

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
108th Meeting
Geneva, 16 December 2019

EXCOM/CONCLU/108

CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS

Meeting of the Executive Committee
16 December 2019

FORMAL SEGMENT

Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda.

1. The provisional draft agenda for the 108th meeting was adopted.

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

2. The conclusions from the 107th meeting of EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/107) were adopted.

Item 3 - Matters relating to the Conference of European Statisticians.

(a) Meeting with the Chair of the Conference of European Statisticians

3. The Chair of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), Ms. Marjo Bruun, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of CES over the past year and its plans for the future. She invited EXCOM to approve the programme of work of the Statistics Subprogramme for 2020, the conversion of the Expert Group on National Accounts into a standing team of specialists under the Conference, and the mandates and terms of reference of certain teams of specialists.
4. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated the work of the Conference, including its Chair and the Secretariat, welcomed the proposed draft documents, and had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval.
5. The representative of Canada expressed support for the planned activities for 2020 and beyond. She said the work of CES in the region often led to the development of international norms and standards for the global statistical system. It was also critical for the development the strong national statistics required to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She highlighted that robust statistics were the bedrock of good governance and evidence-based policymaking and said that Statistics Canada was pleased to collaborate with CES.
6. The representative of Finland aligned with the statement made by the representative of the European Union and its member States. She highlighted the significance of reliable data and the need for comparable, high-quality statistics for decision making. The work of CES in promoting trustworthy statistics and data was an important contribution at both the regional and global levels. Finland fully supported the forward-looking activities for 2020 which focused on topical issues such as the SDGs, migration, poverty etc.
7. The representative of Switzerland said that the work of CES was of high quality and laid the ground for global work. He informed EXCOM that the next UN World Data Forum would be held in Bern in October 2020. The call for sessions would remain open until 31 January 2020 and he encouraged member States to participate. He had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval.

8. The representative of the United States commended the CES' effective use of results-oriented task teams, in which his government actively participated. He looked forward to the CES Roadmap on Statistics for SDGs being updated with emerging challenges and lessons learned and said this Roadmap was valuable for facilitating country-led reporting on the SDGs. He also looked forward to upcoming work on national accounts, especially in the areas of digital economy, globalization, sustainability and well-being, and to the work of the Steering Group on measuring quality of employment, especially in the areas of worker safety, fair treatment in employment, work-life balance, security of work and social protections. He had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval.

9. The representative of the Russian Federation noted the important role of CES for developing the statistical potential of countries and common methodologies for statistical reporting, which was important for strengthening interconnectivity, digitalization and the measuring of progress towards the SDGs. The work of CES was valued by the CIS Statistical Committee as well as the Russian Statistical Service. He stressed the need for an impartial and consistent approach to ensure complete and reliable data. He had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM's approval.

10. The representative of Poland aligned with the statement made by the representative of the European Union and its member States. Poland played an active part in the various subsidiary bodies of the CEES and considered the initiatives of measuring progress towards the SDGs and of developing geospatial information to be of utmost importance to the entire UN community. Poland had recently become Vice-Chair of the CES Bureau, which would strengthen its involvement in future activities.

11. The representative of Belarus supported the activities foreseen for 2020 and affirmed Belarus' readiness to participate in them. He had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM's approval.

12. The Director of the Statistics subprogramme noted that the success of CES was due to the contributions of experts from member States and to the excellent coordination and partnerships with other international actors active in the region such as Eurostat, OECD etc.

13. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Conference of European Statisticians for the comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the activities and achievements of the Conference and being kept aware of future directions of its work.

(b) Decisions on matters related to the Conference of European Statisticians.

14. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2020 as contained in documents ECE/CES/2019/15 and ECE/CES/2019/15/Add.1; the conversion of the Expert Group on National Accounts into a standing team of specialists under the Conference with terms of reference as contained in document ECE/CES/2018/11 and presented in annex I of ECE/EX/2019/L.9; and the mandates and terms of reference of the following teams of specialists established under the Conference of European Statisticians, as contained in the annexes to ECE/EX/2019/L.9:

- i. Steering Group on measuring quality of employment (2020–2024), as contained in annex II;

- ii. Steering Group on gender statistics (2020–2024), as contained in annex III;
- iii. Steering Group on migration statistics (2020–2024), as contained in annex IV;
- iv. Steering Group on climate change-related statistics (2020–2024), as contained in annex V;
- v. Task Force to test and further develop the framework for measuring the value of official statistics (2020–2021), as contained in annex VI;
- vi. Task Force on measuring the quality of administrative sources for use in censuses (2020–2021), as contained in annex VII;
- vii. Task Force on measuring social exclusion (2020–2021), as contained in annex VIII.

Item 4 - Matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy.

(a) Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy:

15. The Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (CSE), Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of CSE over the past year and its plans for the future. He invited EXCOM to approve the programme of work of the Sustainable Energy Subprogramme for 2020, the renewal of the mandate of certain expert groups under the Committee and their work plans for 2020-2021.

16. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated the work of the Committee while looking forward to receiving the concept for the second phase of the Pathways Project for consultation with member States before official presentation to EXCOM, and inquired when this concept would be finalized and the consultations would take place. She expressed no further comments on the submitted report.

17. The representative of the United States supported the work of CSE and thought the Committee provided a pragmatic platform to discuss practical options for transitioning to a sustainable energy system. He noted that the United States' approach to energy recognizes that the cost-effectiveness of renewable energy and storage is leading to the possibility of clean energy portfolios and that the United States incorporates the use of all energy sources and technologies cleanly and efficiently, including nuclear energy and fossil fuels. In international climate discussions, the United States offered a realistic and pragmatic model backed by real world results, which showed that innovation and open markets lead to fewer emissions and more secure sources of energy. He noted that increasing demand for energy resource minerals could lead to strain on the provision of the latter, and hoped CSE would promote diverse and sustainable mineral supply chains through exchange of financial, regulatory and technical best practice. The G20 and the International Energy Agency (IEA) had both recognized that the transition to sustainable energy systems could include clean use of all energy sources including nuclear and fossil. According to the IEA, for example, lifetime extension for existing nuclear power plants was often the lowest cost option for power generation and an important component of cost-effective emission reduction strategies. The G20 had also recognized opportunities for further development of innovative, clean and efficient technologies to facilitate the transition, including hydrogen and, as appropriate, carbon capture and storage. The Pathways Project was a pragmatic reflection of these factors and facilitated informed decision-making. He supported the project and noted the United States plans to provide financial support to the coal-related part of phase 2 of the project once the project is finalized.

18. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed satisfaction with the results of the first phase of the Pathways Project and echoed the question of the representative of the European Union on the proposal for the second phase. The Russian Federation also looked forward to participating in the position paper on the achievement of carbon neutrality in the region by 2050, which would be presented to the Secretary-General in 2020. He noted that gender mainstreaming in the work on energy was not one of the priorities of the Committee and did not wish to overload the agenda of technical bodies with gender issues. He had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM's approval.

19. The representative of Belarus appreciated the Committee's work, the International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, and the completion of the first phase of the Pathways Project. He supported the activities planned for 2020 and had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM's approval.

20. Mr. Keinhorst said discussions on the second phase of the Pathways Project, including on its financing, were ongoing. He envisaged a subregional deep dive for Central Asia in 2020, which would present an opportunity for cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. He hoped to present the second phase concept to EXCOM in time to start activities in the second half of 2020.

21. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy for the comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the activities and achievements of the Committee and being kept aware of future directions of its work.

(b) Decisions on matters related to the Committee on Sustainable Energy.

22. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the programme of work of the sustainable energy subprogramme for 2020, as contained in document ECE/ENERGY/2019/3; the renewal of the mandates of the Groups of Experts on Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Cleaner Electricity Systems, Coal Mine Methane, and Gas for the period 2020–2021; and of the Expert Group on Resource Management for the period 2020–2024; and the work plans of the above six subsidiary bodies for 2020–2021 as contained in documents ECE/ENERGY/2019/6, ECE/ENERGY/2019/7, ECE/ENERGY/2019/8, ECE/ENERGY/2019/9, ECE/ENERGY/2019/10, and ECE/ENERGY/2019/11.

Item 5 - Matters relating to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.

(a) Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management:

23. The Chair of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM), Ms. Doris Andoni, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of CUDHLM over the past year and its plans for the future. She invited EXCOM to approve the programme of work of the Housing and Land Management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population Subprogramme for 2020, the revised terms of reference of the Working Party on Land Administration and its programme of work for 2020-2021.

24. The representative of the European Union and its member States asked when the proposed 2020 Forum of Mayors would take place, highlighting a number of outstanding

questions that would be discussed within the Committee's Bureau and a subsequent Steering Committee. She also believed that the 2021 Forum deserved further discussions, namely on its location, date, format, and links to the 2021 session of the Committee or other high-level UNECE events. She preferred to keep the details of the 2021 Forum open.

25. The representative of Belarus supported the Committee's work and expressed appreciation for the second Country Profile of Belarus that had been presented at the Committee's 70th session. He supported the activities planned for 2020, including on smart cities, and the Committee's willingness to continue working on energy saving, environmentally clean technologies. He had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM's approval.

26. The representative of the Russian Federation said the work of the Committee was important and of good quality. The Day of Cities organized in April 2019 had shown the interest of local governments in joining international discussions and exchanging experience of SDG implementation. He fully supported holding the Forum of Mayors in 2020 and 2021 in connection with the Committee sessions. He saw potential for strengthening cooperation between CUDHLM and CSE. He had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM's approval.

27. The representative of the Czech Republic said that the work of the Committee was very important in light of increasing urbanization worldwide and that his government had for many years provided financial support to it. He attached great value to the contribution of this work to the achievement of several SDGs, particularly of SDG 11. He aligned himself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union and its member States.

28. The representative of Switzerland appreciated the Committee's efforts to align its activities with the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing. The most recent Committee session had recognized the important role of cities and local authorities in SDG implementation and had thus decided to organize the Forum of Mayors. Switzerland supported the initiative and had secured a venue to hold the 2020 Forum in Geneva on 6 October 2020.

29. The representative of the United States supported the work of the Committee, especially in the area of regulatory barriers to construction of affordable housing and encouraging landlords to participate more frequently in government-sponsored rental assistance programs. He highlighted relevant initiatives undertaken by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, namely US Executive Order 13878 on the elimination of regulatory barriers to construction of housing, the Housing Choice Voucher Program and an upcoming study on the problems facing very low income renters. He supported the Forum of Mayors and said his government would provide suggestions for cities whose mayors could be approached for participation. He had no objection to Switzerland's proposed date of 6 October 2020.

30. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management for the comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the activities and achievements of the Committee and being kept aware of future directions of its work.

(b) Decisions on matters related to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.

31. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the programme of work of the Housing and Land Management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2020 as contained in document ECE/HBP/2019/8; the revised terms of reference of the Working Party on Land Administration for the period 2021–2025 as contained in document ECE/HBP/2019/6; and the programme of work of the Working Party on Land Administration for 2020–2021, as contained in document ECE/HBP/2019/7.

Item 6 - Matters relating to the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry.

(a) Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry:

32. The Chair of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), Mr. Guy Robertson, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of COFFI over the past year and its plans for the future. He invited EXCOM to approve the programme of work of the Forests and Forest Industry Subprogramme for 2020, the activities for 2020 and proposed publications for 2020 and 2021, and establishment, terms of reference or extension of mandate of various Teams of Specialists under the Committee.

33. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated the work of the Committee, and had no objections to the decisions tabled for EXCOM's approval.

