



Economic and Social Council

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Economic Commission for Europe

Sixty-eighth session

Geneva, 9 and 10 April 2019

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the sixty-eighth session¹

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 9 April 2019.

The session provides a forum for the consideration of issues of importance for the economic integration and cooperation among the countries of the region and provides an opportunity to review the progress of the Commission's activities.

The session also enables the Governments of member States to examine the secretariat's report on the activities of the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the work accomplished during the two preceding years. Furthermore, Governments are invited to consider decisions to guide the Commission's work for the future.

The following annotations to the provisional agenda provide background information on each of the proposed items and suggestions regarding their consideration at the session.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda.

¹ Delegates attending the sixty-eighth session of the Commission are requested to either register online or complete the registration form available at the website <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50174> and transmit it to the ECE secretariat, if possible at least two weeks prior to the session, either by e-mail unece.68session@un.org or fax (+41 (0)22 917 0566). At the Pregny Gate of the Palais des Nations (14, Avenue de la Paix), delegates should obtain an identification badge from the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section (see map and other practical information available at www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html) which is open every work day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. In case of difficulty, please contact the ECE secretariat by telephone at +41(022) 917 8293.



A. High-level segment

Smart Sustainable Cities: Drivers for Sustainable Development

2. High-level dialogue.
3. Roundtable: Regional and national solutions towards smart sustainable cities and the impact of the instruments of the Economic Commission for Europe.
4. Consideration of the high-level statement.

B. General segment

5. Report on activities of the Executive Committee.
6. Other issues calling for decision by the Commission.
7. Election of officers.
8. Other business.
9. Adoption of the report of the session.

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda

Documentation: E/ECE/1487

1. The Commission will adopt its agenda.

A. High-level segment

2. The high-level segment of the 2019 Commission will be held under the overall theme “Smart sustainable Cities: Drivers for Sustainable Development.”
3. A smart sustainable city is defined as an innovative city that uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other means to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness, while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social, environmental as well as cultural aspects.²
4. By 2050 almost three quarters of the world’s population will live in urban areas. In the ECE region, currently a large proportion of the population lives in cities - from less than 50 per cent in Central Asia to more than 75 per cent in Europe and 80 per cent in North America. This provides a tremendous opportunity, as well as a necessity, to strengthen cities as drivers of sustainable development far beyond their borders.
5. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that technological progress is needed to achieve global prosperity, poverty alleviation and environmental

² Definition endorsed by the Committee on Housing and Land Management in 2015 (ECE/HBP/184) and contained in ITU-T Recommendation Y.4903.

sustainability. However, new technologies must be green, smart, sustainable, and accessible to all to achieve these goals. Innovative solutions such as clean energy, high performance buildings, innovative housing supply and finance, intelligent and sustainable transportation, green technologies and infrastructure, e-business, e-government and state-of-the-art standards and norms are all essential elements to enable cities to continue to drive sustainable development and become Smart and Sustainable Cities.

6. Global and international agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Action, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing and other key international initiatives provide new policy frameworks which enable cooperation amongst and between different thematic areas and different levels of government. They also require a new understanding of action to be taken. The high-level segment will seek to explore related questions, including:

- Where will cities in the ECE region be heading to in 2030? What new challenges and opportunities are expected? What lessons and good practices should be considered?
- How can the role of cities be used to accelerate and deepen the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
- What do these trends mean for ECE and the collaboration with its stakeholders?

2. High-level dialogue

7. The high-level dialogue will focus on current trends related to smart sustainable cities in the region, ECE initiatives aimed at supporting governments in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, and the impact of relevant ECE norms, standards and Conventions in the ECE region and beyond.

8. It will consider action taken at different levels of government, across sectors and in cooperation with a broad range of stakeholders to foster sustainable solutions for how cities can provide inhabitants of all ages with a high quality of life, not leaving anyone behind, while becoming centres of innovation and competitiveness.

