

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Ninety-second Meeting
Geneva, 23 June 2017

EXCOM/CONCLU/92

CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS

FORMAL SEGMENT

Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda

1. The Chair welcomed Ms. Olga Algayerova, the newly appointed Executive Secretary, and invited her to give her opening remarks (see annex).
2. Member States congratulated Ms. Algayeova on her appointment and wished her well in her new role.
3. The provisional draft agenda for the 92nd meeting was adopted.

Item 2 – Chair’s conclusions from the last meeting

4. The conclusions from the 91st meeting of EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/91) were adopted.

FORMAL SEGMENT

Item 3 - Matters relating to the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships

(a) Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships

5. The Chair of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (CICPPP), Mr. Sharon Kedmi, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of CICPPP over the past year and its plans for the future.
6. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed satisfaction with the work of the Committee and hoped it would take into account the outcomes of the October 2016 Minsk conference on “Laying the foundation in the UNECE region for economic integration and sustainable development towards 2030”. He emphasized that PPPs are an important factor in the sustainable development agenda as they help solve social and economic challenges and promote social responsibility in business. He wished to hear more details about an event on PPP models in energy that had taken place at the Energy Ministerial in Astana in June 2017.
7. The representative of Belarus appreciated the Committee’s results. He said innovation and PPPs were very important for the achievement of the SDGs and expressed satisfaction with his country’s cooperation with UNECE in these fields. He supported the decisions bought before EXCOM by the Committee.
8. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated the intersectoral linkages mentioned in informal document 2017/25 between the work of CICPPP, the Committee on Environmental Policy, the Inland Transport Committee and the Committee on Sustainable Energy. He asked for more information on the International People First PPP Forum that had taken place in Hong Kong in May 2017 and the one scheduled to take place in Qindao shortly.
9. The Chair of the Committee said he had not attended the Astana event mentioned by the representative of the Russian Federation but that he would be pleased to obtain and circulate the relevant information.

10. With regard to the PPP fora in Hong Kong and Qindao, the representative of the secretariat explained that UNECE was aligning the development of its international standards for PPPs with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and incorporating social considerations in addition to economic ones. As other regions have seen an increase in the use of PPPs, with China hosting many of them, the international fora allow for a rich exchange of experience with experts from non-UNECE countries, which improves the development of UNECE's PPP standards.

11. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships for the clear and comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the progress and developments as well as the next steps.

(b) Decisions on matters related to the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships.

12. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves i) the programme of work for 2018-2019 of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships as contained in ECE/EX/2017/L.4; ii) the renewal of the mandate of the PPP Business Advisory Board as contained in ECE/EX/2017/L.5; and iii) the renewal of the mandate and revised terms of reference of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies as contained in ECE/EX/2017/L.6

Item 4 - Matters relating to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

(a) Meeting with the Chair of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

13. The Chair of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), Mr. Lance Thompson, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of UN/CEFACT over the past year and its plans for the future.

14. The representative of the European Union and its member States noted the relevance and usefulness of the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide, as well as its recent update. He expressed satisfaction about the emphasis in UN/CEFACT's work on promoting the SDGs. He said the EU and its member States noted the connection between CITES and the Core Component Library. The EU and its member States also took special note of the relevance and usefulness of the UN Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG).

15. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business for the clear and comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the progress and developments as well as the next steps.

(b) Decisions on matters related to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business.

16. Regarding the Sustainable Fisheries Team of Specialists of the UN/CEFACT, the representative of the United States supported the concept, welcomed efforts to improve the sustainability of fisheries management and encouraged enhanced cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization on this topic. He noted that there exist some regional fisheries management organizations that have standards in place, and that there is not necessarily one standard that fits all. In recognition of this, he proposed to amend paragraphs 2 and 3 of the terms of reference contained in document ECE/EX/2017/L.9 to read as follows:

2. The objective of the Team of Specialists is to promote, facilitate and support the implementation of the Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (FLUX) standard or other appropriate sustainable fisheries standards on a global scale.

3. *To achieve this objective, the Team of Specialists will:*

(a) Further develop and actively promote the FLUX standard and other appropriate sustainable fisheries standards at both policy and technical level;

(b) Share experiences on the implementation of the FLUX standard and other existing sustainable fisheries standards;

(c) Develop and share best practices on sustainable fishery standards;

(d) Advise and assist on implementation issues of the FLUX standard or other sustainable fisheries standards to promote interoperability of standards;

(e) Proposes changes to the standard to the Agricultural Domain.

17. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves i) the consolidated United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) mandate and terms of reference as contained in ECE/EX/2017/L.7, ii) the programme of work for 2017-2018 of the UN/CEFACT as contained in ECE/EX/2017/L.8, iii) the mandate and terms of reference of the Sustainable Fisheries Team of Specialists of the UN/CEFACT as contained in ECE/EX/2017/L.9 and further amended in the room, and iv) the mandate and terms of reference of the Advisory Group on the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) of the UN/CEFACT as contained in ECE/EX/2017/L.10.

INFORMAL SEGMENT

Item 5 - Mapping of the reach of the products of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

18. The Executive Secretary recalled that discussion of this item had been postponed from an earlier meeting of EXCOM. She explained that this mapping had been developed in response to an evaluation of UNECE by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). In addition to mapping the geographic reach of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE, focusing in particular on those used outside the UNECE region, the document explores opportunities for and constraints to broadening this geographic reach, in order to inform strategic discussions among member States on the issue. She said the secretariat welcomed guidance from member States and was ready to prepare detailed proposals on specific UNECE products should member States wish to pursue any of the options outlined in the document. She also noted that the Committee on Programme and Coordination had held a hearing with OIOS on the evaluation report of UNECE earlier in the month and expressed support for the recommendations made by OIOS that EXCOM had reviewed previously.

19. The representative of the Russian Federation said the mapping gave a clear picture of how UNECE's products are attractive to non-UNECE countries, and thought it could inform the strategy for cooperation between UNECE and the other Regional Commissions. He noted the reference to UNECE promoting "environmental democracy" in paragraph 21 of the document and said he assumed that this referred to the work on public participation in decision-making on environmental issues, including access to information and the legal systems on issues of environmental protection. He suggested to use this wording in order to avoid ambiguity. Regarding expanding the reach of UNECE's products outside the region, he noted the importance of using limited resources wisely and of working with the other Regional Commissions. He suggested that information on products could be shared with Regional Commissions and other interested stakeholders, who could then make use of the products within their own resources.

20. The representative of Belarus said the participation of third party countries in UNECE's work would help enhance the activities. He supported the second and third options outlined in the paper. He said UNECE should base itself on a sound assessment of external partners when contemplating cooperation, and thought that a fresh look at the practical, non-political format of interaction between UNECE and the other Regional Commissions was needed. He hoped the secretariat could provide more detailed information with an assessment on this kind of interaction with Regional Commissions and activity that is directly related to third party use of UNECE products.

21. The representative of the United States found the document to be useful to inform delegations about the global reach of UNECE's work and suggested that it be shared with incoming delegates for reference. He welcomed additional discussions with two caveats, namely that i) his country was not in a position to support additional resources for the United Nations at this time, and that ii) UNECE should focus its limited resources on maximizing impact and utility for its member States, rather than work outside the region if that was only of marginal benefit to member States.

22. The representative of Switzerland noted that the issue of reach outside the region was a sensitive one. He saw a need to strengthen trust and confidence with the other Regional Commissions. He thought the mapping provided all the requested information and that it was up to member States to continue reflecting on whether and how to proceed.

23. The representative of the European Union and its member States said that the mapping provides abundant examples of UNECE's products being applied outside the region in a variety of fields, and considered this to be a testament to the quality and relevance of these products. He wished to take more time to properly consider the different possibilities for broadening reach and preferred to either return to the matter at a later date or to engage in informal discussions on the topic.

24. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the thorough mapping of the reach of ECE products that documents the geographic reach of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in ECE, prepared in response to a recommendation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. EXCOM decides to continue its deliberations on the issue later this year and requests the Secretariat to convene informal consultations with interested delegations.

Item 6 – Economic Commission for Europe annual report on technical cooperation for 2016

25. The Executive Secretary introduced the 2016 report on technical cooperation activities contained in informal document 2017/27/Rev.2. She highlighted the demand-drive nature of UNECE's technical cooperation activities, which focus on countries with economies in transition, and are linked to UNECE's normative work to support regional cooperation and integration. She noted that total voluntary contributions to these activities had decreased by 7.7% in 2016, and invited EXCOM to take note of the report.

26. The representative of the Russian Federation found this type of reporting very useful in assessing the scale of the work being done and determining future priorities, and said his country would continue financing projects in Central Asia and the CIS countries.

27. The representative of Belarus also found the report very useful. He noted the absence of any activity financed by private businesses, which he thought could be a good source of funding. He suggested to examine how other organizations have attracted private funds. He supported the UNECE resource mobilization strategy and looked forward to the first annual report on its implementation.

