



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/EB.AIR/2007/11  
28 September 2007

Original: ENGLISH

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

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

Twenty-fifth session  
Geneva, 10–13 December 2007  
Item 13 of the provisional agenda

**DOCUMENTATION FOR THE CONVENTION**

Note by the secretariat

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Executive Body at its twenty-third session adopted new procedures for its own reports and the reports of the Working Group on Strategies and Review for a trial period of two years (ECE/EB.AIR/87, para. 73). This document notes the need for the Executive Body to consider, at its twenty-fifth session, the need to review these procedures and agree whether or not to continue them. In addition, the Executive Body at that time agreed on a new way to publish its workplan. This has brought about some technical problems related to the workplan and its use and, in this present document, the secretariat wishes to propose further changes. This document also draws attention to the continued development of United Nations documentation, and in particular the harmonization of documentation in the UNECE secretariat. It also highlights a number of important issues on documentation in order to bring them to the attention of the Executive Body and its subsidiary bodies.

## **I. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BODY AND THE WORKING GROUP ON STRATEGIES AND REVIEW**

2. Until the twenty-third session of the Executive Body, reports of Executive Body sessions and the reports of sessions of the Working Group on Strategies and Review were adopted, in the three UNECE languages, at the end of the session making use of translated conference room papers (CRPs). At its twenty-third session, the Executive Body decided that the reports would be adopted at the following session and that only decisions and substantive points would be adopted at the time of the session itself. It agreed to these arrangements for a trial period of two years.

3. Since the trial period is coming to an end, the Executive Body needs to consider the procedures to be used in 2008. It may wish to revert to the previous mechanism, to change to the new mechanism, or to continue the new mechanism for a further trial period.

4. In arriving at its decision, the Executive Body may wish to consider the benefits of shorter meetings and the subsequent saving of resources, whilst also taking into account any problems encountered through not adopting the report texts immediately after the sessions and considering how these might be overcome.

## **II. PUBLISHING THE WORKPLAN OF THE EXECUTIVE BODY**

5. The Executive Body at its twenty-third session adopted new procedures for its workplan that involved the secretariat publishing the document on the Convention's website and not annexing it to the report of the session, as was the practice previously.

6. While the advantages of website publications are evident, the lack of an "official document" for the published workplan means there is no single United Nations official record of the workplan (the United Nations does not yet recognize web-based publications as official). This also has implications regarding the provision of mandates for documents (see section III below), since at present, reference to the workplan can only be made by referencing the draft documents and the agreed amendments.

7. To overcome these difficulties, the secretariat proposes that the Convention's workplan again be published as an official document, either appended to the report of the session or as a separate document.

8. Furthermore, in order to provide possibilities for amending the workplan through the year, the secretariat proposes an amended mandate for the Bureau of the Executive Body (see

annex). This would enable the Bureau to agree changes to the workplan, as at present, but such changes would be recorded through the secretariat issuing formal corrigenda to the workplan.

### **III. MANDATES FOR DOCUMENTS**

9. United Nations scrutiny of the use of its limited resources has resulted in its auditors and documents management sections looking carefully to see if official documents submitted for translation and printing are properly mandated by a “legislative body”.

10. An editorial manual currently being prepared for use in Geneva describes two types of mandates:

(a) Standing mandates, which give the authority to prepare reports according to a given periodicity – annually, biennially or other – and do not require renewal by the authority concerned. Such is often the case for publications;

(b) Limited mandates, which request preparation and submission of documents once only or a specified number of times, and are subject to renewal.

11. The manual further suggests that mandates should indicate clearly the scope of the document, its intended audience, the necessary parameters to its preparation, and the timing of its presentation to the intergovernmental body. It notes that it is incumbent upon members of the secretariat to ensure that the bodies they service adopt mandates for all documents to be considered at future sessions either in the form of resolutions or decisions or within the approved work programme of the body.

12. The Executive Body may wish to ensure that its reports and workplan provide all necessary mandates for the Convention’s documentation. As a step towards this, the secretariat proposes a set of standing mandates for some documents submitted to the Executive Body and its subsidiary bodies (see proposed decisions in section V below).

