



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/EB.AIR/2008/6
26 September 2008

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

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

Twenty-sixth session
Geneva, 15–18 December 2008
Item 12 of the provisional agenda

A LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR THE CONVENTION

Note by the Bureau

INTRODUCTION

1. The last time that the Bureau considered the future long-term work of the Convention, taking into account the Convention's structure and mandates, was in 1999 when preparing for the seventeenth session of the Executive Body (EB.AIR/1999/5) at the time of the adoption of the Gothenburg Protocol¹. Recognizing that the "Saltsjöbaden workshops" (see para. 11) have considered future strategic directions for many aspects of the Convention's work, and noting that EMEP² is currently developing a strategy for 2010–2019 while the Working Group on Effects is also considering a similar long-term strategy, the Bureau considered it useful also to develop a long-term vision for the Convention as a whole. This is likely to be particularly important over

¹ The 1999 Gothenburg Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone.

² The Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe.

the next few years, when current negotiations on new or revised protocols will be completed. The long-term strategy should provide a framework for the Convention over the implementation period for the revised Gothenburg Protocol, and possibly beyond.

2. To address the issue, the Bureau agreed to amend the Convention's workplan and to provide the twenty-sixth session of the Executive Body with a draft outline of a future strategy (ECE/EB.AIR/91/Add.2/Amend.1, para. 2, workplan item 1.11). The present document, a draft outline strategy prepared in accordance with the mandate cited above, provides an introduction on the need for a strategy (chapter I); a summary of past work on developing Convention strategies (chapter II); and an outline of elements that might be considered for developing a Convention strategy (chapter III). It discusses the past and present organizational structure of the Convention in chapter IV, to help review the current structure and its origins. Chapter V presents possible decisions that might be considered by the Executive Body. The document aims to offer a basis for the Executive Body's discussions at its twenty-sixth session, which should provide guidance for further work on the strategy. The Bureau is expected to complete its drafting of a strategy, along with the amended workplan, for presentation to the Executive Body at its twenty-seventh session in 2009.

I. THE NEED FOR A CONVENTION STRATEGY

3. Under article 10 of the Convention, the Executive Body was established as representing the Contracting Parties. In accordance with its mandate in the Convention, the Executive Body reviews the Convention's implementation and establishes working groups to consider matters of implementation and development, to prepare studies and reports, and to make recommendations to the Executive Body. To this end, the Executive Body decides upon a Convention workplan annually, but it has seldom taken a long-term perspective of its future work and priorities. In part this has been due to the Convention working sequentially on a large number of protocols, each being a focus for negotiations over a few years; these continued efforts left little time or real need to consider in depth the direction and priorities for the longer term.

4. The Convention has always relied upon scientific underpinning to develop its protocols. Both EMEP and the Working Group on Effects have recognized this and have developed longer-term plans and strategies to anticipate the scientific demands. In 2000, EMEP agreed a strategy for 2000–2009, while the Working Group on Effects agreed a number of documents of a strategic nature over a similar time frame. EMEP is now embarking upon a revision of its strategy document (ECE/EB.AIR/GE.1/2008/13 and Corr.1) and the Working Group on Effects is also examining the need to develop an updated strategy in 2009 (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.1/2008/4, section 3.1(d)(iii)).

5. With the completion of protocol negotiations in 1999, the Bureau of the Executive Body took a longer-term look at the Convention's needs and how the Convention's structure and functions should address these needs in the years ahead. At this point in time, with impending negotiations on revised protocols likely to be completed in the next two years, the Convention is about to enter into another stage in its development. Since 1999, some of the driving forces have changed, though many of the important issues still remain.

II. ASSESSMENT OF PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN 1999 AND SUBSEQUENTLY

6. In 1999, the Bureau expected that the Executive Body's priorities for the following few years (EB.AIR/1999/6, para. 2) would shift to: (a) review and extension of existing protocols; and (b) implementation of, and compliance with, existing agreements. The Bureau's expectations have proven to be correct. Although there have been various influences on this work and there has been an increased focus on some additional activities such as outreach, the emphasis on these two aspects of the Convention's work has continued. They remain the main focus of the Convention.

7. The Bureau noted in 1999 that the above two policy-related tasks required sound support with emphasis on three core activities (EB.AIR/1999/6, para. 3): (a) atmospheric measurements and modelling; (b) effects; and (c) integrated assessment, including modelling and economic benefit evaluation. These core activities remain essential for the Convention's work. The application of integrated assessment modelling to emissions controls on persistent organic pollutants and on heavy metals has proved more difficult, but for other pollutants this modelling work is still essential for developing an understanding of costs and effects related to policy action.