28. The representative of the European Union and its member States said the report gave a good overview of technical cooperation activities delivered by UNECE, covering an overview of figures and thematic areas, as well as the concrete activities implemented. He noted that 86% of relevant expenditures were funded by extrabudgetary sources and that together, the European Union member

States and the European Commission had provided close to 50% of these sources, with the European Commission being the largest individual donor.

29. The representative of Switzerland found the report useful. Regarding the contributions from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation mentioned on page 26 of the report, he asked for these to be added to the contributions from the Swiss government as the Agency was part of the latter. He hoped the 7.7% drop in total voluntary contributions in 2016 was not indicative of a future downward trend.

30. The representative of Azerbaijan thanked the secretariat for the detailed and useful report. She expressed gratitude for the technical cooperation activities conducted in Azerbaijan by UNECE and looked forward to their continuation.

31. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the comprehensive report on technical cooperation activities in 2016 and takes note of the information therein.

Item 7 – Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (A/71/L.58)

32. The Chair recalled that discussion on this issue had been postponed from the previous EXCOM. He underlined that UNECE had a very limited mandate and expertise on migration issues (unlike the other Regional Commissions) and no resources for hosting a full-fledged consultation, and sought the views of member States as to which of the two consultation modalities outlined in informal document 2017/28 would be preferable.

33. The representative of the United States preferred option two, namely to dedicate an item on the agenda of a future EXCOM to the issue.

34. The representative of Switzerland also preferred option two. He inquired how the relevant background information would be provided.

35. The secretariat clarified that the input for the discussions on the outcomes of the joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics (30-31 October) and of the Workshop on Migration Statistics for Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia on 1-2 November would be provided to EXCOM once available, as would the outcomes of the 7th Global Regional Consultative Processes Meeting (GRCP) organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on 10-11 October 2017 in Geneva.

36. The representative of the Russian Federation also preferred option two, noting that this would allow UNECE to benefit from the expertise of the IOM.

37. The representative of the European Union and its member States preferred option two and hoped member States would be provided with sufficient time to examine the meeting documents beforehand.

38. The Chair concluded that EXCOM decides to hold a regional discussion on migration for the UNECE region, as requested in A/RES/71/280 and in accordance with its respective mandates, as a dedicated agenda item in an EXCOM meeting. A chair's conclusion will provide the input to the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration consultations. EXCOM requests the secretariat to convene informal consultations with interested delegations to prepare the agenda item.

Item 8 - Important new developments: briefing by the Executive Secretary

39. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following recent meetings:

- i. 27-31 March, Geneva: 29th UN/CEFACT Forum

- ii. 3-4 April, Geneva: 23rd session of the UN/CEFACT Plenary
 - iii. 6 April, Geneva: ECE Donor Meeting.
 - iv. 12-13 April, Geneva: 3rd session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards
 - v. 25-27 April, Geneva: Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and 67th session of the Commission
 - vi. 9-11 May, Hong Kong: UNECE International Forum on people-first PPPs for the Sustainable Development Goals
 - vii. 10-11 May, Geneva: Regional Coordination Mechanism and Regional UNDG meeting
 - viii. 11-14 June, Astana: Energy Ministerial under the auspices of the Future Energy EXPO and the Eighth Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development
 - ix. 13-15 June, Ostrava: 6th Ministerial Conference of the European Environment and Health Process
 - x. 13-16 June, Minsk: 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention and 3rd Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - xi. 19-21 June, Geneva: 65th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians
40. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following upcoming events:
- i. 10-19 July, New York: High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
 - ii. 5-7 September, Marianske Lazne, Czech Republic: Marianske Lazne +70: Celebrating 70 years of UNECE/FAO cooperation on forests
 - iii. 11-15 September, Budva, Montenegro: 6th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and 3rd Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers
 - iv. 12-25 September, New York: 72nd session of the General Assembly
 - v. 20-22 September, Lisbon: UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing

41. The representative of France said that the France's Commissioner for Sustainable Development, who had chaired the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, had greatly appreciated the rich debate at the event and looked forward to sharing the Chair's summary at the High-level Political Forum in New York. He also welcomed future EXCOM discussions on the follow-up to the Regional Forum.

42. The representative of Kazakhstan thanked the Executive Secretary for participating at the Energy Ministerial in Astana, as well as the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division for the good collaboration in the organization of the event.

43. The representative of Portugal said that the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Lisbon would gather ministers from both the UNECE region and other Portuguese-speaking countries, as well as representatives of international organizations, civil society and the scientific community. The Conference would close the third review and appraisal cycle (2012-2017) of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy, and end with the adoption of a ministerial declaration setting out the priorities until 2022. He hoped ministers from all UNECE member States would attend the event.

