

Assessment of communication recommendations by the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Long-term Strategy in follow-up to the 51st session of the WGSR

The Working Group on Strategies and Review (WGSR) at its 51st session (paragraph 16 of ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/110) provided the following in its report: “*The Working Group recommended that the secretariat and a volunteer from the United States work informally to assess the communication recommendations contained in paragraphs 58 and 59 of document ECE/EB.AIR/2012/15 and report on the possibility to implement those recommendations to the Executive Body at its thirty-third session, taking into account concerns expressed during the discussions at the fifty-first session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review*” (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/110, para 16).

This document provides supplementary information to the report by the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Long-Term Strategy (Ad hoc Group of Experts) (ECE/EB.AIR/2012/15, sect. V) with regard to the communication strategy for the Convention. It presents a status report of the items recommended by the Ad Hoc Group of Experts and highlights where further work and/or resources are needed. This overview was prepared by Kimber Scavo of the United States and the secretariat. Section V of document 2012/15 is included below as recommended by the Ad Hoc Group of Experts (items in italics). A status report of items related to each recommendation is included under each recommendation. Included in bolded text at the end of each recommendation, are potential EB recommendations and outstanding items. Those items that would require extra budgetary funding are also included in bolded text.

Section V of ECE/EB.AIR/2012/15

V. Communication strategy

A. Background

56. The action plan for item 12(b) requests the Ad Hoc Group of Experts to revise and update the 2003 communications strategy to help increase the visibility of the Convention, in particular to raise political awareness of air pollution issues in the regions of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and Southeast Europe. The 2003 communications strategy is reviewed in detail in the informal document to thirty-first session of the Executive Body which has been made available as a formal document for the fifty-first session of WGSR (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2013/2).

B. Main conclusions and recommendations

57. *The Convention needs an effective communications strategy and should implement the actions included here, either charging an existing Convention body, or charging a new, small ad hoc body or individual with implementing the strategy over the next twelve months. Progress in the development and implementation of the strategy should be followed through the reports of the subsidiary bodies where the Convention could highlight some of these accomplishments each year to demonstrate its*

efforts. The internet has become increasingly important and is an integral part of everyday work. However, the internet needs to be used in a more effective and strategic way to accomplish the communication goals in the framework of the Convention.

58. Effective internal communication is crucial to ensure the efficient operation of the Convention. The Ad Hoc Group recommends the following actions for communications between Convention bodies, between Parties and with non-Parties in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region:

(a) Assess the needs from the Convention website and decide on what documents and information should be held on the site. Encourage continued development of the Russian part of the website;

1. The secretariat recently conducted the following activities on improving the website for purposes of efficient operation of the Convention:

- Creation of an “Amended Protocols” section of the website which lists as an overview the original texts, amendments and consolidated versions:
 - o Gothenburg Protocol: http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/multi_h1.html
 - o Protocol on Heavy Metals: http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/hm_h1.html
 - o Protocol on POPs: http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/pops_h1.html
- Creation of a “Guidance documents and other methodological materials” section which lists the most recently adopted guidance documents to
 - o Gothenburg Protocol: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/air-pollution/guidance-documents-and-other-methodological-materials/gothenburg-protocol.html>
 - o Protocol on Heavy Metals: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/air-pollution/guidance-documents-and-other-methodological-materials/protocol-on-heavy-metals.html>
 - o Protocol on POPs: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/air-pollution/guidance-documents-and-other-methodological-materials/protocol-on-pops.html>
 - o Emission reporting: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/air-pollution/guidance-documents-and-other-methodological-materials/emissions-reporting.html>
- Linking the different “Protocol” pages, links “Parties” and “Status of ratification” directly to the UN Treaty Section rather than maintaining a separate page (which had led in some cases to inconsistencies):
http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/status/lrtap_s.html
- Updates of the “Implementation Committee” section with the information on the questionnaire on policies and strategies (link restored) and additional responses not included in the database and the new IC ToR:
<http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/air-pollution/convention-bodies/implementation-committee/questionnaire-on-strategies-and-policies-for-the-abatement-of-air-pollution.html>
- Creation of a “reference documents” section in the “members’ area” of the Implementation Committee section of the website (currently passport protected)

