

EXCOM

Acting Executive Secretary of UNECE Michael Møller attends his first meeting of the Executive Committee of UNECE

On 30 April, Acting Director-General of UNOG Michael Møller participated in the 68th meeting of the Executive Committee of UNECE in his new capacity as Acting Executive Secretary of UNECE.

Addressing the assembled delegates of the member States, which included a large number of ambassadors, Mr. Møller called UNECE “the hidden champion of International Geneva” and lauded its dedicated staff, the quality of its output and the extent of its positive impact on people around the world. Mr. Møller stated his desire to hand over a well-functioning UNECE to his successor. He committed to increasing cross-sectoral cooperation within the Commission, maintaining a harmonious working relationship between the organization and its member States, and announced that the recently approved UNECE evaluation policy would strengthen transparency, accountability and organizational learning in the Commission. Mr. Møller ended his remarks with a mention of his new initiative to change the perception of International Geneva in order to raise public consciousness about the substantial work generated by the United Nations and other international organizations in the city, in which UNECE has a clear central role to play. Following Mr. Møller’s speech, ambassadors and heads of delegations of the Russian Federation, the United States, the European Union, Poland, Switzerland Romania and France, congratulated him on his new position and expressed their support for the way forward proposed by the Acting Executive Secretary. They expressed their appreciation for the work of the Commission, and committed to working together in order to move UNECE forward. □

Statistics

Meeting the new challenges in official statistics

More than 170 chief statisticians and experts from UNECE and OECD member countries, and beyond, met in Paris on 9-11 April 2014 for the 62nd Conference of European Statisticians (CES). They endorsed the first ever Recommendations on climate change related statistics that promote using official statistics for climate change analysis. Official statisticians and greenhouse gas inventory data providers should further align their work to streamline the process of monitoring emissions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Conference launched a regular forum on climate change related statistics with the engagement of international organisations active in measuring climate change. The aim is to share ideas and experience, discuss concepts and measurement issues, and identify areas for practical guidance to support countries' work.

Furthermore, the Conference discussed the value of official statistics in view of the data 'deluge' that we are experiencing, where official statistics are increasingly competing with other data providers. Today, information and data are everywhere, however, these sources are often not structured, inconsistent and may be biased towards specific interest groups. In contrast to these other sources, the value of official statistics lies in being reliable, objective and impartial.

The Conference also discussed current challenges in measuring the changing migration patterns. In 2013, the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the United Nations General Assembly considered improving collection of migration data as critical for evidence-based policy decisions. While the measurement of migration has notably progressed over the last few decades, the growing, complex migration flows require closer collaboration among statisticians across borders. The Conference agreed to establish ways for following up on the implementation of related methodological guidance in countries.

The Conference reviewed the set of gender equality indicators to improve monitoring of gender policies in the UNECE region. The set of indicators will be presented in Mexico at the Global Forum of Gender Statistics in November 2014.

Further work in a number of other topical areas was agreed upon, such as developing a guide on measuring global production arrangements, Big Data and its relation to official statistics,



measuring transboundary impacts in the context of sustainable development, measuring social protection, and entrepreneurship statistics. □

For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.04.ces.html>
or contact Tiina Luige at: tiina.luige@unece.org.

Forests

UNECE/FAO to help Kazakhstan develop an action plan for the forest sector in a green economy



The joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, has been requested by the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources of Kazakhstan to assist its Committee of Forestry and Hunting to support the elaboration of its forestry development programme and action plan, with a view to enhance its contribution to a green economy. The programme should be ready by November 2014.

In response to this request a national workshop was held in Astana from 14 to 16 April to train forestry experts on the green economy concept and on forest policy formulation. The workshop was followed by a coaching seminar on action planning.

This project is carried out in the framework of the two-year United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on Sustainable Forest Management for Central Asia and the Caucasus jointly implemented by UNECE and FAO.

With this initiative Kazakhstan will be the first country to pilot the preparation and implementation of a national action plan to enhance the contribution of its forest sector to a green economy. The initiative is part of Kazakhstan's Green Economy Concept 2020, adopted in 2013.

The work will be inspired by the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy, endorsed by member States at the joint session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) that took place last December 2013 in Finland. □

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.unece.org/forests-welcome/areas-of-work/forestsforestpolicieswelcome/capacity-building-in-central-asia-and-caucasus.htm>.

Water

Kazakhstan to start process of joining UNECE Protocol on Water and Health



At a meeting on 24 April 2014 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, key stakeholders of the National Policy Dialogue on water resources Steering Committee of Kazakhstan recommended the initiation of the process of joining the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)-World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe Protocol on Water and Health.

The recommendation is based on the positive results of the assessment conducted by UNECE-supported local expert group, which examined the legal, institutional and financial needs for the implementation of the Protocol in Kazakhstan, as well as the outcomes of the national workshop on the Protocol held on 23 and 24 April. The workshop was attended by more than 30 participants representing key governmental agencies responsible for water and health issues, non-governmental organizations and academia.

In spite of progress in recent years in access to water and sanitation in Kazakhstan, there is still room for improvement, especially in rural areas. Thanks to Government investment programmes, 42.5 per cent of the rural population now has access to the centralized drinking water supply. Wastewater treatment also requires improvement, as currently only two thirds of urban wastewater is treated according to national standards. In addition, 64 per cent of water supply networks need to be rebuilt.

At the meeting, the Steering Committee also adopted its workplan for 2014–2015, which includes a range of activities to be conducted in the framework of the NPD, such as strengthening of river basin administrations and fostering transboundary cooperation. UNECE and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as strategic partners for the NPD process, will seek assistance from donors to finance the implementation of the activities. The workplan will also help Kazakhstan to implement its ambitious State Programme on Water Resources Management until 2040.

In 2013 Kazakhstan became the ninth country in the region of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to join the NPD process. Conducted within the framework of the European Union Water Initiative, the NPD process provides a platform for closer cooperation between different ministerial agencies for discussion of the direction of national water sector policy. □

For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/npd>.

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