Item 9 – Extrabudgetary projects (for approval)

44. Regarding the project contained in informal document 2017/33, the representative of the Russian Federation voiced no objections, but inquired as to the schedule of the consultations on the draft proposal for the establishment of a UN Road Safety Fund. He also noted that only USD 6,000 had been set aside for these consultations out of a total budget of USD 814,000, and wondered whether this small sum would be sufficient.

45. The secretariat clarified that the consultations on the draft proposal had been launched at the Global Sustainable Transport Conference in Ashgabat in November 2016, and that the deadline for submission of comments had been extended to 30 June 2017. Following consolidation of comments, the proposal will be forwarded to the Secretary-General for further action in New York.

46. The Chair suggested that the secretariat send a reminder to all delegations to submit their comments until 10 July 2017, and reach out to the delegation of the Russian Federation to clarify the question on funds. (*The secretariat has since notified member States extending the deadline for comments to 15 August 2017*)

47. Regarding the project contained in informal document 2017/37, the representative of the European Union and its member States requested further clarifications on the following issues:

- i. What would phases 2 and 3 entail in terms of activities and funding?
- ii. Would the project outputs, such as the 500 case studies on People First PPPs, be made available freely to all?
- iii. What is the nature of the involvement in ECE's PPP work of the private company mentioned as a donor in the project, namely Everbright International?
- iv. Are there guidelines that define the engagement of the private sector with ECE, including for the provision of funds by the former to the latter?

48. Regarding the same project, the representative of the United States sought the following clarifications:

- i. As the title of the project refers to UN member States, is the purpose of the project to strengthen the capacity of all UN Member States, rather than only UNECE member States?
- ii. What is envisioned for the subsequent phases of the project?
- iii. Outcome A.1.2 refers to creating a global platform, again suggesting that the project is not focused on only UNECE member States. What would be the nature of this platform? Who would administer it? How would information be shared? How would platform funding be sustained once the extrabudgetary funds are exhausted?

49. The representative of the United States noted that this project represents a fruitful effort by the secretariat to implement the UNECE Resource Mobilization Strategy, which called for seeking out new donors, including from the private sector, and congratulated the secretariat on this effort. He said acceptance of private sector funds should not create a real or perceived conflict of interest, and thought it prudent to develop a framework to evaluate potential private sector contributions to prevent this. As an example of a similar framework, he cited the World Health Organization's Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors. He also suggested, should the technical merits of the extrabudgetary project in question be approved by EXCOM, that such an evaluation framework should be applied, given the substantial proposed contribution of USD 655,000.

50. The Executive Secretary said the secretariat would prepare a framework for engagement with the private sector.

51. In response to the above questions, the representative of the secretariat clarified that the first phase detailed in informal document 2017/37 consisted of identification of People First PPP projects, to mobilize interest and awareness in the public and private sectors to get the best projects mainstreamed within the UN constituency. A potential phase 2 would carry out relevant capacity-building in 10 countries, based on similar work already carried out in Belarus by UNECE which had led to increased awareness, new legislation and institutions, and identification of projects that are now being financed by various organizations. He said the project had been presented to EXCOM to enable the timely approval of the activities, noting that the next EXCOM meeting would not be until late September. Regarding the contribution by Everbright International, he said the company had provided these funds in order to support UNECE's sustainable development work, without any wish to benefit commercially.

52. The Chair suggested that EXCOM keep the project under review and encouraged interested delegations to work with the secretariat to clarify their questions.

53. Regarding the project contained in informal document 2017/38, the representative of Germany noted that the majority of resources were provided by Switzerland and Germany via the UN-Water

multi-donor trust fund. He approved UNECE's application to this trust fund for financing but requested that the planned activity A1.2 was removed.

54. The representative of Switzerland supported the proposal by the representative of Germany.

55. The secretariat agreed to remove the above-mentioned activity and the allocated funds for A.1.2 from the project.

56. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the extrabudgetary projects contained in informal documents 2017/29, 2017/30, 2017/31, 2017/32, 2017/33, 2017/34, 2017/35, 2017/36, 2017/38 (as amended in the room), and 2017/39. EXCOM postpones consideration of project 2017/37 to its 93rd meeting. EXCOM requests the secretariat to develop a framework for the engagement with private sector entities for its consideration.

Item 12 – Other business

57. The Chair informed EXCOM that the next meeting would be held on 26 September 2017.

ANNEX I

Opening remarks by the Executive Secretary

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates of EXCOM,

Thank you for the warm welcome and the kind words upon my appointment as Executive Secretary of UNECE. I am humbled to have been chosen by the Secretary-General, and proud to lead such a remarkable organization as our Regional Commission.