- Updates of the respective subsidiary body webpages with the latest meeting report and links to upcoming meetings
 - Continuous maintenance and update of the list of meetings:
<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=10031>
2. A Russian version of the website has been created, focusing on the needs of EECCA countries and the provision of pertinent information to the public. Selected sections have been translated and updated into Russian. These include: the home page, the section “About Us” with the general information on the Convention, the list of Protocols and the Organization Chart, the individual pages for the EMEP Protocol, the Protocol on POPs, the Protocol on Heavy Metals and the Gothenburg Protocol, the section for guidance documents and other methodological materials, the page on capacity-building and the contact details of the secretariat.
3. Regular budget resources are sufficient to cover the regular updates of the website to keep it up to date, post most recent information, reports etc. Further improvements of the website can be implemented with extra budgetary resources.
4. Forthcoming plans:
- Continuous updates of the website to keep it up-to-date and present most recent information in a user friendly manner
 - Creation of a “policy and cross-sectoral issues” section of the website which lists substantive information on the cross-sectoral linkages between air pollution and other cross-sectoral issues such as climate change, biodiversity, ecosystems, industry, transport, urban development and other issues. In future, this section could provide a link to the information exchanged, collected and presented at WGSR sessions, possible background papers etc.
 - Conducting a review to correct technical errors that have occurred in the migration of the UNECE website to a new server and the respective placing of documents
- 5. The EB could request the secretariat to survey the subsidiary bodies to assess additional website needs in the framework of the Convention.**
- 6. The EB could request the secretariat to provide a cost estimate [to the EB Bureau] of all extra budgetary items that the EB wishes to explore as it relates to communication.**
- 7. The EB could request the secretariat to further explore how to communicate important health information, air quality trends and Convention accomplishments.. This can be done in particular if the EB or its subsidiary bodies address the issues of health and air quality trends as part of their agendas/meetings; communication can then follow from substantive information sharing. [Working with another communication expert[s] in addition to the ECE Communications officer would need extra budgetary funding.]**

(b) Review current practices for high-level official communications (communications from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe to Parties or between Parties/non-Parties) to ensure they are still effective and appropriate;

1. Official communication from ECE to Parties follows UN established procedures and practices. For example, in the case of the amendments to a Protocol, the Executive Secretary informs the UN Treaty Section which then issues an official communication to Parties
2. Less official communication, such as emails and letters to Parties and Heads of Delegations is channelled through air_meetings@unece.org. For compliance related matters, communication with Parties, including official letters, is being sent from air_compliance@unece.org.
3. UNECE is not involved in direct communication between different Parties.

4. This recommendation is already followed.

(c) Review agendas for Convention meetings so that the purpose of the meeting is clear and understandable;

1. This recommendation is particular relevant for Task Force/Expert Group meetings and workshops/seminars. The purpose of agendas for intergovernmental meetings is derived from the mandate of the subsidiary bodies and the workplan for the implementation of the Convention. There are numerous regular standing items on the provisional agendas for official meetings which have to be included, deriving from the mandates, decisions taken at previous meetings and recent developments. Annotations are provided, in line with the standard UN rules and procedures, to give the relevant background information to the different agenda items.
2. Provisional agendas are shared with the Chair before circulation to Parties. In the case of the EB, the agenda is shared with and presented to the EB Bureau.

3. This recommendation is already followed.

(d) Evaluate the needs for formal documentation, especially that which is translated into French and Russian. Develop, as noted in the revised action plan for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EB.AIR/WG.5/80, Annex), a plan to translate promotional and guidance documents into Russian for the sub-region;

1. There is interpretation into the 3 UNECE official languages at all intergovernmental meetings held in the Palais des Nations. This is why meeting planning is crucial and spaces are booked a year in advance to accommodate the needs of the different intergovernmental organs serviced by the UN.
2. All official documents for intergovernmental meetings are translated into the 3 official UNECE languages. According to UN rules and regulations, all official documents need to be mandated. For official UN documents, there is a strict

submission and translation deadline 3 months in advance of the meeting. If documents, following editorial review and formatting, are submitted later than this deadline, the UN translation service will not translate these documents as pre-session documents.

