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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment
in a Transboundary Context
Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment
(Third Meeting, Geneva, 9-12 October)
(Agenda item 2, c (i) of the provisional agenda)

DRAFT DECISION II/11
ADOPTION OF THE WORK-PLAN */
Note prepared by the Bureau

The Meeting,

Recalling Articles 9 and 11, paragraph (f), of the Convention stipulating that further research as well as additional action that may be required shall be undertaken to achieve the purposes of the Convention,

Recognizing that it is essential for Parties fully to implement their legal obligations arising under the Convention;

Recognizing also that Parties should strive to go beyond that which is merely required as a matter of law and take action to maximise the effectiveness of their application of the Convention so that the best possible practical results are achieved;

Recalling Decision II/9 on strategic environmental assessment;

*/ This document has not been formally edited.

1. Adopts the work-plan for the period up to its third meeting, as annexed to this decision;
2. Decides that the aims of this work plan are:
 - (a) The promotion of through implementation by the Parties of all of their obligations arising under the Convention,
 - (b) The improvement of the practical application of the Convention; and
 - (c) The negotiation of a legally binding instrument on strategic environmental assessment, as a Protocol to the Convention

all within a timetable to be agreed by the Bureau and the lead countries for the various activities.

3. Suggests that lead countries which carry out the relevant activities should consult each other in order to avoid overlap;
4. Calls on the Parties and invites non-Parties to arrange, host and participate actively in task forces and meetings in order to facilitate the implementation of the Convention;
5. Invites every relevant body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, to participate actively in the activities included in the work-plan.

Annex

WORK-PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION FOR THE PERIOD 2001 TO 2003

1. REVIEWS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Objective: Parties and non-Parties will submit information biennially on recent developments in the implementation of the Convention and for applying environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context.

Method of work: A draft biennial review will be considered at the third meeting of the Parties in the interest of reviewing the implementation of the Convention.

Organizational aspects: The secretariat will prepare a draft biennial review based on the information provided by Parties and non-Parties pursuant to the reporting system adopted by the Working Group, for discussion and possible adoption at the third meeting of the Parties.

Time schedule: The draft 2001-2003 biennial review will be prepared in 2003 and incorporate the information received by the end of 2002 for consideration at the third Meeting of the Parties.

2. REPORTING SYSTEM

Objective: The Implementation Committee will prepare recommendations for a revision of the questionnaire used for reporting for future reviews of the implementation of the Convention. The capacity and technical possibilities of the ENIMPAS Database will be used in the reporting system. The objective is to improve the questionnaire so that it provides information that will assist the identification of ways in which compliance with the obligations of the Convention, both at the general level and by particular Parties, has been implemented. The Committee will also consider whether any further steps might be recommended to improve monitoring of, and compliance with, obligations arising under the Convention.

Method of work: (...) will act as lead country with the assistance of the secretariat. The Implementation Committee established by the Meeting of the Parties in accordance with decision II/4 will meet with a view to preparing its recommendation.

Organizational aspects: The Committee will present its recommendation for a new reporting mechanism to the fourth meeting of the Working Group.

Time schedule: (to be specified).

3. STRENGTHENING COOPERATION WITH OTHER ECE CONVENTIONS

Objective: To strengthen cooperation between the Convention and the other ECE Conventions with the aim to further improve the practical application of environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context.

Method of work: On the basis of relevant national experience and taking into account document MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/10:

a) To study the relationship with respect to legal aspects and the practical application with the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution Convention;

b) To identify opportunities for improving the practical application of the Convention in particular on post-project analysis, content requirements for EIA documentation, risk assessment and public participation.

Organizational aspects: [...] will act as lead country, with the assistance of the secretariat and will organize for a workshop in order to identify areas for cooperation in the application of the Convention and other Conventions. A report with proposals on how to improve the application of environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context through the provisions of the other conventions will be presented to the Working Group for consideration and thereafter to the Parties at their third meeting for possible adoption.