You know better than anyone what UNECE achieves. We are fortunate to have motivated and very competent staff. Our norm and standard setting work is highly relevant, especially at this time, when we are supporting member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The uptake of our work well beyond the region is a testament to the quality and value of our activities – we will speak more about that a bit later today.

But times are changing and there is always room for improvement, in addition to the need to adapt to a shifting environment.

As I am beginning my tenure, I am in listening mode, and I look forward to hearing from all of you on how best UNECE can support member States. My vision for UNECE is still shaping. At this time, I can already point to a few major building blocks that I will focus on.

The SDGs are the guiding light for our work. To fully align our work to the SDGs will be a natural priority. This work is well underway. Now we need to focus in particular on cross-sectoral collaboration to better reflect the integrated nature of the SDGs in our work. And we need to think about performance indicators that will help us to benchmark our work against clear objectives on the road to 2030.

As second building block are the Secretary-General's reform initiatives. Two are of particular relevance of UNECE. The review of the Development Pillar will also consider the role of Regional Commissions in the larger UN system. We will participate very actively in the discussions leading up the Secretary-General's proposal to the General Assembly in the context of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. We will need to position UNECE very clearly within the UN family. I have already observed that we need to do more to make UNECE's role and comparative advantage understood at Headquarters. Regional Commissions, if they are mentioned at UN Headquarters, are often perceived as a uniform group. That is not the case. Just as every region has its specifics, each Commission is given specific mandates to address the issues relevant to its membership. I, and all of UNECE, will strive to better explain our work to support more informed decision-making for New York-based processes. I would ask all of you to support these efforts and deepen the reporting to New York on our work and the rationale for proposals coming out of Geneva.

Another reform initiative concerns the internal management of the United Nations. The discussions are still in its early stages. Issues for review are being collected, in addition to working on the administrative reforms started under the last administration that need follow through to come to full fruition. In UNECE, one key focus area is the simplification of administrative processes, of course in compliance within the overall accountability and oversight framework of the UN. We need to be able to do business in a simpler way to have more capacity to focus on programme delivery. We are already working on a review of processes that we can control within UNECE. And we will actively engage in the Secretariat-wide discussions on the overarching policies. – You will hear more on this, as the process unfolds.

The need to change the way we do business brings me to another priority. I, and all of us together, must focus on the resources available to UNECE to execute our mandates. As you know, in the last four biennia, our budget has been reduced by 10.9%. We lost 12 posts and now only have a staffing table of 188 positions. As you are aware, 95% of our budget covers staff cost. Only 5% administrative and travel expenditures, consultancy funds and other support costs. Thus far, we have done our utmost to shield

serving staff, focus on cutting in areas that are not dedicated to programme delivery, and worked hard to find efficiencies. But this approach takes us only so far. In defending the budget to the ACABQ last week, I stated very clearly that we have exhausted the options. We will be able to deliver on the mandates with the proposed budget for 2018-2019, even if it is quite painful. However, if further cuts should be considered, our mandate delivery will suffer. I hope you all will engage with your counterparts in capital and at UN Headquarters to communicate the rationale for our budget and help to rally support for it. With your permission, I will share a note soon to summarize our line of argument that you may find useful in your discussions.

In addition to Regular Budget resources, we will also have to step up our efforts on mobilizing extrabudgetary resources. I welcome the resource mobilization strategy that was adopted last year, and I thank all delegations who have so generously contributed to our work through XB funding. However, we need to reverse the overall trend. The 2016 XB level has fallen almost to the level of the 2012 figures after an earlier increase. UNECE needs to get better at raising such funding in support of our mandated activities, and we look forward to working with all of you on developing proposals and modalities that are of mutual interest.

That brings me to another important building block – partnerships. I am determined to widen the base of collaborators and deepen existing relationships. As the SDGs show us, we all need to work together to succeed on the 2030 Agenda and involve an even broader base of partners. Member States, private sector, the larger UN system, our sister Regional Commissions, academia – the opportunities are many. I am committed to a collaborative approach that is transparent and creates synergies for all involved. I would like to commit to all of you here today, that we will keep you informed as we are exploring new initiatives and I hope, in turn, you will share your ideas and suggestions with me.

Finally, I would like to stress what may state the obvious, that UNECE is your organization. We are here to implement the mandates that you entrust to us. I would like to hear your suggestions on how we can make our collaboration even more effective, how to make EXCOM deliberation even more smooth. First and foremost, I am striving to build a trusting relationship with you, UNECE colleagues and our collaborators around the world to achieve our common goals.

Thank you again for the warm welcome. I look forward to a fruitful collaboration.