34. The representative of the United States welcomed the increased attention to reforestation and enhancing resilience, as well as the extensive work of COFFI in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and thought these efforts would lead to enhanced reforestation in the subregion. He recognized the importance of the Annual Forest Products Market Review and the efforts by the relevant Team of Specialists in improving the accuracy and consistency of data. On the potential of sustainable wood products in circular and bioeconomies, he supported efforts to improve resource efficiency and reduce waste, especially when these advanced economic growth and innovation by promoting recovery and recycling of end-of-life products. Noting that circular economy was one approach among many to that end, he encouraged a focus on multiple approaches rather than a single one. As a boreal country, the United States welcomed the establishment of the Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests and looked forward to participating therein. He said it would be important to maintain focus on the wide range of issues pertaining to boreal forests, for example collaboration with indigenous peoples, which was a prominent issue in Alaska.

35. The representative of Poland aligned with the statement made by the representative of the European Union and its member States. She emphasized the relevance of the work of COFFI and the successful implementation of the Integrated Programme of Work (IPoW) for 2018-2019, noting that they supported the critical role of forests for achieving the SDG and enhanced synergies and cooperation in the region.

36. The representative of Finland aligned with the statement made by the representative of the European Union and its member States. She expressed satisfaction at the progress on the IPoW and appreciated the main theme of the recent COFFI session: circular economy. She noted that this allowed Finland to demonstrate new innovative forest products. She also appreciated the establishment of the Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests.

37. The representative of the Russian Federation noted that the partnership between UNECE and FAO strengthened regional cooperation on forest management and welcomed the efforts towards implementation of the Warsaw IPoW. He noted with satisfaction the establishment of the Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests and the changes to the Rules of Procedure of COFFI concerning the participation of non-State actors in the Committee. He noted that the consolidated list of possible decisions for the 77th session of the COFFI had been useful for negotiations and hoped it could become a practice followed by other committees.

38. The representative of Switzerland had no objections to the decisions tabled for EXCOM's approval. He relayed a message of appreciation for the Committee from its outgoing Swiss Chair and Vice-Chair, Mr. Christophe Dürr.

39. The representative of Belarus had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM's approval.

40. The representative of Georgia expressed commitment to sustainable forest management. In 2018, Georgia had joined the Bonn Challenge. The country also subscribed to the Strategy for Greening the Landscapes and Infrastructure of Caucasus and Central Asia discussed at the recent COFFI session. She noted this Strategy did not duplicate existing initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda, the Bonn Challenge or ECCA30, and aligned regional activities by engaging all relevant stakeholders and organizations. She believed it would help scale up actions, investments, results and collaboration on landscape restoration, and was ready to participate in the further development of the Strategy. The Joint Section had offered significant support to Georgia on forest landscape restoration and the development of a national forest monitoring system.

41. The representative of Azerbaijan appreciated the assistance provided to her country by COFFI and the joint secretariat and had no objections to the decisions tabled for EXCOM's approval.

42. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry for the comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the activities and achievements of the Committee and being kept aware of future directions of its work.

(b) Decisions on matters related to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.

43. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the Programme of Work of the Forests and Forest Industry Subprogramme for 2020, as contained in document ECE/TIM/2019/12-FO:EFC/2019/12; activities for 2020 as contained in Annex III of document ECE/TIM/2019/2-FO:EFC/2019/2 as well as the proposed publications planned for 2020 and 2021 as contained in Annex IV; the establishment and terms of reference of a new Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests, as contained in Annex II of ECE/TIM/2019/2-FO:EFC/2019/2; the revised terms of reference of the Team of Specialists on Forest Sector Outlook as, contained in Annex II of ECE/TIM/2019/2-FO:EFC/2019/2; and the extension of mandate for the period 2020–2021 of the following Teams of Specialists, as contained in document ECE/TIM/2017/2-FO:EFC/2017/2:

- i. Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management;
- ii. Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products;

- iii. Team of Specialists on Forest Products Statistics;
- iv. Team of Specialists on Wood Energy;
- v. Team of Specialists on Forest Communication - Forest Communicators' Network;
- vi. Team of Specialists on Green Jobs - Joint ILO/ECE/FAO Expert Network.