3. Due to limited UN translation resources, official documents should be kept as short and concise as possible, beyond the established word limit (8,500 for documents originating in the secretariat and 10,700 for documents originating in an intergovernmental body).
4. Technical documents prepared by the centres are available in English only.
5. All Guidance documents formally adopted by the EB have been or will be translated into Russian and French by the UN translation service. The formal Russian and French translation meets UN standards and rules. It has taken into account the informal translations which had in some instances been prepared previously.
6. Other technical and guidance documents not issued by the UN such as the EMEP/EEA air pollutant emission inventory guidebook and the mapping manual have been translated externally through the voluntary contributions by Parties. They are both available in English and Russian.
7. Additional extra budgetary resources may be needed for the translation of further materials that may be elaborated and presented as informal documents to be presented during meetings. The translation of informal documents submitted by Parties is the responsibility of the Party submitting them.

8. The EB could request the secretariat and the Coordinating Group for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia region to develop a priority list of technical documents, promotional material and guidance documents not issued by the UN to be translated into Russian.

- The EB could request [the EB Bureau] to discuss the list to enlist potential voluntary contributions by Parties. [Needs extra budgetary funding; amount would depend on document to be prepared].

(e) Encourage plans for workshops in the regions of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and Southeast Europe to promote regional communication and participation in the work of the Convention;

1. In November 2013, a workshop is planned in Uzbekistan to raise awareness of national environmental authorities on health effects of particulate matter and to strengthen capacities of national experts to develop emission inventories for this air pollutant.
2. Information on the planned work for the period 2014-2015 is included in the “capacity building” section of the draft 2014-2015 workplan on the implementation of the Convention.

3. This recommendation is being followed and should continue to be encouraged.

(f) Encourage the work of the Coordinating group for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia especially with regard to improving communications within the region of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and between countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and the Convention;

1. The Decision establishing the Coordinating Group on the promotion of actions towards implementation of the Convention in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Decision 2010/17) stipulates that the Coordinating Group was mandated to “Promote the implementation of the Convention and its mechanism on the air quality management in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia through information exchange.”
2. The Action Plan for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia stipulates “Support the EECCA countries involvement in the activities of the Convention through the following actions: Make more material available in Russian” as an action for the Parties meeting within the Executive Body, the Convention secretariat and the EECCA countries. (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2007/17). Furthermore, the Action Plan also mentions increasing “cooperation and information exchange through expanding the modelling and monitoring activities,” as well as organizing “joint activities/workshops to support the EECCA countries involvement” mentioning among others the EMEP centres and the secretariat as responsible.
3. The secretariat is involved in constant communication with the EECCA countries in the context of their participation in intergovernmental meetings in Geneva, preparation of specific sessions (e.g. WGSR segment on information exchange on EECCA needs with regard to ratification and implementation) and the organization of capacity building activities, i.e. workshops/seminars and consultations in the EECCA countries.

4. The EB could request the secretariat and the Coordinating Group for the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia region to explore specifically how to improve communication within the region of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and between countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and the Convention.

(g) Consider the role that the Executive Body Bureaux should play in implementation; for example, each subsidiary body of the Convention should report on at least one communications issue each year. Direct subsidiary bodies to focus on specific issues each year;

1. According to the revised ToR of the EB Bureau (ECE/EB.AIR/91/Add.1, Annex 1), “The Bureau of the Executive Body prepares policy-oriented proposals and functions as an intersessional 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."

2. The Executive Body Bureau holds three half-a-day meetings a year, usually back-to-back with plenary meetings of the EB or the main subsidiary bodies.
3. If subsidiary bodies report on substantive matters in their reports to the EB and those reports contain key scientific results or new policy-relevant messages, these will provide the subject for the preparation of communication material by the secretariat.

4. This recommendation is being followed.

(h) Encourage the secretariat to continue pursuing and advocating communications within the Convention, as well as performing specific roles such as formal communications with Parties;

1. The formal channel of communication between the subsidiary bodies within the Convention is the secretariat. Communication and cooperation between the Chairs is most beneficial and highly encouraged. The secretariat which has a general coordinating role between the different subsidiary bodies is naturally facilitating this, providing information on the roles and responsibilities of different bodies, identifying issues which may need consultation with another body, providing responses to questions by the Chairs and the Parties and clarifying different issues. The Chairs of the subsidiary bodies are ex-officio members of the EB Bureau. The secretariat further facilitates information sharing between the chairs of the Task Forces and Expert Groups under the subsidiary bodies, e.g. by responding to requests for providing information. The Chairs are expected to copy the secretariat in their mutual communications.

