



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Executive Committee

#### Forty-second meeting

Geneva, 24 June 2011

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

#### Proposed modalities for the review of the work of ECE

## Modalities of the 2011-2012 review of the 2005 ECE Reform

### Background

1. The Economic Commission for Europe, at its 64th session held in Geneva on 29-31 March 2011, recalled the ECE reform adopted in December 2005, welcomed its implementation and achievements, and underlined the importance of its first five-year review that will take place in 2011-2012, with a view to drawing conclusions on the future work priorities of the ECE.
2. The Commission reaffirmed the strategic directions adopted by the 2005 ECE reform, without prejudice to the outcome of the 2011-2012 review of that reform, which should make use of lessons learned and best practices.
3. The Commission requested the Executive Committee to duly consider the outputs, as appropriate, of the discussion at the sixty-fourth session of the Commission when it reviews the work programmes of the ECE Sectoral Committees during the intersessional period, and similarly requested the respective Sectoral Committees of the ECE to duly consider the said outputs, as appropriate. The Commission also invited the Executive Committee to consider how to better interact with the Chairpersons of ECE Sectoral Committees with the aim of ensuring its role in terms of governance and oversight in the intersessional period.
4. The Commission invited the Executive Committee (EXCOM) to decide on the modalities of the upcoming review which it will carry out with a view to proposing decisions on the matter to be taken by the next ECE session (in 2013).
5. In May 2011, the secretariat presented to EXCOM, as requested at the 64th Commission session, information on the current allocation and use of resources provided to ECE in the 2010 2011 programme budget under all main thematic areas of work within the subprogrammes implemented by ECE<sup>1</sup> with a link to all main products and services

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<sup>1</sup> (1) Environment, (2) Transport, (3) Statistics, (4) Economic Cooperation and Integration, (5) Sustainable Energy, (6) Trade, (7) Timber and Forestry, (8) Housing, Land management and Population.

delivered in 2010, along with information on the availability of non-staff resources provided under the Regular Budget (Section 19) (informal document 2011/4). Information was also provided on work carried out and resources available in 2010 from the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (Section 22) and the UN Development Account (Section 35), as well as extra-budgetary resources (Report on Technical Cooperation Activities, informal document 2011/6).

6. The modalities for the above-mentioned review as specified below were adopted on 21 July 2011 through a silence procedure, following discussions of informal documents 2011/5 and 2011/5/rev.1 by the Executive Committee on 10 May 2011 and 24 June 2011, respectively.

### **Principles**

7. The review process will be based on a number of good principles or practices including transparency, resource efficiency, clarity about why UNECE should engage in an activity, what UNECE's value added is, identification of duplication of work and of possible savings both within the Commission and with other UN and international organisations, etc. The review process as well as its outcomes should be results-oriented.

### **Modalities of the review**

#### *Review of subprogrammes*

8. Bearing in mind the overall objective of an improved allocation of resources within the Commission (both within the Committees and subprogrammes and between them) based on clearly defined and updated mandates, the reduction of the current overstretch, and an increased emphasis on areas in which the Commission has clear demonstrable added value, EXCOM would review the work and priorities within each of the eight subprogrammes implemented by ECE. The EXCOM may wish to decide on the schedule/timing of these reviews. A possible period is from Autumn 2011 to Summer 2012 (suggested schedule attached – see Annex I).

9. In a first step, the secretariat will provide EXCOM with a clear picture of the current mandates of the Committees and their subsidiary bodies; the extent to which these mandates have been carried out over the past years in a resource efficient way; and their added value vis-à-vis activities currently undertaken by other UN bodies or international organisations. For this a complete picture of the activities, the input (human and financial resources) and the output (list of results) per subsidiary body would be useful, building on the informal document 2011/4.

10. The secretariat would solicit inputs from the Chairpersons of Sectoral Committees and, through them, their main subsidiary bodies (e.g. Working Parties, Teams of Specialists, etc). The purpose would be to identify within each subprogramme:

- Priority areas of current work and results achieved
- Possible new and emerging issues and expected results
- Possibilities for streamlining and synergizing activities within each of the expected results
- Ways of improving efficiency and methods of work
- Expected results and related activities that may need to be reoriented/refocused to better reflect priority demands of member States
- Possible optimization of the structure of the programme of work

- Ways of improving communication and public outreach.

This should take into account the results of the evaluations of the subprogrammes, in particular those carried out by respective Sectoral Committees, after the 2005 reform. It should also take into account the results of regular priority-setting processes carried out within the Sectoral Committees. The EXCOM will request the Sectoral Committees to carry out their priority setting bearing in mind the above listed elements under 'purpose'.

11. In a second step, for each subprogramme the secretariat will prepare for consideration by EXCOM, documents which will identify possible future work priorities and the desirable and projected outputs in each area (objectives should as much as possible be formulated in a way that allows results to be measured, and each activity could have a sunset clause when appropriate, linked in particular to the achievement of a previously defined objective). An effort should be made to determine the activities that need to be enhanced and those that may be abolished, in order to better reflect the evolving needs and priorities of member States, as decided by EXCOM. Any identified duplication of work between UNECE and other UN bodies and international organizations should not automatically lead to the abolishment of the work area in question. Careful consideration should be given to the comparative advantages, cooperation and synergies, relevance to the mandate, efficacy, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the work. These considerations should guide the review process and member States' decision in order to enable UNECE to focus its activities and resources on areas in which it has maximum impact, relevance, visibility and legitimacy.

12. The Chairpersons/Bureaux of Sectoral Committees could be invited to participate in meetings of EXCOM when respective subprogrammes will be reviewed.

#### *Review of programmatic activities reported directly to EXCOM*

13. The Executive Committee would also carry out a review of programmatic activities which are reported directly to it (e.g. aging, gender), taking into account provisions of paragraphs 8-12 above, as appropriate.

#### *Finalization of the review*

14. In a third step, in the second trimester of 2012, after the conclusion of the review of subprogrammes and their activities as outlined above, the EXCOM would carry out a cross-sectoral review and formulate recommendations on the future UNECE work priorities to be submitted for approval by the Commission in 2013. Key criteria for the cross-sectoral review include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Work plans for any activities should clearly define the end objectives and provide for sunset clauses when appropriate.

## Annex I

### Tentative schedule of reviews of subprogrammes

<i>Approximate timing of review by EXCOM</i>	<i>Subprogramme</i>	<i>Sectoral Committee session</i>
October (2 <sup>nd</sup> half)	Housing and Land Management	October 3-4, 2011
	Timber and Forestry	October 10-14, 2011
November (2 <sup>nd</sup> half)	Statistics	November 2-3, 2011 (Bureau)
	Sustainable Energy	November 16-18, 2011
	Ageing	November 21-22, 2011
December (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)	Economic Cooperation and Integration	November 30-December 2, 2011
March (1 <sup>st</sup> week)	Transport	February 28- March 1, 2012
End April-early May	Environment	April 24-27, 2012
End June-early July	Trade	June 18-19, 2012