

Long-term strategy for the Convention until 2030

I. Introduction

1. Over the past few decades, numerous industrial accidents have reminded us that industrial facilities that produce, handle or store hazardous substances remain a serious threat to our societies and to the environment in which we live. While governments and industry (operators, business associations and others) have progressed in making these operations safer, the damage caused by past accidents is proof that their effects can be far-reaching, sometimes across borders. They cause severe harm to the environment, workers, communities, businesses and national economies with an overall deterioration in quality of life. Moreover, recovery from industrial accidents undermines development progress and is time-consuming and expensive. Many places still suffer from events that occurred years ago and for the severely injured and the victims' families, time offers no recovery at all. There is thus a constant need to reinforce safety measures at industrial facilities containing hazardous substances in order to reduce the risk of accidents.

2. The severe transboundary effects of the Sandoz (Schweizerhalle) accident in 1986 and the resulting pollution of the Rhine affecting Germany, France and the Netherlands led governments to realize that a legal framework for cross-border cooperation on industrial accident prevention and preparedness is vital. Following several years of negotiations under ECE auspices, the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) was adopted in 1992 and entered into force in 2000. It is designed to protect people and the environment from the effects of accidents at facilities that produce, handle or store hazardous chemicals. The Convention also applies to industrial accidents resulting from natural hazards, so-called 'NATECH' (natural-hazard-triggered technological disasters) events, such as earthquakes, floods and landslides, which are expected to become more frequent and intense due to climate change. The Convention provides an effective mechanism for supporting countries' progress towards sustainable development, disaster resilience and a green economy by protecting their populations, the environment and economies from industrial accidents occurring within and across national borders. As such, it is an important legal instrument in the context of the wider policy goals agreed by United Nations Member States, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (Sendai Framework), particularly with regard to the management of technological hazards and the reduction of related risks.

3. The present long-term strategy is a holistic document that starts by recalling the Convention's history, strengths and achievements (chapters I and II). This narrative provides the context and rationale behind the vision and objectives to be achieved by 2030 in light of the key challenges, which indicate the desired direction and future development of the Convention over the next decade (chapter III). Finally, the strategy proposes mechanisms for its implementation with a view to achievement of its vision and objectives (chapter IV).

4. The present strategy is aligned with and supported by the communication, outreach and engagement strategy for the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, which has been prepared by the Bureau for review and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting. The latter strategy seeks to raise awareness of the Convention, increase its visibility and promote the greater involvement of Parties, non-Parties, strategic partners, donors and other relevant stakeholders by setting out communication and engagement options and attracting more sustainable financing of its activities.

II. Strengths and achievements of the Convention

1. Industrial safety policy, governance and transboundary cooperation

Improved policymaking and governance

5. The Convention has led to the adoption and implementation of more effective industrial accident prevention, preparedness and response policies, driven industrial safety governance and inspired the development of mechanisms for coordination among public authorities within and across national borders.

Improved intergovernmental dialogue and cross-border relations

6. In the 25 years since its adoption, the Convention has provided a sound legal framework and an active intergovernmental platform for the promotion of cooperation and the advancement of industrial safety in the ECE region. This, in turn, has fostered mutual understanding of industrial-safety-related challenges and improved relations between neighbouring and riparian countries, thereby contributing to international peace and security.

Response to emerging developments

7. The Convention's scope has been revised and expanded to include the most prevalent chemical accident risks and to ensure consistency with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

Strengthened water pollution prevention

8. The Convention has strengthened the prevention of accidental water pollution and its potentially far-reaching transboundary effects by supporting countries' preparedness through the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group), established in cooperation with the secretariat of the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention).

Enhanced notification systems

9. The Industrial Accident Notification (IAN) system allows the Parties, through their points of contact, to notify each other promptly in the event of an accident or imminent threat thereof and to request mutual assistance.

Increasing the number of Parties

10. Since its adoption, the number of Parties to the Convention has been increasing steadily. As at May 2018, there are 41 Parties, including the European Union, 26 of its member States and a significant number of countries in Western, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

Ensuring coherence with other relevant policies and legislation

11. The Convention has maintained coherence with other relevant policies and legislation. Two amendments to its annex I have been adopted and entered into force, in 2007 and 2015, respectively, in order to align it with the amendments to the European Union Seveso Directive (Seveso-II, Directive 96/82/EC and Seveso-III, Directive 2012/18/EU) and the GHS.