2. This recommendation is being followed and should continue to be encouraged.

(i) Improve communication between integrated assessment work and the national experts on certain sectors (e.g., energy, transportation, agriculture). Increase information sharing of the Convention's scientific and technical work;

1. The main forum for the exchange of information on integrated assessment modelling are the meetings and workshops organized by TFIAM. Moreover, TFIAM holds periodically consultations with national experts on the country-specific data used in the GAINS model.

2. The EB could request the views of TFIAM on improving communication between integrated assessment work and the national experts on certain sectors.

3. The EB could request the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies to discuss with the secretariat approaches to improve information sharing of scientific and technical work within the Convention and UNECE region.

(j) *Communicate compliance information more effectively.*

1. All documentation related to compliance is posted on the website. It is located in the “members’ area” section of the “Implementation Committee” part of the website (<http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/air-pollution/convention-bodies/implementation-committee/member-login.html>). This part of the website is currently password-protected and accessible to IC members only. This webpage contains a “reference documents” section which contains several important reference documents, including on reporting obligations, the adjustment procedure and others. Furthermore, it contains webpages for each IC meeting with the respective background information for the consideration of each of the compliance cases, i.e. all notes on compliance related issues prepared by the secretariat and the responses received by Parties.
2. For the consideration of the EB at its meetings, there is an IC report on compliance as well as the draft recommendations and an overview of compliance with reporting obligations.
3. Active communication on (non-)compliance related matters is not envisaged. A note about a specific Party’s non-compliance had been prepared in the past and posted on the UNECE webpage at the request of the EB upon recommendation by the Implementation Committee as a stronger measure against that Party’s continuous non-compliance. Currently, this note has been removed from the website as the Party came into compliance.

4. The EB could encourage the secretariat and Parties to engage in more active communication with regard to information about policies, measures and good practices on the basis of the exchange of information and experiences within the Convention framework, i.e. at WGSR.

59. *While websites and documentation have improved, outside awareness and understanding of the Convention’s work is lacking. Therefore, the Ad Hoc Group recommends the following actions for communications with the public:*

- (a) *Initiate a review of the Convention’s website and consider what changes are needed to make it more attractive and informative for the public;*
 1. The Convention website is under the auspices of ECE. Its structure has been aligned with ECE requirements e.g. listing meetings in a format that allows finding them across different Conventions and intergovernmental bodies. The UNECE communications officer has been involved in the design of the website.
 2. New approaches in terms of structure are discussed by the secretariat with the Communications officer who also clears and distributes all press releases. Maintaining the content and updating it is up to the Convention secretariat.
- 3. The EB could invite the secretariat to consider producing non-technical content understandable to the general public. Proposals would then subsequently need to be discussed with the ECE communications unit. The structure of the website can be changed only to the degree that coherence with the ECE approach is kept. Content and new information can, however be added. [May require extra budgetary resources]**

(b) Target action to communicate with the public through annual workplans with reports from subsidiary bodies and the secretariat providing information on achievements;

1. Reports from the subsidiary bodies should include concrete conclusions and achievements. Some of these could be interesting health and environmental facts and trends that can be pulled from the reports developed into information to put on the website. The report template can help facilitate receiving the type of information the secretariat would need to develop this information.
2. Substantive information included in the reports of the subsidiary bodies including on health and environmental effects can provide the background for consideration and discussion at the respective meetings. This can provide the basis for communication materials prepared by the secretariat such as press releases and short articles with pertinent, new information relevant for public interest.
- 3. This recommendation is being followed and the EB could encourage the secretariat to prepare communication materials based on the subsidiary bodies' reports and substantive discussions at the EB, its subsidiary bodies or other meetings in the framework of the Convention.**

(c) Encourage Parties to take initiatives individually to promote the Convention. Decide on priority issues that might be used to raise the visibility of the Convention. Provide an easily accessible logo for all Parties to use in promoting the Convention's work;

1. The Convention is represented by the secretariat. It communicates on the basis of the formal decisions adopted by its meeting of the Parties (EB). Individual Parties or persons communicate about the Convention on their own behalf and express their own views.
2. A separate logo for the Convention exists as it has been created for the 25th anniversary of the Convention for the use in presentations etc. It is visible e.g. at:

http://www.fbu-ev.de/25clrtap/download/02_Dovland.pdf

Its use has been limited to some presentations since formally, for UN documents and communication materials; the UN logo is being used.

