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**The Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference:  
cleaning the air****Draft Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (2016–2021)****Note by the Bureau of the Convention on the Long-range  
Transboundary Air Pollution***Summary*

At its twentieth session (Geneva, 28–31 October 2014), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) mandated its Bureau, with support from the ECE secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to proceed with the preparation of the Eighth Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016), including preparing relevant documents to facilitate the organization of the Conference (ECE/CEP/2014/2, paras. 84 (c) and 98 (gg) (xi) c).

One of the themes for the Conference agreed by CEP is “Improving air quality for a better environment and human health”. The current document contains a proposal for an initiative aimed at improving air quality within the region prepared by the Bureau of the ECE Convention on the Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention). The CEP Bureau considered an initial draft of the initiative at its meeting on 15 and 16 June 2015 and recommended submitting the draft initiative to CEP for consideration.

CEP will be invited to consider the draft initiative as a possible outcome of the Batumi Ministerial Conference, and to provide guidance to the Bureau of the Air Convention in finalizing the initiative, including the mechanism for collecting commitments from stakeholders, for submission to ministers in Batumi.



## Introduction

1. Being aware of the still severe air pollution situation in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region and the call for action to protect public health and ecosystems, the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air presents a number of actions for improving air quality within the region. The objective of the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air is to encourage and support Governments and other actors in their work to improve air quality during the period 2016–2021.

2. More specifically, the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air has the following objectives:

(a) To provide Governments and other stakeholders with a list of possible concrete actions to address local, national and regional air pollution problems for their consideration;

(b) To inspire action on air pollution issues that are not currently being addressed;

(c) To aid the further implementation of the commitments under the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention) and its protocols;

(d) To invite stakeholders (international organizations, donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)) to support actions that improve air quality, in particular capacity-building and technical assistance actions;

(e) To invite Governments to commit to implementing specific actions and to share their successes and further challenges at future meetings of the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP).

3. Due to the different air pollution situations in countries of the ECE region, their effects on human health and the environment and actual challenges, priorities for actions will differ among countries. The arrangement and order of actions proposed for consideration in the present document should therefore not be seen in any way as constituting a ranking of the actions or conferring priority on those mentioned first.

4. Some actions are of a general nature and constitute an important starting point to better characterize the sources of air pollutants. These include monitoring activities with regard to both air quality and the resulting impacts on human health and ecosystems. These activities could be considered as prerequisites for raising the awareness of the public and policymakers on the necessity to abate noxious emissions.

5. Other actions are specifically required as starting points to establish the common basis for cooperation with other countries and to accede to international agreements. For countries where data collection and assessment are at an early stage technical support and expertise sharing would be welcomed.

6. Governments and other stakeholders are invited to choose appropriate actions from the list of possible actions proposed below in accordance with their country-specific needs with a view to undertaking a voluntarily commitment to implementing them.

7. Similar to the Astana Water Action, countries and other potential stakeholders (international organizations, donor organizations and NGOs) could be invited to submit their voluntary commitments by using a template that could be annexed to this document.

## **I. Establishment of systematic, comparable and transparent monitoring activities and emissions inventories**

8. Possible actions with regard to the establishment of systematic, comparable and transparent monitoring activities and emissions inventories include:

- (a) To collect and maintain information on actual levels of:
  - (i) Emissions of sulphur, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, ammonia, volatile organic compounds and some heavy metals and particulate matter, as a minimum;
  - (ii) Ambient concentrations of the compounds mentioned in subparagraph (a) (i) above and ground-level ozone, taking into account, as appropriate, the Guidelines for Reporting Emissions and Projections Data under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (ECE/AB.AIR/125);
- (b) To deliver data, as a minimum, for all large point sources according to the mechanism established by the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs) to the ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to justice in Environmental Matters;
- (c) To foster cooperation and the exchange of information between the subnational and local authorities on issues related to air pollution;
- (d) To designate institutional organizations responsible for the monitoring of air quality and the exchange of data between the various local networks, as well as the harmonization of the monitoring methodologies, as appropriate to national circumstances;
- (e) To designate institutional organizations responsible for the establishment of inventories of air pollutant emissions;
- (f) Where systems are already well established, to provide technical support regarding air quality monitoring and inventory development to countries beginning to undertake these activities and to share expertise with them in this regard.