2. Guidance and exchange of experiences

12. A major achievement of the Convention is the large number of guidance materials, good industry practices, checklists and other instruments that have been developed for use by countries, competent authorities, operators and others. This guidance has led to a common understanding of safety approaches and standards for specific sectors (e.g. pipelines, tailings management facilities (TMFs) and oil terminals) and areas of work (e.g. safety reports, hazard rating, land-use planning and siting). The guidance developed for Assistance Programme beneficiary countries includes benchmarks for measuring implementation of the Convention and national self-assessments and action plans. Most recently, guidance has been prepared in cooperation with other international organizations in order to help countries to meet their commitments under the Sendai Framework with respect to man-made and technological hazards.¹

13. Through its convening power, the Convention has enabled national authorities and stakeholders to exchange knowledge, experiences and good practices and benefit from innovative training formats such as online training on industrial accidents, developed jointly with the United Nations Environment / United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Joint Unit.

3. Assistance Programme²

14. A key asset of the Convention is its Assistance Programme, adopted at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Budapest, 27–30 October 2004) in order to support countries with economies in transition. At a High-level Commitment Meeting (Geneva, 14–15 December 2005), the majority of countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia undertook to implement it (CP. TEIA/2005/12). Today, all of the countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia are participating in activities under the Programme, which has become a key tool for improving cooperation between competent authorities and facilitating, documenting and measuring progress in implementing the Convention.

15. To date, over 60 assistance activities — including training sessions, workshops, emergency response exercises, advisory services and consultations — have been implemented and over 1,000 representatives of the competent authorities and industry of all beneficiary countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia have received training that enhanced their administrative and institutional capacities.

16. Long-term projects implemented under the Assistance Programme, such as the Danube River Project (Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia) and the Danube Delta Project (Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine), the on-site inspection project (Croatia, Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and the Project on improving industrial safety in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), have strengthened subregional cooperation in preventing accidents and enhancing preparedness.

¹ *Words into Action guidelines: Man-made/technological hazards*, available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/words-action-guidelines-man-madetechnological-hazards-2018-public-consultation-version>.

² The long-term strategy stipulates (see chapter IV, para. 25) that the Assistance Programme, established in 2004, be renamed the “Assistance and Cooperation Programme” in view of the changes in its mission over time and of the guidance provided at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 3–5 December 2014).

4. Strategic partnerships

17. The Convention has significantly increased the number of strategic partnerships on industrial safety. The Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Industrial Accidents, established in 2013, helps to identify synergies and avoid duplication of efforts. The European Commission and its Joint Research Centre, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Environment/OCHA Joint Unit are among the Convention's key strategic partners.

III. The Convention's response to challenges: Its vision and key objectives until 2030

18. The Convention's overall vision until 2030 is to significantly increase industrial safety and reduce the risk of technological disasters by ensuring its full implementation, its wide recognition as a legal instrument for risk reduction under the Sendai Framework and its contribution to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. By building on its strengths, critically evaluating its role in the wider context and considering existing challenges and new opportunities, it will serve as an example of the prevention of and preparedness for industrial accidents through transboundary cooperation, including beyond the ECE region.

19. The specific elements of this vision — its key challenges and objectives and the strategic priorities for implementing it — are set out below. Where relevant, linkages to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework are provided.

1. Improving industrial safety

Key challenges

(a) In low — and middle — income countries, particularly those with economies in transition, industrial facilities and equipment are often ageing, institutional structures and enforcement capacities weak, administrative and expert capacities limited, legal frameworks incoherent and cooperation among competent national authorities, operators and other relevant actors lacking.

(b) In ECE-region countries with more developed industrial safety management, complacency is prevalent; continued emphasis on the need to invest in the prevention of industrial accidents is crucial in order to maintain and enhance industrial safety.

(c) Accidental water pollution can lead to far-reaching transboundary impacts and potential regional catastrophes. Serious hotspots such as TMFs in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and hazardous activities along rivers and river basins pose a threat in the region and beyond.

