

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
Eighty-ninth Meeting  
Geneva, 1 February 2017

**EXCOM/CONCLU/89**

**CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS**

## **FORMAL SEGMENT**

### Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda

1. The provisional draft agenda for the 89<sup>th</sup> meeting was adopted.

### Item 2 – Chair’s conclusions from the last meeting

2. The conclusions from the 88<sup>th</sup> meeting of EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/88) were adopted.

## **FORMAL SEGMENT**

### Item 3 - Matters relating to the Committee on Housing and Land Management

3. The Chair of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM), Ms. Elena Szolgayova, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of CHLM over the past year and its plans for the future. She sought EXCOM approval for the renewal of the mandate of the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) for the period 2016-2020 and its revised terms of reference as contained in annex II of document ECE/HBP/S/2016/3.

4. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed appreciation for the work of the CHLM, including on energy efficiency standards for buildings and smart sustainable city indicators, and its positive contributions to HABITAT III, including the side event on road safety.

5. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated CHLM’s work. He requested more details on the network of Geneva UN Charter Centres, and on the lack of resources for the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings.

6. The representative of Belarus supported the renewal of the mandate and terms of reference of the WPLA. She said Belarus was ready to begin a national review on the development of its housing sector and wished to host a Geneva UN Charter Centre, and hoped for relevant support for these efforts.

7. The Chair of the CHLM explained that Geneva UN Charter Centres were hosted by existing organizations and were intended to be a practical means for disseminating the principles of the Charter. Thanks to the network structure, these Centres can collaborate on joint activities such as workshops. Regarding the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, she explained that limited resources had prevented it from launching its work. Given the importance of the topic and the fact that no other organization in the region worked on it, she hoped that funding could soon be secured.

8. The Executive Secretary further informed EXCOM that a project proposal on energy efficiency standards in buildings had been shared with interested delegations, and also hoped that the work could start soon.

9. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Committee on Housing and Land Management for the clear and comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the progress and developments as well as the next steps. EXCOM approves the renewal of the mandate of the Working Party on Land Administration for the period 2016-2020 and its revised terms of reference as contained in annex II of document ECE/HBP/S/2016/3.

## **INFORMAL SEGMENT**

### Item 4 – Preparations for the 2017 Commission session

10. The Secretary of the Commission informed that during a series of informal meetings member States had agreed on the text of the draft provisional agenda and the draft high-level statement of the 2017 Commission session. Possible decision items for consideration at the Commission would be further discussed during upcoming informal consultations. Subject to agreement reached among interested delegations, a short EXCOM meeting was foreseen towards the end of February or in early March to table related draft documents for formal EXCOM approval.

11. The representative of the Russian Federation thanked the secretariat for the good organization and appreciated the collaboration and flexibility displayed by members States during informal consultations on the agenda and the high-level statement, and hoped to see the same spirit during discussions on possible decision items for the Commission. He recalled that his delegation had submitted a draft decision on effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region.

12. The representative of the European Union also appreciated the positive collaboration during the informal consultations. He confirmed his interest in further consultations and looked forward to a successful Commission session.

13. The representative of Belarus also appreciated the constructive consultations and thought the agreed texts were balanced and substantive. He hoped the background documents prepared by the secretariat for the session would refer to the outcomes of the Minsk Conference of October 2016, and that the report of that Conference would be distributed as soon as possible.

14. The Executive Secretary explained that an oral report on the Minsk Conference would be made at the upcoming sessions of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and the Committee on Competitiveness, Innovation and Public-Private Partnerships, which had mandated the organization of the Conference. An informal written report would be made available on the ECE website dedicated to the conference. He hoped delegates would help facilitate high-level participation from their governments at the Commission as well as at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) that would precede it. He also encouraged delegates to reach out to networks of start-ups in their countries to encourage submissions to the Ideas4Change contest, which will take place concurrently.

15. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on the preparations for the 70th anniversary of the Commission. EXCOM approves the draft provisional agenda of the Commission session as contained in informal document 2017/2. EXCOM decides to submit the draft high-level statement as contained in informal document 2017/3 for consideration at the 67th session of the Commission. EXCOM requests the secretariat to convene further informal consultations in order to explore the issues that may require a decision by the Commission.

### Item 5 – Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

16. The Executive Secretary presented informal document 2017/4, containing language agreed by member States during informal consultations for a draft Commission decision on the establishment of the RFSD, and hoped EXCOM would approve its submission to the Commission. He also introduced informal document 2017/8 detailing the extrabudgetary resources needed to organize the RFSD, and hoped delegates could inquire with their governments about possible contributions.

17. The representative of the Russian Federation suggested to insert the phrase “the corresponding decisions of” before the phrase “the Economic and Social Council” in op 2.d of the draft decision.