INFORMAL SEGMENT

Item 7 – Proposed programme budget for 2021.

44. The Executive Secretary presented the proposed programme budget for 2021 to EXCOM for comments, noting that final instructions on its preparations would be received before the end of the month from the UN Controller.

45. The representative of the European Union and its member States noted the references made to reaching beyond the region and extending collaboration with UN entities. Although supportive of this, she highlighted ongoing resource shortages. In this context, she supported region-to-region cooperation and encouraged the secretariat to explore possible joint administration of instruments with other Regional Commissions. In the area of environment, she noted that the number of seminars and trainings had more than doubled while the number of publications had dropped, and inquired whether the discrepancy indicated underestimated priorities. In the area of transport, she said the programme was very important for the EU who was committed to supporting in Geneva and in New York the securing of sufficient resources for the implementation of the mandate. In the area of energy, she noted the growing network of International Centres of Excellence, including those opening outside the region based on demand by the host countries. She encouraged to focus this collaboration within the region rather than outward. In the area of forests, she looked forward to the informal consultations in January 2020 on opening negotiations for a possible Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in the UNECE region.

46. The representative of the United States inquired whether enhancing collaboration with other regions would not further strain UNECE resources.

47. In response to the EU, the Executive Secretary noted that several discussions on reaching beyond the UNECE region were ongoing and that a related paper would be presented to EXCOM for discussion in the near future. On the International Centres of Excellence, she noted that they did not require any secretariat resources and were financed by the host countries. The secretariat was also working on an inventory of these Centres and would bring it to EXCOM for a discussion in the near future.

48. The Chair concluded that EXCOM takes note of the proposed programme budget for 2021. EXCOM encourages delegations to liaise with their counterparts in New York in order to ensure that their views are well represented at the budget discussions at UN headquarters.

Item 8 - 2020 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

49. The Executive Secretary presented the draft provisional agenda for the 2020 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) to EXCOM for approval.
50. The Director of the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit noted an amendment to the draft agenda changing the ending time of the second day of the event to 13:00 from 16:00.
51. The representative of the Russian Federation suggested changing the topic of roundtable D to “achieving carbon neutrality in the UNECE region”, as this would allow focus not only on reducing emissions but also the development of offsetting technologies.
52. The representative of the European Union approved the agenda as amended.
53. The representative of Switzerland approved the agenda as amended and noted that Switzerland had once again secured the Centre International de Conférences Genève as the meeting venue as it had done in 2018 and 2019.
54. The Chair concluded that EXCOM adopts the provisional agenda of the 2020 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the ECE Region as contained in informal document 2019/46, with the amendments that the second day of the event would end at 13:00 and that the topic for round table D would be “Achieving carbon neutrality in the ECE region”.

Item 9 – Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in the Economic Commission for Europe.

55. The Executive Secretary presented the management response to the 2019 evaluation of gender mainstreaming in UNECE to EXCOM for information.
56. The representative of the United States inquired whether the self-standing gender unit mentioned in the management response to recommendations 17 and 18 would be financed from extrabudgetary or regular funds. In the latter case, he asked how the secretariat would ensure overall budget neutrality.
57. The representative of the Russian Federation echoed the question of the representative of the United States and believed that the implementation of the recommendations from the evaluation should not burden the UNECE regular budget or reduce financing for other areas of work.
58. The representative of the European Union and its member States echoed the question of the representative of the United States.
59. In response to the questions, the head of the Programme Management Unit said a relevant options paper would be presented to EXCOM before June 2020 and that the concerns raised by delegations would be taken into account therein.
60. The Director of the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit underlined that her staff could not take on more work without additional resources.
61. The Chair concluded that EXCOM takes note of the evaluation on "Gender Mainstreaming in the Economic Commission for Europe" and the management response to the document as contained in informal document 2019/47.