### **IV. HARMONIZATION OF DOCUMENTS IN THE SECRETARIAT**

13. Since 2005, the UNECE secretariat has been involved in a document harmonization exercise aimed at harmonizing the layout and formats of the documents being prepared for UNECE bodies, including the multilateral environmental agreements. Guided by the United Nations Document Management Section in Geneva, the different divisions in UNECE have been working towards more harmonized documentation that is consistent with the available manuals and the various decisions of the General Assembly.

14. Delegations may have already noticed some changes in layout to the Convention's documents, though in general the Convention's documentation was close to the standards set by the United Nations. Even so, there will continue to be changes to the agreed style of documents, in particular with the aim of harmonizing documents across United Nations duty stations. The style developed in New York some years ago has not yet been adopted in Geneva; however, this is likely to happen within the next year. This will give a different look to our documents as font sizes will change, but the content and the information currently given on document titles, agenda items, etc. will still be found as before.

15. There may be other issues related to the harmonization process that could result in small changes to the way the Convention's documents are presented. The secretariat will ensure that the Executive Body and its Bureau are well informed of any such changes to ensure that any problems can be fully examined and solutions found as quickly and as effectively as possible.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

16. The secretariat invites the Executive Body to provide it with the necessary guidance for the preparation of the Convention's official documents through, inter alia, the decisions drafted below. The Executive Body may wish to change or add to these decisions following its discussions on the above issues.

17. The Executive Body may wish to:

(a) Agree that adoption of reports by the Executive Body and the Working Group on Strategies and Review at their following sessions, and adoption of decisions at the current sessions, have provided a more streamlined way of working, and decide to continue this procedure [for a further period of two years][for the future];

(b) Note the need to have an official record of the workplan and agree that its annual workplan be published as a United Nations document following its annual session;

(c) Also note the importance of recording any changes to the annual workplan, and decide to amend the mandate of its Bureau, as set out in the annex, to enable such changes to be recorded; also agree to request the secretariat to annex the amended mandate to the report of the twenty-fifth session;

(d) Recognize the need for mandates for documents and urge all Parties and the secretariat to take the necessary actions to ensure that mandates are clearly spelled out for all official documents required; as a first step for this the Executive Body agrees to the following standing mandates:

- (i) Reports of all major subsidiary bodies to be prepared by the secretariat and submitted to sessions of the Executive Body;
  - (ii) Workplans of all major subsidiary bodies to be prepared by the secretariat annually and submitted to the Executive Body;
  - (iii) Finance documents to be prepared, where appropriate, for sessions of the Executive Body and its main subsidiary bodies;
  - (iv) Progress in core activities documents to be prepared for sessions of the Executive Body by the secretariat to facilitate decision-making by the Executive Body on its scientific activities;
- (e) Note the steps being taken in the secretariat to harmonize documentation and request the secretariat to inform it of any significant changes prior to such changes taking place.

Annex**REVISED MANDATE OF THE BUREAU OF THE EXECUTIVE BODY<sup>1</sup>**

The Bureau of the Executive Body prepares policy-oriented proposals and functions as an inter-sessional forum for initiating strategic action and for securing operational coordination. To promote multi-disciplinary cooperation and integration, it cooperates actively with the Bureaux of the subsidiary bodies under the Executive Body. To respond flexibly and efficiently to pressing new challenges, the Bureau can decide upon urgent matters, as appropriate, based on, inter alia, scientific input from the Bureaux of the Executive Body's subsidiary bodies. Such decisions can include amendment of the Convention's adopted workplan, which shall be done through the issue of appropriate corrigenda to the workplan document. All substantive decisions shall be reported by the secretariat to the Executive Body, which should consider and confirm them, as appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> The revised mandate is based upon, and replaces, that adopted in 1999 (Executive Body decision 1999/2 concerning the structure and organization of work, ECE/EB.AIR/68, annex III). New and changed text is underlined.