Key objectives to be achieved by 2030

(a) The Convention will be fully implemented at the national and local levels throughout the ECE region. It will drive national efforts to minimize the occurrence and consequences of industrial accidents and to prevent deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals (Goal 3), related damage to the environment and economic losses, particularly in a transboundary context. Through its intergovernmental framework, it will continue to provide a platform for policy dialogue, the exchange of experiences and the identification of good practices.

(b) Cooperation between riparian countries and the relevant river basin commissions will be well-established and implemented. Through the Joint Expert Group, the Convention, in cooperation with the Water Convention, will continue to promote the prevention of accidental water pollution and preparedness, thereby preventing and minimizing contamination and contributing to clean water (Goal 6).

(c) The approximation of safety approaches and standards across subregions will be further advanced and the safety culture enhanced where appropriate. The Convention will lead the way in increasing knowledge of technological hazards at industrial facilities and related accident risks among public authorities, promoting enhanced management of those hazards and the taking of risk reduction measures by industry (e.g. operators and business associations) and ensuring proper communication of risks to the public, thereby helping to building safe and resilient societies (Goal 11).

(d) The Parties will ensure inclusive public information and participation by implementing article 9 of the Convention with the involvement of the population, regardless of age and gender (Goal 16). This will enhance awareness of the existing risks and of the emergency and response procedures needed in order to contain damage to human health in the event of an accident.

(e) The safety of hotspots in the ECE region will be improved, decreasing the risk of accidents that could lead to catastrophes with wide-ranging transboundary impacts. National efforts will focus on prevalent safety challenges, supported by capacity development activities under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme. Subject to the availability of resources, the Convention will also inspire countries beyond the ECE region to strengthen industrial safety and address their own hotspots.

2. Enhancing transboundary cooperation

Key challenges

(a) Only half of the Parties have notified potentially affected countries of their hazardous activities.

(b) Countries rarely take into consideration land-use plans and hazardous activities in neighbouring countries when taking decisions on siting or land-use proposals within their borders.

(c) Few countries have developed joint off-site contingency plans.

(d) Political priorities sometimes hamper effective transboundary cooperation with regard to chemical accident prevention and preparedness.

(e) Some of the Convention's provisions on transboundary cooperation are poorly understood. Countries have frequently expressed the need for further support in implementing the Convention and its provisions on transboundary cooperation.

(f) Transboundary cooperation before or after an accident is particularly difficult where one of the countries concerned is located outside the ECE region or is not a Party to the Convention and the growing number of United Nations Member States that have begun to address industrial hazards as a result of awareness-raising activities under the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda could lead to a fragmentation of approaches and incompatible or parallel mechanisms.

Key objectives to be achieved by 2030

(a) Countries will cooperate in addressing transboundary risks and will fully implement the relevant provisions of the Convention with regard to prevention (notification

of hazardous activities and land-use planning and siting), preparedness and response (joint or harmonized contingency plans, exercises and agreements on mutual assistance) and public participation. The Convention's role as a driver of cross-border cooperation and the transboundary focus of capacity development activities under its Assistance and Cooperation Programme will be enhanced. Preparedness and response exercises, particularly along transboundary rivers, will test and improve emergency and response policies and procedures³ and facilitate harmonization with other regional procedures and mechanisms.

(b) Countries will make use of established accident notification systems, including the IAN system, in order to notify each other of accidents, mitigate their consequences promptly and request and render mutual assistance. Transboundary cooperation could extend beyond the ECE region and, in particular, to countries that border on Parties to the Convention. United Nations Member States will increasingly share knowledge and expertise on transboundary cooperation in managing technological hazards and reducing chemical accident risks. To that end, subject to the availability of funding and giving priority to countries that border on Parties, the Convention will continue to facilitate the voluntary participation of United Nations Member States beyond the ECE region in policy and expert networks and activities under the Convention and in the application and dissemination of its guidance materials and good industry practices. It will continue to contribute its expertise to other regional and global initiatives and build on ongoing efforts to expand outreach through partnerships with, among others, OECD, the Water Convention, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and other United Nations regional commissions, particularly the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). In partnership with these organizations, the Convention should offer policy guidance, tools and good practices for prevention of and preparedness for industrial accidents. By 2030, it should have developed a network of contacts in countries and key organizations beyond the ECE region, and particularly in neighbouring countries. Implementing the Convention will also help countries beyond the region to strengthen industrial safety and transboundary cooperation and to implement the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework commitments.