18. The representative of the European Union and its member States noted that the EU had also taken an active role in the deliberations of the draft decision document and expressed the hope for a successful RFSD in 2017.

19. The representative of Switzerland noted that the draft decision constitutes an important signal of ECE's strong engagement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He hoped the RFSD would help crystallize important issues that should be brought to the attention of the High-level Political Forum. He looked forward to contributing to the organization of the event.

20. The representative of Belarus supported the draft decision and enquired about the use of the above-mentioned extrabudgetary funds.

21. The Director of the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit explained that the funds would cover the travel of 20 speakers and participants from the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia as well as interpretation during some of the round tables.

22. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the proposed draft decision on the establishment of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development as contained in informal document 2017/4 and amended in the room, and decides to submit it for consideration at the 67th session of the Commission. With regard to the extrabudgetary financing needs for the Regional Forum as outlined in informal document 2017/8, EXCOM encourages interested delegations to contact the secretariat.

#### Item 6 – Matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy

23. The Executive Secretary introduced informal document 2017/5, containing the draft ministerial statement of the Energy Ministerial to be hosted in Astana on 11 June 2017, and noted that the update on this item concludes the reporting of the Committee on Sustainable Energy to EXCOM on its 25th session that had been resumed in January 2017. The Committee had endorsed the draft ministerial statement, and recommended its submission to EXCOM for approval and inclusion in the forthcoming sixty-seventh session of the Commission and for subsequent submission to the Energy Ministerial as reflecting the UNECE position. Noting that an informal consultation would soon take place to determine whether the matter warrants a decision by the Commission, he invited EXCOM to take note of the information provided in document 2017/5. Should a Commission decision be deemed necessary, it could be tabled for EXCOM's approval at the planned meeting in late February/early March.

24. The representative of the Russian Federation supported the Energy Ministerial and said he would be ready to take note of the draft ministerial statement with the understanding that it would be finalized in Astana, taking into account possible input from other regions.

25. The representative of the United States supported the Energy Ministerial but said taking note of the draft ministerial statement would be premature as he still had questions on and proposals for it. He preferred to take note of the ongoing consultation process as regards the draft ministerial statement. Regarding the green technology centre proposed to be established under UN auspices, he had questions as to the exact role to be played by the UN and hoped to discuss them with representatives from Kazakhstan at the upcoming informal consultations.

26. The representative of Kazakhstan said he would be happy to provide further explanations. On the draft ministerial statement, he hoped EXCOM would approve its submission to the Commission's consideration in April, with the understanding that it might be further amended in Astana in June.

27. The representative of the European Union and its member States felt it would be premature to take note of the draft ministerial statement given that further work on it was needed, and said he would also have questions for Kazakhstan during the informal consultations.

28. The representative of Kazakhstan said that the secretariat and the Committee on Sustainable Energy were open to amending the draft ministerial statement further but thought it would be good to submit to the Commission a version supported by EXCOM. On the green technology centre, she explained that it was an initiative brought to the General Assembly by the President of Kazakhstan, with the goal of providing relevant expertise to Central Asian countries. Her government was collaborating with the UNDP office in Kazakhstan on the Energy Ministerial and the proposed centre, the ownership of which would remain with the government, possibly under Nazarbayev University. The centre would provide expertise on renewables and green technology and would be a practical contribution to implementing the Paris Agreement. It would not require any financial commitment from member States.

29. The representative of Italy said it would be premature to take note of a text that was still in the draft stage. He asked how comments and questions on the text could be submitted.

30. The Executive Secretary replied that comments could be submitted to the secretariat or to the delegation of Kazakhstan.

31. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on the recent activities of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, and takes note of the information provided on the draft ministerial statement of the Energy Ministerial Conference to be held in Astana in June 2017 and the ongoing consultations that are being held on the draft document.

#### Item 7 - Preparation for the seventieth anniversary of the Inland Transport Committee

32. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that the language of the first decision contained in the draft ministerial resolution expected to be adopted at the upcoming session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) had been finalized by the ITC Bureau, taking into account EXCOM's comments. The decision relates to the reporting structures of the ITC. He said the issue of submitting selected ITC decisions to the Commission would be discussed at informal consultations and then, hopefully, at the next meeting of EXCOM. He also informed EXCOM that the draft proposal for the establishment of a UN Road Safety Fund had been revised after the Global Sustainable Transport Conference in November 2016 and would be submitted to the ITC session. He requested member States to consider language and possible decisions that could supplement discussions on the matter.

33. The representative of the Russian Federation welcomed the agreed language in the draft ministerial resolution and said that his Minister of Transport would attend the ITC session. He hoped the secretariat would disseminate the updated draft proposal on the UN Road Safety Fund. As a member of both ECE and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Russian Federation would strive to ensure that both Regional Commissions carry out work on transport in a coordinated fashion. He hoped other countries belonging to both organizations would join in this effort.