8. In 1999, the Bureau believed that to ensure the needed scientific basis, it would be crucial to maintain the scientific networks that have developed during the preparation of the protocols (EB.AIR/1999/6, para. 4). This has proved to be the case, and the Convention relies now, as it did then, on strong scientific networks to achieve the Convention's goals. Reflecting the need for scientific networks in 1999, the Executive Body agreed on its future structure (EB.AIR/1999/5); this structure is shown in figure 1.

9. It was envisaged in 1999 that an active information strategy, focusing on the Convention's achievements and on new threats to health and environment, with specific reference to economic benefits, should be implemented with a view to raising political awareness of these issues. It was proposed that, to this end, targeted awareness-raising activities, involving non-governmental organizations as well, should be included in the annual workplans adopted by the Executive Body.

10. While such a coordinated information strategy for the Convention has not materialized, some efforts were made to consider aspects of such a strategy, and a workshop was held in 2003 in London (EB.AIR/WG.5/2003/7) that made a number of proposals for future work. The conclusions were noted by the Executive Body, which commended their use by the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/79, para. 55 (e)). While there was an initial further follow-up through the twenty-fifth anniversary event held at the Executive Body's twenty-second session (e.g. the publication of a history of the Convention, *Clearing the Air* (ECE/EB.AIR/84)), little further action on the proposals for a communications strategy has been taken.

11. Of yet greater significance to the work on considering future Convention priorities have been the deliberations at the three so-called Saltsjöbaden workshops hosted by Sweden. The first, held in 2000 in Salsjöbaden, focused on future needs for regional air pollution strategies (EB.AIR/WG.5/2000/7) and set out, in particular, to consider the scientific need for future revisions to the Gothenburg Protocol. The second, held in 2004 in Gothenburg, was entitled "Review and Assessment of European Air Pollution Policies" (EB.AIR/WG.5/2005/10). The third, held in 2007, also in Gothenburg (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2007/9), focused on air pollution and its relation to climate change and sustainable development.

12. All three Saltsjöbaden workshops took a long-term strategic look at the Convention's future. The results were presented to the Convention's main subsidiary bodies, and in many instances the recommendations were taken up, often through decisions by the Executive Body.

13. While the various workshops and related actions noted above have taken place since 1999, no concerted effort has been made by the Executive Body to review the overall strategy of the Convention or any consequent changes to the Convention's structure. The Convention's workplan has simply been developed on a year-by-year basis with relatively small changes being made from one year to the next. The Bureau considers that it is now timely to make a review of the Convention's strategy. It has drawn upon the various workshop reports available, as well as from its own experience in developing priorities, to provide a focus for discussions by the Executive Body.

III. NEW AND DEVELOPING PRIORITIES

14. Recognizing the Convention's existing priorities, as well as those highlighted at the Saltsjöbaden workshops, and being aware of new and emerging issues, the Bureau has identified the main issues that might be discussed for possible inclusion in a future strategy. These are listed in the paragraphs below. The list is not to the exclusion of additional items, nor is it suggested that the Convention's strategy cover all these issues. It should also be noted that the list is currently in no specific order and that some items might need to be restructured,

subdivided, merged, amended or even deleted. In addition to discussing the relative priorities of the items, the Executive Body may also wish to identify some of its future goals in relation to its priorities, e.g. increasing outreach activities, protecting human health and the environment from long-range transported air pollution and greater participation from all countries in the protocols.

15. *Geographic scope of the Convention and scientific outreach.* In terms of intercontinental transport of air pollution, consider continuing the work of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution after it completes its report in 2010. In terms of scientific outreach, continue and strengthen scientific and technical links to other regions, to share experiences and information.

16. *Policy links within the UNECE region as well as outside the region (policy outreach).* Strengthen links and collaboration between the Convention and the European Community. Further develop links between North America, Europe and Central Asia, especially with regard to implementation of the Convention and its protocols. Explore policy links between the UNECE region and other regions developing air pollution abatement strategies.

17. *South-Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.* Promote participation in Convention activities by countries in these two subregions. Revise the protocols and encourage capacity-building to help these countries accede to the protocols.

18. *Links to other organizations and conventions.* Maintain or strengthen important existing links to organizations and conventions, e.g. the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the European Environment Agency. Develop new links where appropriate and necessary.

19. *Links to climate change.* Continue to explore synergies and co-benefits linked with climate change mitigation and adaptation.

20. *Nitrogen.* Continue the work of the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen to explore future options for emission controls.

21. *Shipping and aircraft emissions.* Strengthen links to the International Maritime Organization and the International Civil Aircraft Organization.

22. *Socio-economic aspects and promoting a “communications strategy”.* Review previous deliberations on a communications strategy and promote better communications

within the Convention as well as between the Convention, relevant bodies and the public at large.

23. *Control options.* Further develop work on control options, including technological advances and possible structural changes.