(c) Countries will improve international cooperation related to mutual assistance, research and development, exchange of information and technology in the field of preventing industrial accidents, ensuring preparedness for and mitigation of their consequences.

3. Supporting implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework and other relevant policies

Key challenges

(a) Industrial accidents and their potential far-reaching consequences pose a threat to countries' ability to achieve sustainable development.

(b) Countries are engaged in the development of multiple policy initiatives, strategic documents and action plans⁴ and are not always fully aware of the linkages between

³ These include those established under the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism and its Host Nation Support Guidelines.

⁴ E.g. the self-assessments and action plans that support implementation of the Convention and have been developed under its Assistance Programme; national disaster risk reduction strategies and action plans that support implementation of the Sendai Framework; and relevant national policies within the scope of the Industrial Accidents Convention (including Chemical ("C") and Explosives ("E") policies within CBRN-E in some member-countries) and action plans.

related policy areas, including industrial and chemical safety, disaster risk reduction and efforts to mitigate the risks arising from i.a. chemical and explosive materials.

(c) Countries are not always fully aware of the linkages between the Convention and other regional or global policy commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework and relevant national policies within the scope of the Industrial Accidents Convention (including Chemical (“C”) and Explosives (“E”) policies within CBRN-E in some member-countries).

(d) Countries are not fully aware of existing facilities (within and across borders) and lack access to programmes or resources designed, among other things, to increase their awareness, knowledge and skills and build their capacity for disaster risk reduction.⁵ This is particularly relevant because, unlike the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005–2015), the Sendai Framework addresses the management of human-caused and technological hazards and the reduction of related risks.

Key objectives to be achieved by 2030

(a) Implementation of the Convention and its legal framework, tools and guidance materials will support countries’ efforts under the 2030 Agenda and their pursuit of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and targets 3.9, 3.d, 6.3, 9.1, 9.4, 11.b, 12.4, and 13.1.⁶

(b) The Convention will be a widely-recognized instrument for reducing technological disaster risks and fostering transboundary cooperation. Its implementation will also support national efforts to implement the Sendai Framework’s four priority areas for action⁷ by:

- (i) Raising awareness of technological hazards and related disaster risks to manage disaster risks;
- (ii) Strengthening disaster risk governance;
- (iii) Encouraging countries to invest in disaster risk reduction for resilience; and
- (iv) Enhancing disaster preparedness with a view to effective response and to “build back better” in recovery, rehabilitation and construction.

⁵ See the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction’s zero draft of the global capacity development strategy in support of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, available at <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/events/56922>.

⁶ Target 3.9: “By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals”; target 3.d: “Strengthen the capacity of all countries (...) for risk reduction”; target 6.3: “By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution (...) and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials (...)”; target 9.1: “Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure (...)”; target 9.4: “By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable”; target 11.b: “By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards (...) resilience to disasters and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels”; target 12.4: “By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals (...) throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks”; and target 13.1: “Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries”.

⁷ The Convention’s contribution to the Sendai Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals is described in greater detail in the document “Fostering the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030” (ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/1), prepared for the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Ljubljana, 28–30 November 2016), available at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41526>.

(c) Countries will, as appropriate, include in their national disaster risk reduction and relevant national policies within the scope of the Industrial Accidents Convention (including Chemical (“C”) and Explosives (“E”) policies within CBRN-E in some member-countries), strategies and action plans on the management of technological hazards at industrial facilities and transboundary risks and references to their relevant legal obligations, including under the Convention. The Convention through its capacity development activities, guidance and tools, will help countries to identify and develop linkages with the national disaster risk reduction strategies and action plans.

4. Emerging risks and developments

Key challenges

(a) Accidents, including those with transboundary consequences, occurring at facilities that are not within the Convention’s scope (for example, pipelines, TMFs and in the transport of dangerous goods) may have significant economic and societal costs including fatalities, injuries, evacuation, damage to the environment, mobilization of emergency services, damage to buildings, business disruption and the costs of reconstruction, recovery and ecosystem restoration. These accidents that lie outside the scope of the Convention, while the related hazards and risks are regulated by other regimes,⁸ remain a challenge for policy coordination and may hamper sustainable development of countries.

