UNITED NATIONS

Advance Copy

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ECE/1452
19 January 2009

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Sixty-third session
Geneva, 29 March-1 April 2009
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

OTHER ISSUES CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

Note by the Executive Secretary

Summary

This item covers any other issues calling for action by the Commission not addressed under another item of the agenda. At the time of the document's preparation, such action related to the holding in 2010 of ECE's fourth Regional Implementation Meeting for Sustainable Development, as detailed below, and to the approval of the revised Terms of Reference of the Timber Committee.

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I. FOURTH REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. In 2002, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) stated that the “implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Summit should be effectively pursued at the regional and subregional levels, through the regional commissions and other regional and subregional institutions and bodies". The Summit also called on the regional commissions to promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into their work in a balanced way and to facilitate and promote such integration into the work of regional, subregional and other bodies “for example by facilitating and strengthening the exchange of experiences, including national experience, best practices, case studies and partnership experience related to the implementation of Agenda 21”.

2. In this connection, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) at its eleventh session in May 2003 invited the regional commissions to consider organizing regional implementation meetings in collaboration with other regional and subregional organizations to provide regional inputs to the discussions of CSD.

3. The CSD meets annually in New York, in two-year cycles, with each cycle focusing on clusters of specific thematic and cross-sectoral issues, outlined in its multi-year programme of work (2003-2017) (E/CN.17/2003/6).

4. ECE has organized three Regional Implementation Meetings in preparation of CSD-12, CSD-14, and CSD-16 respectively, contributing a regional perspective to the assessment and review of implementation in important areas like water and sanitation, energy, as well as agriculture, land, drought and desertification.

5. CSD-18, to be held in April/May 2010, will start a new two-year-cycle with a focus on the following sectoral issues:

- Transport
- Chemicals
- Waste management
- Mining
- Sustainable consumption and production patterns.

6. The Secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development has already indicated that the regional commissions are expected to provide similar regional inputs to CSD-18 as were provided to the previous sessions, involving the following preparations:

- The organization of Regional Implementation Meetings by each of the five United Nations regional commissions (which presumes preparation of significant assessment papers for the sectoral issues)
- Written contributions to the Secretary-General’s Reports
- The organization of regional panels during the session.

7. While not all issues have the same relevance for all regions, the ECE region is expected to provide inputs with regard to progress and challenges in its member countries.

8. In those areas where ECE does not carry out substantive activities and therefore does not possess the required expertise, other competent organizations and bodies will be asked to assist with the preparation of background documentation.

9. In order to ensure timely preparations, it is proposed that the Commission decide, at its sixty-third session, to organize the Fourth Regional Implementation Meeting in preparation of CSD-18. The suggested dates are 26-27 January 2010 (two full days), which would allow sufficient time for preparing the Meeting as well as allowing for its results to be fed into CSD-18.

10. To prepare for and convene the Regional Implementation Meeting for CSD-18, it is estimated that approximately US$ 45,000 would be needed, as follows:

- For at least one consultant paper on the sectoral issues (see paragraph 8 above): US$ 20,000
- For travel and daily subsistence allowance of one representative from each of the eligible[1] member States: US$ 25,000.

11. Past experience suggests that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will be unable to provide funds for consultants as well as for the participation of most countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South-East European countries.

Proposed Actions

12. It is proposed that the Commission decide to organize the Fourth Regional Implementation Meeting in preparation of CSD-18 on 26-27 January 2010 in Geneva. ECE member States are invited to explore the possibilities of making an extrabudgetary contribution to help defray the above-mentioned costs.

II. REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE TIMBER COMMITTEE

13. The Work Plan on ECE Reform provides that “the Terms of Reference of the Sectoral Committees shall be approved by the Commission.” (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1, para. 24).

14. The Timber Committee, at its sixty-sixth session in October 2008, held jointly with the European Forestry Commission, adopted its Strategic Plan of the ECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry 2008-2013 (ECE/TIM/2008/7) which included the revised Terms of Reference of the Timber Committee.

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[1] According to the criteria for financial support approved by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its fifteenth session, 21-23 April 2008 (ECE/CEP/148, Annex IV).

Proposed Action

15. The Commission is requested to approve the revised Terms of Reference, as contained in document ECE/TIM/2008/7, which are expected to be endorsed by the Executive Committee at its meeting of 27 February 2009.