24. *Scientific under-pinning and development.* Maintain and develop, where appropriate, programme activities on monitoring and modelling to address the emerging requirements of the Convention. In particular, support activities linked to the implementation of protocols, e.g. trend analysis. This work is mostly, though not exclusively, related to the work of :

- (a) The Working Group on Effects;
- (b) EMEP.

Ensure consistency between the strategy for the Convention and the long-term strategies being developed for these two bodies.

25. *Particulate matter.* Make continued efforts to investigate abatement options for particulate matter.

IV. CONVENTION STRUCTURE TO DEAL WITH FUTURE PRIORITIES

26. Since 1999, the basic structure of the Convention has remained the same, with the same main subsidiary bodies, but there have been changes to the scientific and technical bodies to address specific needs from year to year. The current structure for the Convention (figure 2) can be compared with that of 1999 (figure 1) to identify the changes that have taken place. In particular, the Executive Body has established a Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution and a Centre for Emission Inventories and Projections under EMEP, as well as a Task Force on Heavy Metals, a Task Force on Persistent Organic Pollutants and a Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen under the Working Group on Strategies and Review.

27. The Executive Body may wish to consider whether the existing structure is appropriate for addressing the Convention's future work.

V. POSSIBLE DECISIONS BY THE EXECUTIVE BODY

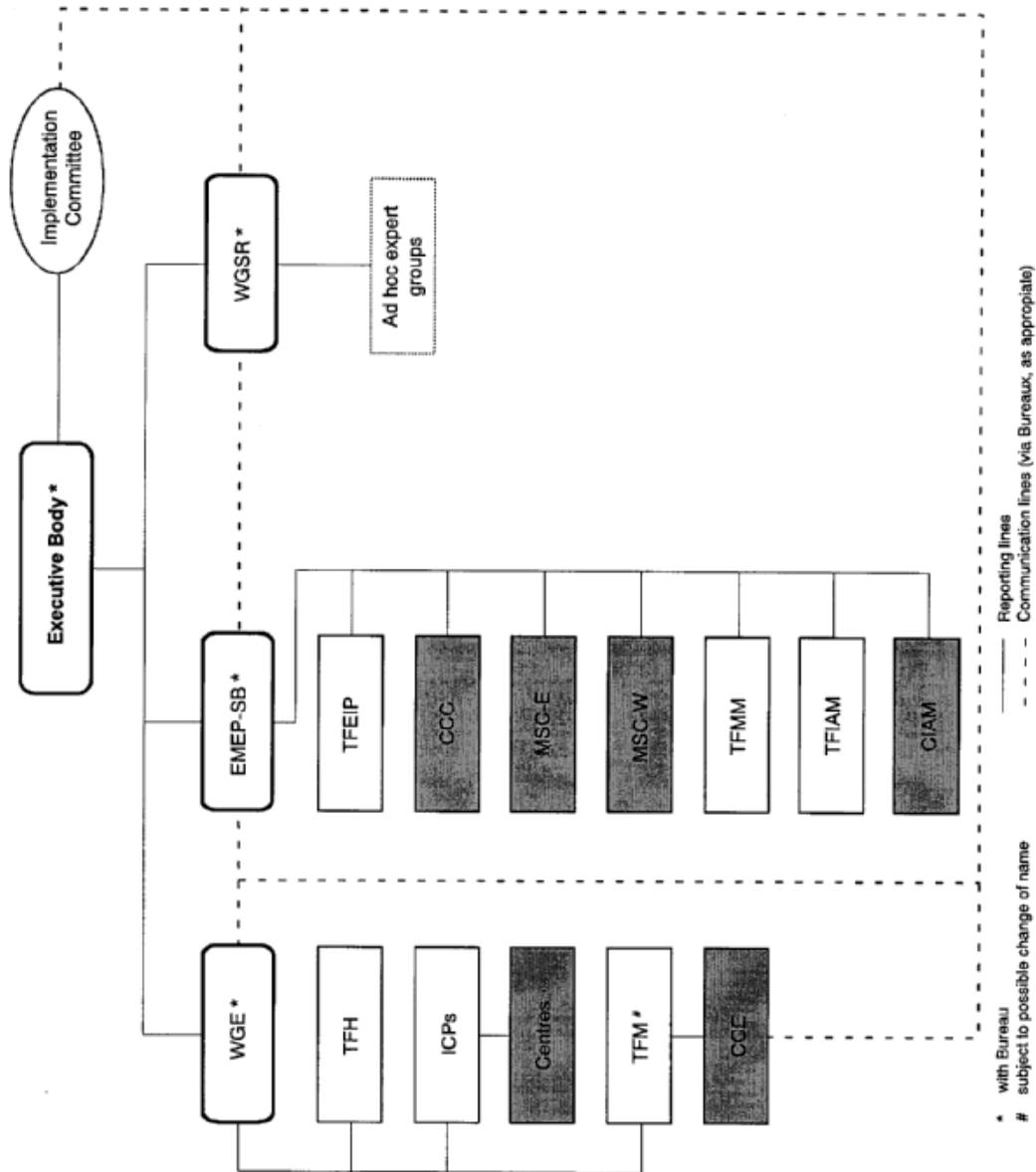
28. The Executive Body may wish, inter alia:

(a) To take note of the draft outline strategy prepared by the Bureau and agree that a strategy for the Convention would provide a useful basis for its future work;

(b) To invite delegations and Convention bodies to provide written comments on the draft outline strategy to the secretariat by 31 March 2009;

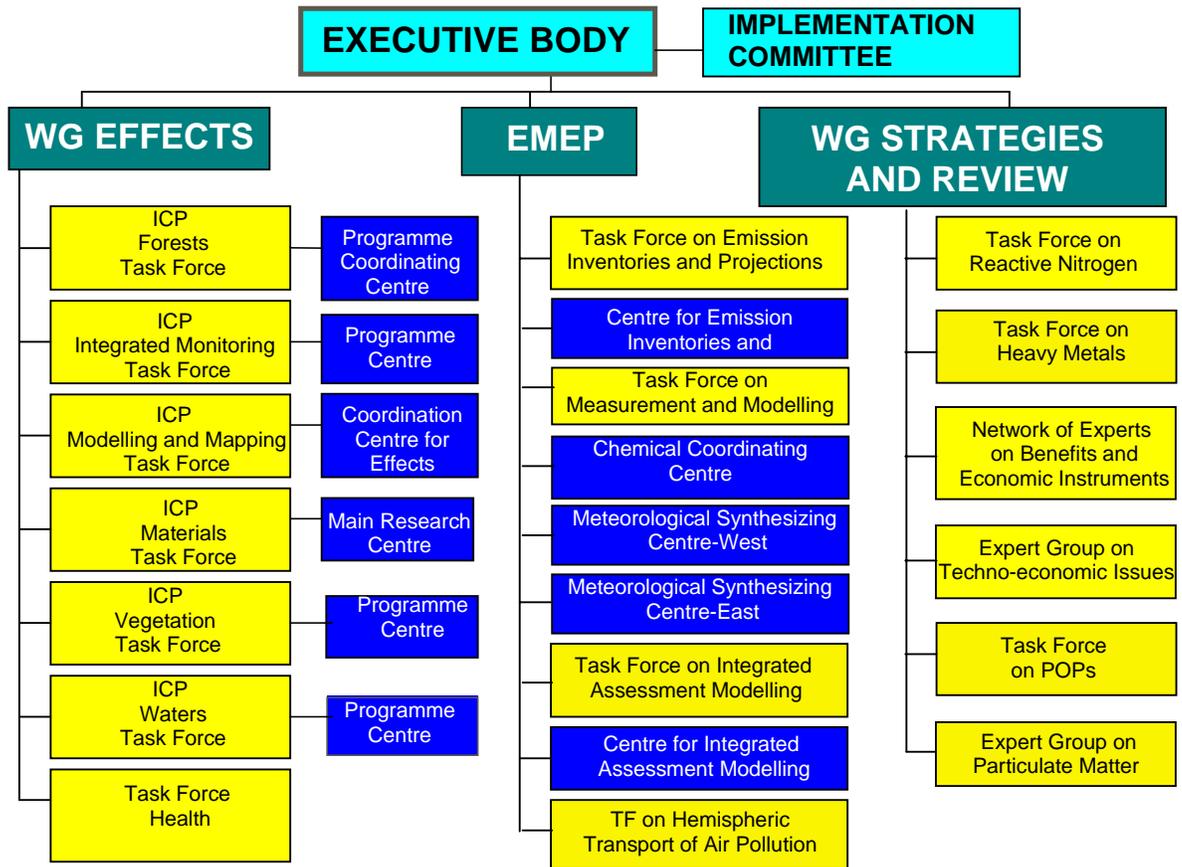
(c) To request the Bureau to draw up a revised draft strategy based on the draft outline and comments received, and present it to the twenty-seventh session of the Executive Body in 2009.

Figure 1. Structure of the Convention as agreed in 1999



Notes: Figure reproduced from EB.AIR/1999/5, page 5. WGE, Working Group on Effects; EMEP-SB, Steering Body of EMEP; WGSR, Working Group on Strategies and Review; TFH, Task Force on Health; ICPs, International Cooperative Programmes; TFM, Task Force on Mapping; TFEIP, Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections; TFMM, Task Force on Measurement and Modelling; TFIAM, Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling; CCE, Coordination Centre for Effects; CCC, Chemical Coordinating Centre; MSC, Meteorological Synthesizing Centre; CIAM, Centre for Integrated Assessment Modelling.

Figure 2. Current structure of the Convention



Notes: WG, Working Group; ICP, International Cooperative Programme; POPs, Persistent Organic Pollutants.