34. The representative of Switzerland welcomed the draft ministerial resolution and said the Swiss delegation to the ITC session would be headed by a State Secretary.

35. The representative of Belarus requested confirmation from the secretariat that the ministerial resolution would not present obligations for those signing it or the ECE, and also that credentials would not be needed, and received this confirmation from the Director of the Sustainable Transport Division.

36. The Chair noted that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for convening the informal consultations on the preparations for the 2017 Commission session, and looks forward to continuing this process to advance the planning further.

#### Item 8 - Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management

37. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that the Director of the Statistics Division had participated in a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of UN-GGIM:Europe to discuss possible modalities for closer collaboration with ECE with the goal of preparing a concrete proposal for EXCOM's consideration. During the discussions, it had been clarified that the long-term aim should be for UNECE provide a sustainable secretariat for UN-GGIM:Europe, as part of a specific work programme on geospatial information management. At present, secretariat support to UN-GGIM:Europe is provided by EuroGeographics, an NGO in Brussels. UN-GGIM's Executive Committee had noted that the most likely scenario would be a gradual transition, with a period where ECE and EuroGeographics should provide a joint secretariat, whose possible modalities remained under discussion. The Executive Secretary said that the secretariat would like to explore with member States how best to take the proposal on closer collaboration forward. The issue would be part of the upcoming informal consultations, in order to determine if a draft decision for the Commission should be prepared.

38. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management and requests the secretariat to hold informal consultations on this matter.

#### Item 9 - ECE Knowledge management strategy

39. The Executive Secretary presented, for EXCOM's information, the ECE Knowledge Management Strategy and its Action Plan, which had been developed further to a recommendation from a 2016 OIOS evaluation of the organization.

40. The representative of the Russian Federation welcomed the document and underlined the importance of preserving and transmitting institutional knowledge as well as incorporating it in future work.

41. The representative of the European Union and its member States also welcomed the document and the concrete targets such as the incorporation of knowledge management issues into performance assessments of staff. He hoped the secretariat would update EXCOM at a later stage on the implementation of the Strategy, bearing in mind the timelines from the Action Plan.

42. The representative of Switzerland welcomed the document and said knowledge management had been a strong focus of the December 2016 event on evaluation co-organized by the Swiss government and ECE. He hoped to present at the next meeting on EXCOM a proposed decision relating to the outcomes of this event. He supported the request by the representative of the European Union and its member States for updates on the implementation of the Strategy.

43. The Chair concluded that EXCOM welcomes the development of the ECE Knowledge Management Strategy and Action Plan and looks forward to regular updates on its implementation from the secretariat.

#### Item 10 – Resource mobilization strategy: Next steps

44. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that, as follow up to a decision taken at the 86th meeting of EXCOM, on the ECE Resource Mobilization Strategy, a Resource Mobilization Officer (RMO) had been hired in October 2016. She had already delivered a draft Action Plan for Resource Mobilization building on ECE strategic objectives, and worked with Divisions to develop flagship initiatives that put a special emphasis on inter-divisional collaboration. He further informed EXCOM that a briefing for ECE donors was foreseen to take place in March or early April, with the goal to present ECE's main achievements in 2016, share project documents on flagship initiatives, and discuss donor engagement more broadly. He said donor representatives would be invited to present good

practices, case studies or experiences from their national context. The invitation for the event would be circulated in due course. The Executive Secretary also thanked Switzerland for supporting the secretariat's efforts on strengthening evaluation in the organization.

45. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on the implementation of the ECE resource mobilization strategy, and looks forward to further briefings on this matter.

#### Item 11 – ECE collaboration with UNOG on ICT

46. The Executive Secretary presented informal document 2017/7, containing details on the proposed consolidation of ICT services with UNOG as requested by EXCOM at its 88<sup>th</sup> meeting. He explained that this proposal was in line with General-Assembly resolution A/RES/69/262 that called for a reduction of “the level of fragmentation of the current information and communications technology environment across the Secretariat and at all duty stations and field missions” and was also pursuant to the ICT strategy developed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology at UN Headquarters. The arrangement foreseen would not apply to ECE-specific business systems, applications, websites or databases, which would continue to be serviced in-house without disruption. The additional cost of the arrangement would be US\$ 562,429 for 2017, which ECE could cover with either funds or in-kind contribution of staff resources. To provide safeguards and ensure the requisite level of service, the agreement would contain a detailed service level agreement specifying the scope of services to be delivered, a provision for annual joint reviews, and a modification/termination clause if issues of concern arose. The Executive Secretary underlined that this arrangement was intended to increase efficiency, reduce fragmentation in ICT and meet increased cyber security requirements.