(b) In cities, greater population density and decreasing distances to industrial facilities, together with the anticipated higher frequency and intensity of extreme weather conditions resulting from climate change and natural disasters, increase the risk and potential impact of an industrial accident and therefore pose a threat to sustainable development.

(c) The increasing frequency of extreme weather events as a result of climate change and their growing impact as a result of increased population density and industrialization make NATECH events more likely to occur.

(d) The production of hazardous substances is being increasingly outsourced to countries beyond the ECE region, particularly in Asia, where accident risks have increased and prevention efforts and disaster management capacities may lag behind. This has potential spill-over effects on the ECE region, including an increased risk of transboundary accidents⁹ and reputational risks and economic losses for parent companies.¹⁰

Key objectives to be achieved by 2030

(a) The Convention will be a flexible and modern instrument capable of addressing new and emerging risks. The Working Group on Development will assess developments and, where relevant, make proposals to the Conference of the Parties on the need to review the Convention. New and emerging risks will be included in the Convention’s workplan.

(b) The Convention will remain responsive and proactive in addressing developments at the regional and global levels, taking global megatrends such as climate change, related natural disasters and urbanization into account, and will develop and adjust its mechanisms with the necessary flexibility. Future discussions and guidance on land-use planning and siting will bear these factors in mind (Goal 11).

⁸ Such as the United Nations model regulations and recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods.

⁹ In 2005, for example, a chemical plant accident in Jilin, China, created an 80 kilometre toxic slick in a tributary of the Amur River, polluting it and ultimately affecting the territory of the Russian Federation.

¹⁰ As, among others, the headquarters of major companies’ operations are often located in the ECE region.

(c) The increased risk of NATECH events will be considered in risk assessment and evaluation, safety measures and contingency planning and reflected in the relevant guidance, policy and expert dialogues. The Convention will support national efforts to adapt and strengthen resilience to climate-related hazards and natural disasters (Goal 13).

IV. Mechanisms for implementation of the Convention

20. The following mechanisms are required in order to pursue the Convention's vision until 2030 and the key objectives thereof.

1. An inclusive policy forum for dialogue among authorities, industry, academia and civil society

21. With its convening power, the Convention will continue to provide a platform for dialogue on industrial safety and the challenges faced by countries in its implementation. It will provide a forum for exchanging experiences, identifying good practices and considering their applicability to a variety of national circumstances. Prevalent and emerging safety issues will be addressed at the policy and expert levels at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, dedicated seminars, workshops and expert group meetings.

22. The Convention will continue to be at the centre of a policy network on industrial safety and will aim to intensify its linkages with policy circles addressing wider disaster risk reduction and relevant national policies within the scope of the Industrial Accidents Convention (including Chemical ("C") and Explosives ("E") policies within CBRN-E in some member-countries) and strategies. Further to its natural policy cooperation, it will strive to increasingly involve all stakeholders, including representatives of industry, academia and civil society, in its networks. It will expand its outreach and consider new and innovative activities (university curriculums, case studies, webinars, industrial safety applications, TEDx¹¹ and others) in order to strengthen cooperation with a broader range of stakeholders.

2. A centre of excellence for guidance development and implementation

23. The development of guidance documents to support implementation of the Convention will be pursued by policymakers and national experts in close cooperation with industry representatives and academia. The Convention will continue to be a centre of excellence for the development of guidance, technical knowledge and expertise through its expert networks. Future guidance will take better account of countries' needs, broader policy developments, emerging challenges to industrial safety, the Sendai Framework and national efforts to pursue its implementation.¹² Once guidance has been developed, efforts will focus on the exchange of experience and capacity development so that countries can implement it. The Joint Expert Group will continue to play an active role in that regard and, in the context of the Water Convention, could reach out to countries beyond the ECE region and consider their experience and good practices when disseminating safety guidance.

¹¹ TEDx Talks is a website on which previously-recorded live TED (a non-profit organization devoted to spreading ideas) conferences are posted and shared with the community. TEDx events are planned and coordinated at the community level and are normally available at no cost (<https://www.ted.com/watch/tedx-talks>).

¹² This will include the development of national and local risk reduction strategies and plans; regional and subregional mechanisms for cooperation on disaster risk reduction; and disaster preparedness and contingency policies, plans and programmes at the national and local levels.

