



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

CP.TEIA/2005/10
3 October 2005

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE TRANSBOUNDARY
EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS**

High-level Commitment Meeting
Geneva, 14 – 15 December 2005

DRAFT DECLARATION *

**BY THE HEADS OF DELEGATION
OF THE EAST EUROPEAN, CAUCASIAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN
AND THE SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

Introduction

1. We, heads of delegation of (*names of EECCA and SEE countries*) met in Geneva on 14-15 December 2005 at a high-level commitment meeting organized under the auspices of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. We were joined at this meeting by heads of delegation of (*names of other UNECE member countries*).
2. We recognize the challenge presented by the Convention, whose main objective is to prevent industrial accidents, in particular, those with transboundary effects, and to prepare for and respond to such accidents.

* An agreement on this text was reached at an open-ended joint meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties and the Working Group on Implementation, held in Warsaw on 14 September 2005. Representatives of 28 UNECE member countries (including 17 EECCA and SEE countries) and the European Commission attended the meeting.

3. We note that the implementation of the Convention requires the coordinated involvement of a number of competent authorities at the national level. Certain tasks also require vertical coordination between the authorities at the national level and those at the regional and local levels. Finally, implementing the Convention also requires cross-border cooperation between neighbouring countries and the involvement of the industry and the public.

4. We welcome the numerous activities under the auspices of the Conference of the Parties aimed at improving industrial safety in our countries, in particular the subregional workshop on the implementation of the Convention held in 2003. We acknowledge that these activities led to the preparation of the internationally supported assistance programme for the EECCA and SEE countries to enhance our efforts to implement the Convention.

5. We welcome decision 2004/1 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on strengthening the implementation of the Convention, taken in Budapest on 27-30 October 2004, and in particular the adoption of the assistance programme.

6. We gratefully acknowledge the strong support for the assistance programme expressed by many Parties in Budapest and the financial contributions made so far by the Czech Republic, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia and Switzerland thanks to which the programme was launched, thus facilitating the high-level commitment meeting.

Challenges

7. We recognize that most of our countries, in order to implement the Convention, need to strengthen their regulatory and institutional frameworks and to increase human resource capacities.

8. We are aware that this would have a positive influence on the safety of activities involving hazardous substances, many of which need modernization, replacement of obsolete technologies and better maintenance. We recognize the risk of an accident associated with these facilities and that such an accident could have impacts on both human health and the environment in our already highly vulnerable societies.

Our commitment

9. We commit ourselves to addressing these challenges and to making the necessary efforts to implement the Convention.

10. At the same time, we stress that our efforts need to be supported. To this end, we consider the assistance programme as an important tool to enhance our countries' efforts to fully apply the Convention in practice.

11. We reiterate the determination of our countries to improve industrial safety by implementing appropriate safety measures at activities involving hazardous substances. Our countries, therefore, are also strongly committed to implementing the Convention's national tasks and to fulfilling its cross-border and multilateral duties.

12. We stress that most of our countries have already implemented the majority of the Convention's basic tasks clearly defined by the programme (chapter IV, first paragraph of sections A to J). We shall ensure that the remaining tasks will be carried out without delay.

13. We will report on the present state of implementation of these tasks by submitting a national implementation report and, furthermore, we will demonstrate their implementation to the members of the fact-finding teams, set up in accordance with the third step of the action plan to implement the assistance programme.

14. We welcome the visits of the fact-finding teams in our countries and will, in cooperation with the Convention's secretariat, organize their meetings with representatives of: (i) all competent authorities at national level; (ii) selected authorities at local level; and (iii) selected activities involving hazardous substances. We will contribute to drawing up individual country reports and an overall report on the implementation of the preparatory stage of the assistance programme for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

Next steps

15. We will provide the fact-finding teams with more insight into the particular areas in which our countries need capacity-building activities and advisory services in order to be able to implement the more complex tasks under the Convention (chapter IV, second paragraph of sections A to J).

16. We will welcome the future assistance provided through the programme. We will thus actively participate in needs-driven assistance activities and receive advisory services. We will also put forward proposals for transboundary pilot projects, including joint response exercises among neighbouring countries.

17. We understand that for those of our countries that have not yet become Parties to the Convention, the assistance received through the programme will promote our accession to the Convention

18. We call on the countries of Central and Western Europe and North America and international financial institutions and programmes to support further the assistance programme financially and in kind in order to facilitate its full implementation.