## **II. Establishment of national action programmes that reduce air pollution**

9. Possible actions related to the establishment of national action programmes that reduce air pollution include:

- (a) To control and reduce emissions of sulphur, nitrogen oxides, ammonia and volatile organic compounds, as well as particulate matter, heavy metals and some persistent organic pollutants (POPs) that are of importance given their potential for long-range transboundary atmospheric transport and for causing adverse effects to human health, natural ecosystems, materials or crops through, e.g., acidification, eutrophication or the creation of ground-level ozone;
- (b) To adopt, as necessary and on the basis of sound scientific and economic criteria, strategies, policies and programmes with measures:
  - (i) To control and reduce emissions of sulphur, nitrogen oxides, ammonia, volatile organic compounds and particulate matter;
  - (ii) To encourage increased energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, as well as the to promote low emission systems for biomass burning;

- (iii) To decrease the use of polluting fuels, in particular (low grade) coal and high sulphur fuels;
- (iv) To introduce less polluting transport systems and promote traffic management systems to reduce overall emissions and exposure from road traffic;
- (v) To promote good agricultural practices to avoid losses of ammonia in the environment;
- (vi) To establish programmes with respect to atmospheric monitoring and modelling, health and ecosystem effects and to facilitate the communication of the results to the public;
- (c) To apply best available techniques to mobile sources and to both new and existing stationary sources, including in the agriculture sector, taking into account the related guidance documents adopted by the Executive Body for the Air Convention;
- (d) To report the measures undertaken and outcomes to the Executive Body for the Air Convention through the Convention secretariat.

### **III. Improvement of public awareness**

10. Possible actions to improve public awareness include:
- (a) To promote, in a manner consistent with national laws, regulations and practices, the provision of information to the general public, including information on:
    - (i) National annual emissions of sulphur, nitrogen oxides, ammonia, volatile organic compounds and particulate matter;
    - (ii) Levels of air pollution and health and ecosystem exposure;
    - (iii) Measures applied or to be applied to reduce air pollution problems;
  - (b) To make the information detailed in subparagraph (a) above available to the public with a view to minimizing emissions, including information on:
    - (i) Less polluting fuels, renewable energy and energy efficiency, including their use in transport;
    - (ii) Good agricultural practices to reduce emissions of ammonia and to improve the efficiency of nitrogen fertilization;
    - (iii) Human health, environmental and climate effects associated with the reduction of the pollutants;
    - (iv) Steps that individuals and the private sector can take to reduce emissions of the pollutants;
  - (c) To report the available information to the Executive Body for the Air Convention and, as appropriate, to the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs. This information or parts of it could also be reported to the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as, depending on the various topics and affiliation, to the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) networks through the secretariats of the various conventions and organizations;
  - (d) To make use of the third cycle of the ECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) Programme to report and communicate on air quality issues and possible abatement measures that could be implemented at the national scale.

## IV. Capacity-building and technical support

11. Possible actions to build capacity and provide technical support include:

(a) To undertake strengthened capacity-building activities on air quality, such as workshops and policy development assistance, to support the implementation of measures to improve air quality;

(b) To participate more actively in and to designate national experts to the international scientific and technical activities under the Air Convention as a fast track to cleaner air with tools such as transfer of knowledge and technology;

(c) To further develop cooperation through bilateral action (twinning efforts) or multilateral activities in line with the workplan for the implementation of the Air Convention and its protocols;

(d) To encourage the further development under the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development of financing for air pollution measures in the ECE region;

(e) To explore opportunities for partnerships with the private sector on the way to promote clean technology and the implementation of low emissions techniques, as well as the further development of the green economy. Contacts and business opportunities could be jointly developed with industry in the power sector, the car industry or with the oil, gas and chemicals organizations.

## V. Policy

12. Possible actions in the policy sphere include:

(a) To explore opportunities for strengthened international cooperation on air pollution, for example under the Air Convention;

(b) To work towards becoming a party to relevant international agreements addressing air pollution, such as the Air Convention and its protocols and other multilateral environmental agreements, and to report on progress to the next Environmental for Europe Ministerial Conference;

(c) To work towards ratification of the amended Protocol on Heavy Metals to the Air Convention, and to report progress to the Convention's Working Group for Strategies and Review at its annual session;

(d) To work towards the ratification of the amended Protocol on POPs to the Air Convention, and to report progress to the Convention's Working Group for Strategies and Review at its annual session;

(e) To work towards the ratification of the amended Gothenburg Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone to the Air Convention, and to report progress to the Convention's Working Group for Strategies and Review at its annual session;

(f) To take actions in sectors which are of priority for the country in question, taking into account the specific guidance documents developed under the Air Convention, and to regularly report progress to sessions of the Convention's Working Group for Strategies and Review. Such actions could include actions in the agriculture, energy or transport sectors.

## Annex

### **Template for submitting actions within the framework of the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air**

The template below should be used to submit actions undertaken by countries, organizations and the private sector within the framework of the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air. For each action, please provide information on the following six items.

1. Country or organization:
2. Title<sup>a</sup> of the action (indicate between brackets the reference(s) to related paragraphs of the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air):
3. Description of the action and, if possible, target date:<sup>b</sup>
4. Expected outcome:
5. Partners:
6. Contact points:<sup>c</sup>

*Please note:* This template should be submitted, if possible by [date, month] 2016, to [e-mail address].

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<sup>a</sup> The title must be as precise as possible.

<sup>b</sup> In six lines maximum (possible indication of source material such as websites).

<sup>c</sup> E.g., CEP delegate and the ECE Air Convention focal point and/or ministry dealing with air pollution.