3. Cooperation through strategic partnerships

24. The Convention will continuously aim to be a driver of strategic partnership development. It will seek synergies to complement its core competencies when addressing current or emerging policy issues and to broaden the range of policymakers and stakeholders involved in the development of recommendations and approaches and the delivery of capacity-building activities. It will pursue cooperation through the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Industrial Accidents and contribute to the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Chemicals Management. It will also aim to enhance its traditional strategic partnerships and to develop new partnership arrangements with other relevant organizations, including the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UN Environment, ESCAP and the other United Nations regional commissions, OECD, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and regional institutions such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Inter-State Council on Industrial Safety. Synergies with other ECE Conventions and programmes will continue to be sought.

4. The Assistance and Cooperation Programme

25. The Assistance Programme will be revised and rebranded to ensure that it remains an effective instrument for delivering assistance and building capacity at all levels. It will be renamed the Assistance and Cooperation Programme, through which beneficiary countries will increasingly cooperate and support each other and take full ownership of activities. The multi-year, multi-country projects implemented through the Programme are expected to lead to enhanced governance through national policy dialogues on industrial safety involving all relevant stakeholders and to improved transboundary cooperation through subregional projects and activities. The Working Group on Implementation will continue to provide oversight of assistance activities and guidance of national efforts to prepare self-assessments and action plans under the Programme's Strategic Approach.

5. Enhanced visibility through networking and communication

26. The Convention will enhance its visibility within the ECE region and beyond in line with its communication, engagement and outreach strategy. This will be achieved by drawing attention to linkages with the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework and ensuring the participation of office-holders, focal points and the secretariat in high-level events organized at the regional and global levels. To that end, the Convention will enhance its partnership with and involvement in networks on related issues (e.g. disaster risk reduction, crisis management and relevant national policies within the scope of the Industrial Accidents Convention (including Chemical ("C") and Explosives ("E")) policies within CBRN-E in some member-countries). Communication products such as brochures, postcards, press releases and notes will highlight these linkages. Thus, while substantive work at the expert level will continue, it will gain wider recognition in policymaking, among industry representatives, at academic institutions and in other circles.

6. Workplan

27. The Convention's workplan will remain the primary instrument for achieving its vision and the objectives and strategic priorities set out therein. Parties and strategic partners will lead workplan activities both substantively and financially. Countries will participate actively in intergovernmental and expert group meetings and contribute to a rich exchange of experience and expert knowledge and to guidance development and review. Beneficiary

countries will assume ownership of assistance activities and endeavour to ensure their continuity and provide in-kind support. The workplan will address countries' implementation challenges and needs as set out in their national implementation reports and in the final reports on the conclusions of assistance activities and will aim to address current and emerging issues while ensuring continuity of effort. Through the workplan, the Conference of the Parties and the Bureau will clearly prioritize objectives in light of the available and anticipated resources.

7. Sustainable financing and capacity development

28. Sustainable and predictable financing is crucial for the Convention's future. It is a prerequisite for the continuity of its activities, including the servicing of intergovernmental bodies, organization of policy and expert meetings, coordination of guidance development and maintenance of the Convention's networks. It is also essential for sustainable capacity development and for the assistance provided to countries so that they can make safety improvements and harmonize standards across subregions and potentially beyond. Predictable financing is essential to the effective planning and implementation of activities and retention of a stable secretariat with qualified staff.

29. As stated in the Convention's Sustainable Financial Mechanism (ECE/CP.TEIA/24, annex I)¹³, the primary responsibility for securing the resources needed to implement the workplan lies with the Parties, which are invited to consider contributions that reflect their economic strength, or higher (para. 12); other stakeholders are also encouraged to provide contributions (para. 14). Parties will continue to pledge or indicate, prior to adoption of a biennial workplan, their annual voluntary financial and in-kind contributions and will take an active part in ensuring additional contributions (para. 24). They will also continue to provide support through in-kind and expert contributions. Focal points will reach out to their national authorities, including development cooperation agencies, and the Bureau will prepare an affordable workplan (para. 24 (c) (i)).

¹³ The Sustainable Financial Mechanism was adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting (Stockholm, 24–26 November 2012) and is available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=29023>.