3. Part of the priorities for communication naturally follows from the long-term strategy and the decisions taken by the EB in any particular year e.g., the revision of the Gothenburg Protocol, as well as the biannual workplan.

4. The EB could decide whether the logo needs to be updated and made easily accessible for Parties. If so, the EB should consider rules related to its usage.

The EB could decide what additional specific actions, if any, should be taken to raise the visibility of the Convention? [Could require extra budgetary funding]

(d) Increase efforts to make relevant information from subsidiary bodies easier to access in order to inform the public and technical experts outside the Convention;

1. This proposal fully matches ongoing and planned efforts by the secretariat, e.g. the “amended Protocols” and “Guidance documents and other methodological materials” section of the website.

2. The secretariat provides links to the website of the respective task forces and expert groups as well as technical centres. The maintenance of these websites is their responsibility.

(e) *Consult with Parties over the use of air quality indices and maps to promote the visibility of the Convention as well as raise awareness to the link between health and air pollution;*

1. The EB could request EMEP (TFMM) and WGE (TFHealth) to explore this recommendation and report back to [to the EB Bureau]. [Depending on results of the discussion, could require extra budgetary funding]

(f) *Explore the feasibility and benefits of implementing one or more social media platforms (e.g. Face book, Twitter);*

1. UNECE communicates on twitter (https://twitter.com/UN_ECE) and facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/UNECEpage>). Upon request, also CLRTAP meetings in Geneva can be covered by the ECE Communications unit specifically those with information on health and environmental effects. The CLRTAP secretariat will have to carry out preparatory work to flag the most relevant content of public interest. No additional resources are needed for this but the workload of the secretariat during meetings will be increased which, depending on the meeting, may reduce its availability to respond to other demands and requests from delegates.

2. The EB could consider whether it wants to encourage the use of these UNECE communication options.

(g) *Review all current reports and brochures and make recommendations for additional ones, focusing on the priority work of the Convention;*

1. All publications are available on the website.

2. Due to resource cuts in the UN, the UNECE Environment Division is not anymore printing publications and report apart from legal texts. Extra budgetary resources are required and should ideally be targeted at developing or updating brochures including some in Russian for communication to the public. An example of a brochure which could be updated and translated into Russian is the 30th anniversary brochure by ICP vegetation.

3. The EB could discuss the resource constraints after reviewing cost information from the secretariat for printing brochures and additional publications and decide on any further action, if any. [New printing requires extra budgetary resources].

(h) Review past press releases and explore future possibilities for promoting work. National efforts to issue press releases should be well coordinated through the secretariat;

1. All press releases are available at:

http://www.unece.org/press/current_press_h.html

2. By topic “air pollution” all CLRTAP related press releases are visible. The current procedure for issuing press releases is that these are drafted by the secretariat and cleared by the ECE communications officer. Depending on the subject, the issue is also presented at a press conference in Geneva.

3. National press releases can be issued by Parties at their discretion.

4. This recommendation is already followed.

(i) Encourage subsidiary bodies and Parties to promote the Convention when taking part in such meetings;

- 1. This could be a recommendation from the EB. It is unclear what is meant by “such meetings.”**

(j) Encourage all Parties to promote the Convention’s work through their national activities whenever a suitable opportunity occurs;

- 1. This could be a recommendation from the EB.**

(k) Communicate information on health and environmental effects (e.g., biodiversity loss) to the public and engage in marketing activities to raise awareness of air pollution.

1. Some of the expert groups and task forces gather information on health and environmental effects of air pollution. This information can be provided to the subsidiary bodies for review and discussion and the secretariat can prepare press releases and other communication materials on this basis.

- 2. The EB could encourage the subsidiary bodies to highlight information on health and environmental effects which the secretariat can use to prepare communication materials. Further, the EB could invite the subsidiary bodies to highlight and present the policy relevant findings of their work, as stipulated in the draft 2014-2015 workplan.**

Note that addressing the Convention’s work and communication with other international organizations were addressed under the regional and global networks and agreements part of the Ad Hoc Group report. These recommendations are also very important for an effective communication strategy for the Convention. The WGSR, at its 51st session, recommended continuing and, if requested, increase outreach and collaboration with other global and regional networks and agreements on air pollution and included 5 specific recommendations. The EB should consider adopting these recommendations as part of a comprehensive list of communication activities.