47. The representative of the Russian Federation posed the following questions regarding the proposed arrangement:

- i. How much does ECE currently pay to UNOG for ICT services, and is this cost included in the US\$ 562,429 mentioned by the Executive Secretary?
- ii. If the cost is covered via in-kind resources, would the remaining staff of the Information Systems Unit be able to service current and future requests from ECE intergovernmental processes requiring specialized support?
- iii. Would the cost increase in 2018 and later, and how would the secretariat react to such an increase?
- iv. Will the Secretary-General maintain the direction, established by his predecessor, of streamlining and consolidating ICT structures?
- v. How can delegations continue to advocate for budget increase of the ECE in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly in circumstances when the ECE Secretariat voluntarily transmits part of its budget or staff to UNOG?

48. The representative of Switzerland posed the following questions regarding the proposed arrangement:

- i. What does the cost of US\$ 562,429 entail and how will it be paid?
- ii. Will this cost remain the same in the long run?
- iii. What are the risks involved, and the associated mitigation measures?

49. The representative of Belarus echoed the first two questions posed by the Russian Federation and also asked what expenditure from the planned budget would be used to cover the cost of the arrangement if the secretariat chose not to cover it with in-kind resources.

50. In response to the questions, the Executive Secretary clarified that the arrangement would lead to an upgraded and efficient environment for ICT services at ECE and would strengthen programme deliverables, with a number of safety guarantees and close surveillance of implementation to ensure the desired efficiencies. Moreover, it would help address the security deficiencies in ECE's computer systems which had been pointed out by UNOG. The total cost of ICT services is approximately US\$

928,000 with the previously mentioned amount of US\$ 562,429 being the as-yet-unpaid portion of this total. He said he believed this was an administrative issue, but he would not undertake the proposed arrangement in case of objections from EXCOM. He emphasized, however, that member States should then recognize that this could expose the ECE computer systems, and through them the UN system's broader computer framework, to security risks, and would go against General Assembly resolution 69/292 on reducing ICT fragmentation.

51. Given the outstanding questions by the various delegations, the Chair proposed returning to the issue at a later date.

52. The Executive Secretary noted that the arrangement had been under negotiation for a year and would need to be signed soon if it were to go ahead, given that it was intended to cover services for 2017. He deemed the issues part of his managerial responsibilities and noted that he would be able to take accountability for them only if he could exercise his administrative functions with the necessary flexibility.

53. The representative of the Russian Federation said he would not be able to support any decision other than the one proposed by the Chair at the current juncture, as he had to wait for instructions from his capital.

54. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the written explanations and decides that it needs further time to continue consultations on this issue.

#### Item 12 – ECE proposed programme budget for 2018-2019

55. The Executive Secretary made a briefing to EXCOM on the proposed programme budget for 2018-2019 and explained that UNECE had received instructions to cut the budget by slightly over US\$ 1 million, equivalent to 4 posts. He recalled that ECE had already lost 6 posts in the previous year, and that it was the only Regional Commission to not be granted its request for additional resources to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, despite having, by far, the highest number of outputs in terms of meetings, parliamentary documents and technical cooperation per staff member. He said the secretariat was still debating on the difficult question of how to meet these requested budget cuts without impacting mandated activities. As the revised budget estimate was due on 10 February, the secretariat would provide further information once the internal discussions were concluded.

56. The representative of the Russian Federation hoped the secretariat would circulate the presentation used by the Executive Secretary. He recalled that the Fifth Committee had not granted ECE's request for three additional posts to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda due to the lack of a relevant Commission decision. He found this unfortunate and said that ECE needed these resources, including due to its strong involvement in 17 UNDAFs. His delegation had submitted a draft Commission decision on this topic and looked forward to discussing it at the upcoming informal consultations.

57. The representative of the United States said his government would likely not support a request for additional resources. Instead, he proposed that the Executive Secretary be empowered to reprioritize ECE's resources in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

58. The representative of the United Kingdom noted that the delegates accredited to the Fifth Committee had a global overview of the responsibilities of the UN and the member States as a whole and agreed with the representative of the United States on the necessity for reprioritization, which could be discussed at EXCOM. He thought that decreasing the number of meetings could be another way to consider for realizing the budget cuts.

59. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the explanations regarding the proposed programme budget for 2018-2019, and looks forward to further briefings on this matter.



Item 13 - Important new developments: briefing by the Executive Secretary

60. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following recent meeting:
  - i. 25-27 January, Geneva: 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Committee on Environmental Policy
61. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following upcoming event:
  - i. 20-24 February, Geneva: Global Road Safety Films Festival and 70th anniversary session of the Inland Transport Committee

Item 14 – Other business

62. The Chair informed EXCOM that the date of the next meeting would be in early March 2017.
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