Item 10 - Important new updates: briefing by the Executive Secretary

62. The Secretary of the Commission informed EXCOM about the following recent meetings and events:

- i. 29-30 October, Geneva: Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting
- ii. 4-7 November, Geneva: Forêt2019 - the joint 77th session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the 40th session of the FAO European Forestry Commission
- iii. 13-15 November, Geneva: 25th session of the Committee on Environmental Policy
- iv. 19-21 November, Belgrade: 5th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health
- v. 21 November: 14th session of the SPECA Governing Council and the 2019 SPECA Economic Forum
- vi. 28-29 November, 2nd European Clean Air Forum, Bratislava
- vii. 2-13 December, Madrid: COP 25
- viii. 9-13 December, Geneva 39th session of the Executive Body of the Air Convention
- ix. 10-11 December, Vienna: Regional UN System meeting

63. The Secretary of the Commission informed EXCOM about the following upcoming events:

- i. 19-20 February, Stockholm: 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety
- ii. 25-28 February, Geneva: 82nd session of the Inland Transport Committee

Item 11 – Extrabudgetary projects (for approval)

64. Regarding the projects contained in informal documents 2019/51 and 2019/52, the representative of the United States noted that the lack of funding commitments therein provided insufficient transparency for member States. Accordingly, he found it difficult to approve the projects. Should the projects fail to get the projected funding, the outcomes could change significantly, which created additional difficulties in offering approval. He felt these projects signalled a need for member States to offer more clarity on when extrabudgetary projects should be brought to EXCOM for approval and on any possible exceptions. He would offer suggestions in the coming months with a view to achieve maximum transparency and accountability. He felt it prudent to approve the project in informal document 2019/51 for only one year and requested the secretariat to provide an update on the funding for the second year once the commitments were received. He also requested that EXCOM have the opportunity to approve in advance funding provided by actors outside the UNECE region.

65. Regarding the project contained in informal document 2019/51, the representative of the European Union and its member States likewise did not wish to approve the project for two years given that contributions had not been specified in full. While she appreciated the contributions by Switzerland, she noted that it was uncommon to approve projects which had not secured at least 50 per cent (and ideally 100 per cent) of the cost, as this created a lack of transparency. Member States should receive a detailed overview of expected activities and expenses in the approval phase and of completed activities and incurred expenses thereafter. She said she would also engage in discussions to possibly clarify the underlying issues in the

extrabudgetary project approvals, to enable better planning for the Secretariat as well as for the membership. She echoed the suggestion of the representative of the United States to approve the project for 2020 and hoped an updated version 2021 could be submitted to EXCOM as soon as possible with requisite funding secured.

66. In response to the concerns raised by the United States and the EU on the projects in documents 2019/51 and 2019/52, the representative of Switzerland explained that it was difficult for Switzerland to provide clarity on the funding because the projects were not initiated by the government. To commit funding, the Swiss government requested clarity on the project scope, objectivities, activities and budgets, which could not be provided before EXCOM approved the projects. In order to address such discrepancies in the future, he hoped the project approval practices could be adapted. He suggested that interested member States discuss this issue.

67. The representative of France noted that, regarding the project in informal document 2019/51, the Bureau of CUDHLM would meet shortly to discuss it and hopefully provide more clarity.

68. The Secretary of the Commission suggested that project 2019/51 be adopted with an amendment that it would only be adopted for one year, with the 2021 activities to be resubmitted once requisite funding was pledged.

69. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the extrabudgetary project contained in informal documents 2019/48, 2019/49, 2019/50 and 2019/52. EXCOM approves the extrabudgetary project contained in informal document 2019/51, as amended, for one year. EXCOM requests the secretariat to organize informal consultations on the XB process, and to present informal documents 2019/51 and 2019/52 to EXCOM for information once updated.

Item 12 – Other business

70. The Chair informed EXCOM that the next meeting would take place on 17 February 2020.