

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Ninetieth Meeting
Geneva, 2 March 2017

EXCOM/CONCLU/90

CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS

Meeting of the Executive Committee
2 March 2017

FORMAL SEGMENT

Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda

1. The provisional draft agenda for the 90th meeting was adopted.

Item 2 – Chair’s conclusions from the last meeting

2. The conclusions from the 89th meeting of EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/89) were adopted.

INFORMAL SEGMENT

Item 3 – Preparations for the 2017 Commission session

3. The Executive Secretary thanked all delegates for their positive and constructive engagement in the preparations for the Commission session. He encouraged further engagement in the side events and hoped member States would be represented at high level during the session.

4. The Secretary of the Commission informed EXCOM that, during a series of informal meetings, member States had developed three draft decisions for the Commission session contained in informal documents 2017/9, 2017/10 and 2017/11. The latter two documents pertained to the issue of transport and had been adjusted based on the outcomes of the recently-concluded session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC). She also said that interested delegations were continuing work on possible draft decisions for the Commission session on the June 2017 Energy Ministerial and the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Pan-European region. If consensus was reached, these could be tabled for approval at the 91st meeting of EXCOM on 24 March 2017. The Secretary noted that the deadline for document translation for the Commission session would have passed by that time and the documentation would then be available in English only.

5. Regarding the draft decision in informal document 2017/9 on “strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management”; the representative of the Russian Federation believed it contained all the necessary elements for carrying out the relevant work and analysing the possibilities for cooperation with the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe (UN-GGIM: Europe). He recalled his inquiry on whether the Chair of the UN-GGIM: Europe Bureau could submit a formal notification as to that body’s intentions on exploring the possibilities of cooperation with ECE. He had been informed by the secretariat that a letter to that effect had been received, and asked for it to be circulated. The letter was circulated in the room by the secretariat. The representative of the Russian Federation then said that he had no further comments on its contents.

6. The Director of the Statistics Division further informed EXCOM that she would be participating at a UN-GGIM: Europe meeting later in the month, where the topic would be

furthering cooperation on the integration of statistical and geospatial work in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. The representative of the European Union and its member States supported the text of the draft decision as contained in 2017/9.

8. The Chair concluded that EXCOM decides to submit the draft decision as contained in informal document 2017/9 for consideration at the 67th session of the Commission.

9. Regarding the “Draft Resolution of the Economic and Social Council on the reporting of the Inland Transport Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe,” contained in the draft decision in informal document 2017/10 on “Decision 1 of the Ministerial Resolution adopted at the 79th session of the Inland Transport Committee”; the representative of the European Union and its member States suggested that the two operative paragraphs be merged and amended as follows:

“Decides to mandate the Inland Transport Committee of UNECE to report to the Economic and Social Council on an annual basis for information purposes, while leaving the organizational structure of the UNECE secretariat, as well as the programme-budgeting functions and oversight unchanged, paying special attention to issues of global regulatory governance through the United Nations transport Conventions and other means.”

10. With regard to the same paragraphs, the representative of the Russian Federation requested to change the acronym “UNECE” to “ECE” in line with the established usage in official United Nations documentation. He said the results of the ITC’s 79th session were very important and reiterated the support he had expressed to the draft decision in question at that occasion. He inquired why the representative of the European Union had deleted the phrase “under the purview of the Committee” in his proposed amendments.

11. The representative of the European Union and its member States replied that this deletion would bring the text closer to what had originally been agreed by member States regarding Decision 1 of the Ministerial Resolution.

12. The representative of the Russian Federation asked for confirmation that this deletion did not imply that the United Nations transport Conventions would not be administered by ECE.

13. The representative of the European Union and its member States provided this confirmation.

14. The representative of Switzerland supported the text of the draft decision including the proposed amendments by the European Union.

15. Consensus was reached that the previous operating paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Draft Resolution of the Economic and Social Council on the reporting of the Inland Transport Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe should be replaced by the following text:

“Decides to mandate the Inland Transport Committee of ECE to report to the Economic and Social Council on an annual basis for information purposes, while leaving the organizational structure of the ECE secretariat, as well as the programme-budgeting functions and oversight unchanged, paying special attention to issues of global regulatory governance through the United Nations transport Conventions and other means.”

16. The Chair concluded that EXCOM decides to submit the draft decision as contained in informal document 2017/10 and further amended during the meeting, for consideration at the 67th session of the Commission.

17. Regarding informal document 2017/11, the representative of Germany said her government had not formed a final position on the draft proposal on establishing the United Nations Road Safety Fund mentioned therein. She asked the secretariat for further written information on the timetable regarding the consultation possibilities and process.

18. The Executive Secretary said the consultation process should be driven by member States and would further be driven by the Secretary-General and the General Assembly once ECE submitted the draft proposal to the former. As it was important to ensure a thorough consultation process, it was difficult to lay out a precise schedule and deadlines. Nevertheless, he said the secretariat would do its best to provide the requested answers.

19. The representative of the Russian Federation suggested that the draft Commission decision contained in informal document 2017/11 be modified as follows, and explained that replacing the phrase “establishing the United Nations Road Safety Fund” with “establishing a Road Safety Trust Fund” would remove any possible appearance of prejudging future relevant decisions by the Secretary-General and the General Assembly:

*“Welcomes the decision of the Inland Transport Committee to look into the possibility of establishing a Road Safety Trust Fund through, *inter-alia*, multi-stakeholder and intergovernmental expert consultations, with a view to developing a concrete proposal for the consideration of the Secretary-General in due course, and encourages Member States to become involved in this process.”*

20. The Chair concluded that EXCOM decides to submit the draft decision as contained in informal document 2017/11 and amended in the meeting for consideration at the 67th session of the Commission.

Item 4 – Extrabudgetary projects (for approval)

21. The Executive Secretary said that the extrabudgetary project contained in informal document 2017/12 was exceptionally presented without a donor as no contributors had yet been identified.

22. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the extrabudgetary project contained in informal document 2017/12, and requests the secretariat to provide an update at its next meeting on the status of funding of this project.

Item 5 – Other business

23. The Executive Secretary recalled that the secretariat had received two requests to reduce its proposed programme budget for 2018-2019. One request related to the realization of benefits from the implementation of UMOJA. The secretariat proposed to meet this request by cutting two General Service posts, one from the Information Systems Unit which would become vacant within one year, and one, currently vacant, from the Sustainable Energy Division. He said the secretariat had been granted with more flexibility in meeting the second budget reduction request. The proposal was to meet this request by abolishing the vacant D1 post in the Programme Management Unit (PMU) and establishing a P4 post within the same unit to cover evaluation, audits and risk management and by reducing the budget of the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation as well as non-post expenses on consultants, travel and external printing. He noted this proposal would avoid the need to terminate existing contracts, streamline the management structure of the Office of the Executive Secretary, and maintain the integrity of the oversight and control functions of the PMU. He said the secretariat had done its best to address the budget reductions without a negative impact on its deliverables. He noted that the proposal was still being discussed with New York and would be shared with member States once finalized.

24. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed his disappointment at ECE having to reduce its level of resources, and hoped these proposed changes would not affect the quality of the work done by the divisions.

25. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that he would be absent for four weeks starting on 8 March 2017 due to personal reasons.

26. The Chair informed EXCOM that the next meeting would be on 24 March 2017.
