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EXECUTIVE BODY FOR THE CONVENTION ON
LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE CONVENTION**

Note by the secretariat

Introduction

1. The Convention on Long-range Transboundary air Pollution was adopted in Geneva on 13 November 1979. This year therefore marks its twenty-fifth anniversary. Moreover, two of its three most recent protocols have entered into force, and the third is about to do so. This is a time not only to reflect on the achievements of the Convention and its protocols but also to consider its future work taking into account current strengths and weaknesses. Such considerations might be viewed against the continuing need for protecting people and their environment from air pollution as well as taking into account the continued evolution of the political and economic situation in the UNECE region.
2. To mark the twenty-fifth anniversary Environment Ministers of Parties to the Convention have written congratulatory statements to the Executive Body.

Documents prepared under the auspices or at the request of the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution for GENERAL circulation should be considered provisional unless APPROVED by the Executive Body.

3. At the time of writing the secretariat had received statements from the Ministers of: Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom and the European Community.

4. This document provides an overview of the Ministers' statements by summarizing briefly points made in them, including some that the Executive Body may wish to take up.

THE SUMMARY

5. The Ministers note the development of the Convention and, stressing its international importance,

- Express their awareness of the early history of air pollution that recognizes that air pollution can travel great distances and can be addressed only through international cooperation, indicating that some Parties had an interest in acid rain even in the 1960s and that many of these have been involved with the work of the Convention from the time of its adoption;
- Appreciate that the Convention is one of the oldest and most productive environmental agreements, which, even throughout the political and social changes of the past 25 years, has, with its consensus-driven approach, provided an outstanding example of effective international environmental cooperation for other regions and agreements;
- Consider the Convention a unique framework and forum that has enabled countries to discuss air pollution issues and seek solutions;
- Recognize that the Convention has established one of the largest atmospheric monitoring and assessment programmes worldwide with EMEP and an effective compliance mechanism through its Implementation Committee;
- Draw attention to the influence of the Convention at the global level, emphasize the contribution that it has made to international law and point towards future possibilities for contributing, through synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements, at the global scale;
- While noting the increased number of Member States to the European Community, recognize that the Convention extends to the East to cover a further 20 countries as well as across the Atlantic to Canada and the United States and it therefore plays an important role in harmonizing air pollution abatement across the region.

6. They draw attention to their national efforts linked to the Convention and

- Praise the work of the Convention that has led to significant cuts in emissions across the UNECE region, note their individual national emissions reductions for particular sectors whilst stressing that, for some of their countries, additional resources will be required to achieve the required goals;
- Note with appreciation the important contribution that the Convention has made towards developing national legislation and indicate examples of laws and projects that have provided the basis for national emission controls;
- Highlight their efforts to contribute to the work of the Convention, as well as their intentions to accede to protocols and to implement protocol obligations;
- Indicate that they are Party to certain protocols to the Convention and provide, in particular, information on their current efforts to ratify the more recent protocols as well as stressing the problems that are sometimes a barrier to accession.

7. The Ministers expressed satisfaction with the Convention's science, technology and policy activities and

- Acknowledge that the substantial scientific work is vital to the credibility of the Convention's work, provides insight for policy makers and forms the basis for increasingly sophisticated agreements;
- Underline that effects-based objectives are now an integral part of both national and international work on pollution control;
- Emphasize their national contributions to the important scientific work under the Convention and describe their particular inputs to EMEP and the Working Group on Effects;
- Urge all Parties to contribute to the funding the core scientific activities not supported by the EMEP Protocol;
- Suggest that the bringing together of science and policy under the Convention is without parallel and indicate that this unique institutional framework has resulted in new approaches of integrated assessment and strategic policy;
- Take note of initiatives under the Convention to provide access to information on control technology and control options, which is of particular importance to East European countries.

8. They also stress the importance of current and future priorities and

- Highlight the need for further action to address the continuing problems caused by air pollution, noting that acidification has not been solved and there are continued effects on ecosystems, and recognizing that there are extensive effects on human health from particulate matter and ozone;
- While recognizing the improvements in emissions from some sectors, draw attention to continued or increasing emissions in others, e.g. emissions from traffic;
- Note the effective links with the European Community's Clean Air for Europe programme as well as with other international organizations and environmental agreements, and stress the importance of ensuring that such collaboration continues;
- Recall that the benefits of implementing the Gothenburg Protocol far outweigh the costs and urged all Parties to complete their ratification of the more recent protocols to the Convention as soon as possible;
- Acknowledging that hemispheric movement of air pollutants is an increasing concern, urge Parties across the region to work together to provide a better understanding of this issue;
- Aware of the synergies and linkages between the traditional air pollutants and greenhouse gases, welcome the Convention's new work in this area, and recognize the additional benefits of addressing global, regional and local issues at the same time.

9. Finally, the Ministers congratulate the Convention on its twenty-fifth anniversary and

- Identify national activities planned for celebrating the anniversary;
- Draw attention to the benefits of public participation and urge Parties to make data and information available to raise better public awareness of air pollution problems;
- Reaffirm their intention to continue to cooperate with the Convention and contribute to its future work in order to make further progress in dealing with transboundary air pollution.