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300

The UNECE Weekly editorial team is proud to present to you this 300th issue. We hope that during its almost six years of existence, UNECE Weekly has given you a fair overview of the numerous activities going on in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your positive comments and reactions and to wish you a happy holiday season.

UNECE at Doha Conference

Contribution to follow-up Conference on Financing for Development

Over 3,000 people, including delegations from 160 UN member States, convened in Doha, Qatar at the end of November for the Follow-up Conference on Financing for Development. The objective of the meeting was to ascertain how well the objectives agreed to in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002 had been achieved and to address any new developmental issues that had arisen since then.

At the end of the meeting, the member States adopted by consensus the *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development* which reconfirmed the principles in the Monterrey Consensus. Although the primary objective was to agree upon a set of best policies and commitments for promoting long-term economic development, the problems associated with the current global financial crisis occupied much of the discussion.

Almost 40 Heads of Government addressed the conference, a number of them from UNECE member States including President Nicolas Sarkozy representing France and the European Union. Also attending were UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and European Commission President José Manuel Barroso.

The UN regional commissions organized a session on the role of regional cooperation and global partnerships in financing for development. UNECE, for its part, discussed the significant similarities between the European approach to cooperation and integration and the six pillars of the Monterrey Consensus; some newer issues especially relevant for the wider-European region that have increased in importance since Monterrey were also highlighted.

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Financing for Development and economics of gender

UNECE receives MDG 3 champion torch from Secretary-General

A High-level side event at the Doha Conference, organized by Norway on 29 November in close collaboration with UNECE, discussed how to mobilize women's economic potential for growth and development. The event had a global character due to the participation of all regional commissions as facilitated by UNECE.



MDG 3 champion torches received on behalf of UNECE, UNECLAC and UNESCAP

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon delivered a keynote address emphasizing that the global economy would come to a halt without women's work, including the unpaid and under-appreciated work of women in the informal sector. He handed MDG 3 champion torches – part of the Danish "Call for Action" initiative – to UNECE and other regional commissions, and urged them to intensify their efforts in furthering gender equality.

The discussion was chaired by Erik Solheim, Norwegian Minister of Environment and Development Cooperation, who emphasized that gender equality was critical to economic growth and development. The panellists agreed that current financial crisis presents an additional challenge for reaching MDG 3 as women are disproportionately hurt by economic downturns, which involve cuts in jobs, public spending and fiscal austerity measures. It is however also an opportunity both to strengthen the case for "gender equality as smart economics" including integrating a gender perspective into measures to stabilize financial markets and

revive economic growth. To make this happen, said Mary Robinson, currently Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders, there is a need for a driving wedge for economic gender equality.

The side event drew on the agreed conclusions of the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women adopted by Member States in March 2008. Their implementation requires joint action by Governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations at national, regional and global levels. The messages from this event are particularly relevant for UNECE due to its focus on the economics of gender and its preparations for a regional review meeting in the gender and economy area.

For more information visit <http://www.unece.org/oes/gender> or contact Ewa Zimny (ewa.zimny@unece.org).

Not an official record - For information only

Industrial Accidents Convention moving forward on Assistance Programme

The UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents was created as a response to the need to protect human beings and the environment from the consequences of industrial accidents, especially in a transboundary context where cross-country coordination is crucial and more difficult to achieve.

The main item on the Agenda of the fifth meeting of Parties to the Convention (25-27 November) was the Assistance Programme, launched in 2004 to help with the problems faced by countries with economies in transition in implementing the sometimes complex requirements of the Convention.

The Assistance Programme is characterized by a bottom-up structure in which assistance activities are organized according to the needs expressed by participating countries. To date, these needs have been identified through fact-finding missions to the countries and by the countries' biennial implementation reports. At their meeting, the Parties created a new tool – a Strategic Approach that

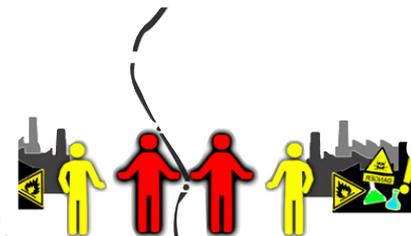
can be used by countries both to monitor their progress and to identify their assistance needs.

This Strategic Approach has the further aim of ensuring the Assistance Programme's sustainability by providing support for medium- and long-term financial planning.

Progress in enhancing the communication procedures of the Industrial Accidents Notification (IAN) System was reported on. The System was created to enable every country to inform the potentially affected neighbouring country that an industrial accident has happened and to ask for mutual assistance.

A side-event organized during the meeting was a chance to see how cooperation between authorities and the private sector – a vital aspect of the Convention – works in practice. Participants heard from the Cantonal Authority of Geneva for Inspection and Labour Relations, and from two local chemical companies – Petrostok SA, a storage facility for petroleum products, and Givaudan Suisse SA, producer of perfumes and aromas – on their safety practices, including a guided visit.

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UNECE standard for porcine meat



The purpose of UNECE standards for meat products is to facilitate trade by recommending an international language for use between buyer and seller. The language describes meat items commonly traded internationally and defines a coding system for communication and electronic trade.

This standardization of the trading language is the foundation which allows the meat industry to adopt modern data transfer methods and streamline the flow of information and product throughout the supply chain. Meat standards are a complex subject: a large number of product options can be specified by the buyer and the quality of the final product depends to a large extent on the way the meat is cut.

The UNECE standard "Porcine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts" offers for the first time internationally agreed specifications written in a consistent, detailed and accurate manner using anatomical names to identify cutting lines. Comprehensive colour photographs and diagrams are included to facilitate practical application of the standard. It recommends an international language for raw (unprocessed) pork (porcine) carcasses and cuts marketed as fit for human consumption. It provides purchasers with a variety of options for meat handling, packing and conformity assessment that conform to good commercial practice for meat and meat products, intended to be sold in international trade. UNECE standards for meat undergo a complete review three years after publication, following which new editions are published as necessary.



Available from the UN Publications, Sales and Marketing Section (unogbookshop@unog.ch). For more information contact Claudio Meza (agristandards@unece.org).

Accessions to UNECE transport legal instruments

Germany acceded to the Protocol to the European Agreement on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) (14 October 2008). Total number of Contracting Parties: 32.

Albania acceded, on 14 October 2008, to:

- European Agreement on Article 23 of the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic concerning Weights and Dimensions of Vehicles. The Agreement entered into force for Albania on 13 November 2008. Total number of Contracting Parties: 8.
- Convention on Customs Treatment of Pallets, 1960. The Agreement will enter into force for Albania on 12 January 2009. Total number of Contracting Parties: 30.
- Convention on the Taxation of Road Vehicles engaged in International Passenger Transport. The Agreement will enter into

force for Albania on 12 January 2009. Total number of Contracting Parties: 20.

- Convention on the Taxation of Road Vehicles for Private Use in International Traffic. The Agreement will enter into force for Albania on 12 January 2009. Total number of Contracting Parties: 24.

The European Agreement Supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals entered into force for the Netherlands on 8 November 2008. Contracting Parties: 30.

For a full list of ratifications to UNECE transport conventions, as well as the number of contracting parties, visit <http://www.unece.org/trans/conventn/cparties.html>.

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