9. The high-level dialogue will be opened by a keynote address that sets the stage for the discussion.

10. Afterwards, Heads of Delegation are invited to make interventions.

11. The Executive Secretary will make a presentation on the work of ECE on the nexus “Smart Sustainable Cities”.

3. Roundtable: Regional and national solutions towards smart sustainable cities and the impact of the instruments of the Economic Commission for Europe

Documentation: E/ECE/1489

12. The roundtable session will be dedicated to the topic “Regional and national solutions towards smart sustainable cities and the impact of ECE instruments”. Discussions will focus on practical examples and success stories that demonstrate the benefits of integrated planning and comprehensive solutions for smart, sustainable and resilient cities and highlight the impact of relevant ECE instruments that support this approach. Examples may be taken from the following areas:

- Smart sustainable cities as hubs and drivers of innovation, trade competitiveness and the transition towards a circular economy
- Interoperability of city systems: Harvesting the potential of block chain, internet of things and Artificial Intelligence
- Affordable, decent and healthy housing, and energy efficient buildings
- Sustainable transport in cities, road safety
- Increasing urban resilience to natural and man-made disasters and mitigating/adapting to climate change
- Sustainable use of land and green public spaces
- Reducing the environmental footprint of cities
- New approaches to public-private partnerships, innovative financing, policies, regulation, institutions, and technologies
- Accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, and responsiveness of urban decision-making.

13. Participants will include representatives from Governments, civil society, academia, the private sector, and the United Nations system. A participant of the “Day of Cities” that will precede the Commission session will report on the roundtable discussions among Mayors on key issues and challenges for cities in the ECE region.

4. Consideration of the high-level statement

Documentation: E/ECE/1490

14. Member States will be invited to consider the high-level statement reiterating their commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda; articulating the value added and impact of the work of ECE, including its realignments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the organization of its work around four nexus areas, and highlighting the important role of the Commission within the regional architecture of the United Nations Development System. After consideration, the high-level statement will be proposed for endorsement.

B. General segment

5. Report on activities of the Executive Committee

Documentation: E/ECE/1491

15. Following the review of the ECE reform, EXCOM was established in 2006 to act as the governing body of ECE during the intersessional period of the Commission. Member States will be provided with a report of the activities of EXCOM since the last Commission session and will be invited to provide their views and comments on the functioning of EXCOM.

6. Other issues calling for decision by the Commission

Documentation: E/ECE/1492

16. The Commission will be invited to approve any other decision as necessary.

7. Election of officers

17. Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission states: “The Commission shall, at each biennial session, elect a country from among its members to hold the chair for the period of the biennium. The representative of the elected country will be the Chairperson. The Commission will also, at the same meeting, elect two countries whose representatives will become the Vice-Chairpersons for the period of the biennium. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission will also serve as the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Executive Committee for the period of the biennium.” Accordingly, under this item, elections for the Chair and Vice-Chairs for a period of two years will be held.

8. Other business

9. Adoption of the report of the session

18. The Commission will be invited to adopt the report of the sixty-eighth session.

III. Tentative timetable

| <i>Time</i> | <i>Agenda item</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday, 9 April 2019 | |
| 10:00–10:30 | Opening and adoption of the agenda Opening remarks: - Chairperson - Executive Secretary - Other high-level officials |
| High-level segment: Smart Sustainable Cities: Drivers for Sustainable Development | |
| 10:30–13:00 | Item 2: High-level dialogue: - Keynote address: Speaker (to be confirmed) - Interventions by Heads of delegation - Presentation by the Executive Secretary on the Nexus “Smart Sustainable Cities” |
| 13:15–14:45 | Lunch break |
| 15:00–18:00 | Item 3: Roundtable: Regional and national solutions towards smart sustainable cities and the impact of ECE instruments |
| Wednesday, 10 April 2019 | |
| High-level segment (continued) | |
| 10:00–10:30 | Item 4: Consideration of the high-level statement |
| General segment | |
| 10:30–11:00 | Item 5: Report on activities of the Executive Committee |
| 11:00–12:00 | Item 6: Other issues calling for decision by the Commission |
| 12:00–12:30 | Item 7: Elections of officers |
| 12:30–13:00 | Item 8: Other business |
| Meeting suspension to finalize the conclusions and decisions | |
| 16:00–17:00 | Item 9: Adoption of report of the session |

The Commission session will be preceded by a “Day of Cities”, to be held at the Palais des Nations on 8 April 2018. Two roundtables of Mayors from cities in the ECE region will allow for peer learning on urban issues, as well as the identification of key issues and challenges for cities in the region. An information fair will showcase innovative solutions towards smart sustainable cities in the ECE region and relevant ECE norms, standards and good practices.