with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), including through its membership of the Scientific and Advisory Board on Natural-hazard triggering technological accidents (NATECH), and inputs to the Chapter on technological hazards of the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be launched at the UNISDR Global Platform meeting (Geneva, 13-17 May 2019). To foster synergies in the exchange of information among Parties, and in the implementation of assistance activities, partners will be involved, including, the UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Union, OECD, OSCE, the Commonwealth for Independent States (CIS) Inter-State Council for Industrial Safety, the Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Regional Environmental Centres.

86. The European Environment Agency (EEA) is involved in the activities of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, including, but not limited to, the monitoring of SEIS establishment in Europe and Central Asia and the recently published SEIS mid-term review report. EEA is engaged, as part of a common approach between the UNECE, EEA and UNEP, in supporting national, regional and global reporting on the state of the environment. The EEA also funded a project "Support production and regular update of the UNECE set of indicators and strengthening environmental statistics and accounting under the ENI SEIS II East project" that has been carried out by UNECE since 2017 until April 2019. The cooperation with the EEA also focuses on supporting integration of environmental information systems in e-government and open data domestic frameworks.

87. Other important partners outside the United Nations system are OECD (for the Protocol on PRTRs, the EfE process, and in conjunction with the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI)), OSCE (for the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, supporting Aarhus Centres and other different activities under the UNECE MEAs), the European Commission and the Regional Environmental Centers (RECs). OECD participates in the activities of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators and the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment. In 2018, OECD presented its work on environmental and green growth indicators, including links between OECD indicator sets and other statistical work during the fifteenth session of the Joint Task Force. UNECE is represented in the Bureau of the GREEN Action Programme Task Force, serviced by OECD under the Environment for Europe process.

88. The European ECO Forum and its members are active partners in the work of the Committee, MEAs, ESD, THE PEP and in the EfE process.

89. The Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health are cooperating, among others, with UN-Water, WHO and its Regional Office for Europe, the European Investment Bank, Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme, UNESCO, international river basins commissions, such as the Rhine, Danube, Okavango (OKACOM), Chu Talas, Niger commissions, the International Network of Basin Organizations, OSCE, OECD, the RECs, the Global Water Partnership, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation, the African Network of Basin Organizations, the Economic Communities of Central African and West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Stockholm International Water Institute, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Organization of American States (OAS) the secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), Women Engage for a Common Future, the World Bank, World Wildlife Fund, Green Cross International, the European Environment and Health Youth Coalition, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

90. The Air Convention continues its close cooperation with the European Union including in the implementation of capacity building activities in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The continuation of this project will run through 2021. Furthermore, the Convention regularly cooperates, among others, with the Arctic Council and WMO.

91. Under the EaP GREEN programme, the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA support the implementation of strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment of national development activities and work together with the following international organizations providing comprehensive support to achieve the programme's objectives: (i) OECD serves as coordinator of the programme, and support the implementation of market-based approaches to promote green growth and the reform of environmentally-harmful subsidies, the greening of banks and small- and medium-sized enterprises, and the adoption of green growth indicators; (ii) UNEP contributes to mainstreaming sustainable production and consumption in national policies through strategic policy setting, as well as through work on sustainable public procurement and organic agriculture; and (iii) UNIDO assists the private sector actors in adopting cleaner production and resource efficiency. In 2017-2018, the Espoo Convention in cooperation with Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC) prepared Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context for Central Asian countries that involved three subregional consultation meetings. As of 2018, the provisions of the Protocol on SEA is being promoted in Central Asia in partnership with OSCE.

92. The secretariat of the Aarhus Convention continuously pursues a close cooperation with a number of partner organizations. OSCE, UNEP, UNDP, UNITAR, RECs, and EEA participate in the capacity-building coordination framework under the Convention, which is serviced by the secretariat. Over 50 projects were reported by partner organizations to support the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and Principle 10 in the UNECE region and beyond

93. In the reporting period the secretariat of the Aarhus Convention started collaboration with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety on the preparation of a joint guidance material as to assist Parties to both treaties in implementing them.

94. UNECE has worked with UNEP, OSCE, OHCHR and other partner organizations in supporting cooperation of judiciary, judicial training institutions and other independent review bodies in the pan-European region (in support of target 16.3 of SDG 16).
95. Cooperation between the secretariat and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council was further enhanced in the reporting period. The secretariat further provided substantive input during expert consultations on human rights and air pollution and for the preparation of the report of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment.
96. Furthermore, the secretariat also pursued cooperation with UNEP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on environmental human rights defenders and cooperated with partners within the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals to assist Governments to implement different international obligations related to chemicals management.
97. Upon the request from ECLAC the Aarhus Convention secretariat provided ongoing advisory support, including by engaging relevant experts, for the negotiations and promotion of a regional agreement on access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.
98. In connection with implementing the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Application of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums (Almaty Guidelines), the secretariat cooperated with the United Nations Environment Programme's Chemical Conventions (Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions), the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) on the promotion of transparency and effective public participation in international decision-making on chemicals and waste and with UNFCCC on the application of the principles of the Convention in the climate change-related decision-making. In addition, it cooperated with UNEP on the subjects of stakeholder engagement in the UNEA, UNEP access to information policies and with UNDESA on the processes related to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.
99. Secretariat cooperates closely with OECD, UNEP, GEF and UNITAR as to build capacities of Governments in the area of chemicals management, including through electronic tools for PRTRs (PRTR:Learn; OECD Centre for PRTR Data, OECD Resource Centre for Release Estimation Techniques; and PRTR.net.).
100. Furthermore, it continued servicing a region-wide inter-agency capacity-building coordination mechanism for the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and a global international coordinating Group for the Protocol.
101. Since 2016 UNECE has been an observer to the Inter-State Council on Industrial Safety under Commonwealth of Independent States, and has regularly attended the meetings of the Council, which recognized achievements under the UNECE Project on Strengthening Industrial Safety in Central Asia and supported future work by its members towards the preparation of national self-assessments and action plans under the Industrial Accident Convention's Assistance Programme.
102. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is one of the main partners in the third study on green jobs in green transport under THE PEP, identifying how transport policies privileging electric vehicles and public transport can have a positive impact on new, green job opportunities.
103. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) participates in the activities of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment. In 2018, IUCN was actively involved in the revision of the UNECE set of environmental indicators related to biodiversity.