Time schedule: (to be specified)

4. GUIDELINES ON GOOD PRACTICE AND ON BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Objective: On the basis of document MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/7 and MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/6 to discuss the experience and review and update guidelines on the practical application of the Convention and on the preparation of bilateral or multilateral agreements.

Method of work: Based on the previous work (see documents above) and giving also attention to the work under item "Subregional cooperation" in the workplan, the experience in the practical application and in bilateral or multilateral agreements will be discussed at workshops and the guidelines will be completed.

Organizational aspects: Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands will act as lead countries, with the assistance of the secretariat. A report containing the guidelines with relevant background information (compendium) will be presented to the Working Group for consideration and there after to the Parties at their third meeting for possible adoption.

Time schedule: Spring 2001 - Autumn 2002.

5. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Objective: To prepare a legally binding protocol on strategic environmental assessment (SEA) to the Convention.

Method of work: On the basis of relevant national and international experience, a draft protocol on SEA will be prepared so that it can be considered by the Open-ended Ad-hoc Working Group on the Protocol.

Organizational aspects: The secretariat, with the assistance of experts, will prepare a first draft protocol on this issue for consideration by the Open-ended Ad-hoc Working Group on the Protocol established in accordance with decision II/9 and thereafter for possible adoption by an extraordinary Meeting of Parties held in conjunction with the fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Kiev, Ukraine, 2002).

Time schedule: Spring 2001 - Spring 2002.

6. SUBREGIONAL COOPERATION

Objective: To support the application of environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context through the provisions of the Convention, in particular in countries in transition: Central Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States.

Method of work: Workshops, seminars, training courses etc. will be organized, and guidelines and other material will be produced, in order to introduce or improve EIA systems and practice, covering the specific needs of countries in transition, in particular with regard to methodological support.

Organizational aspects: Croatia and Poland will act as lead countries, with the assistance of the secretariat. Poland will provide for the facility enabling countries in transition to address their needs regarding transboundary EIA. Workshops and other activities will be organized in Central Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States, with the participation of experts from the countries of these regions, as well as from other countries in line with paragraph 14 of the Oslo Ministerial Declaration.

Support from the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South-East Europe and other initiatives will be sought, in addition to other sources of support.

Time schedule: (to be specified.)

7. DATABASE ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Objective: To allow an exchange of information on matters related to EIA in a transboundary context and to provide support to Parties and non-Parties in the establishment and maintenance of a system of networking, by setting up, as a central resource, a computer database, accessible to users through the Internet in order to strengthen the application of EIA in a transboundary context in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

Method of work: The lead country will maintain the database on environmental impact assessment up to the third meeting of the Parties.

Organizational aspects: Poland will act as lead country, with the assistance of the secretariat, in particular in relation to the translation of information. For the next meeting of the Parties, Poland will prepare a report analyzing the use of the database.

Time schedule: (to be specified).

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONVENTION

Objective: To assess the effectiveness of the Convention in the light of developments, at national and international levels, in the field of environmental impact assessment.

Method of Work: To review and analyze the implementation of the Convention, in consultation with the Implementation Committee and other stakeholders such as the public, NGOs and proponents.

Organizational aspects: A task force with ... as lead country will organize meetings with the aim of preparing a report on its findings, including possible amendments and supporting rationale for consideration by the Working Group and thereafter to the Parties at their third meeting for possible adoption. .

Time schedule: (to be specified)

9. REVIEW OF GUIDANCE ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN A TRANSBOUNDARY CONTEXT

Objective: To review the guidance on public participation as included in Decision II/3 with the aim of further strengthening its practical application under the Convention.

Method of Work: Parties, non-Parties, competent authorities and the public will collect and disseminate information dealing with all aspects of public participation in a transboundary context.

Organizational aspects:will act as lead country, with the assistance of the secretariat, to prepare a report reviewing the implementation of the guidance on public participation in a transboundary context based on information to be provided by Parties.

Time schedule: (to be specified)