

## Decision VII/4–III/4

### **Budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance**

*The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol), meeting in joint session,*

*Recalling* decision VI/4–II/4 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the Meeting of the Parties of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, on the budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance for the period up to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol,

*Also recalling* the financial strategy adopted through decision VI/4–II/4 (annex II), including with a view to improving the sustainable availability and predictability of resources under the Convention and the Protocol and to ensuring a more equitable and proportionate sharing of the financial burden among the donors,

*Recognizing* the wish of the Parties for a high degree of transparency and accountability regarding the status of and developments in the financing of activities under the Convention and the Protocol,

*Welcoming* the biannual financial reports prepared by the secretariat during the present intersessional period

*Acknowledging with appreciation* the contributions made in cash and in kind in the present intersessional period, while noting with regret that the financial burden was not evenly distributed, with three donors providing the bulk of the funding and with several Parties not contributing at all,

*Recognizing* the need to:

(a) Ensure that sufficient resources are available to implement the workplan for the next intersessional period, 2017–2020, adopted through decision VII/3–III/3,

(b) Increase the willingness of donors to make further financial and in-kind contributions, as well as assist in financial and project management,

(c) Ensure that the financing of activities under the Convention and the Protocol should be distributed among as many Parties and non-Parties as possible,

*Aware* of the importance of wide participation by the Parties in activities under the Convention and the Protocol in order to ensure progress,

*Aware also* of the need to facilitate the participation of certain countries with economies in transition that may otherwise not be able to take part,

*Recalling* decision II/14 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, which amends the Convention to allow United Nations Member States not members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to accede to the Convention, and also article 23, paragraph 3, of the Protocol, which allows United Nations Member States not members of ECE to accede to the Protocol,

1. *Agree* to maintain the existing scheme of financial contributions for covering the budgeted costs for the implementation of the workplan for the next intersessional period, whereby Parties and signatories to the Convention and to the Protocol contribute an amount that they choose to pledge on a voluntary basis;

2. *Also agree* that, in line with paragraph 21 below, that work will continue during the intersessional period to ensure that the financial arrangements and the financial strategy foster the effective implementation of the workplan;
3. *Confirm* for State Parties the system of shares endorsed by decision III/10 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, whereby countries make contributions equivalent in value to a number of shares of the budget;
4. *Urge* all Parties to contribute to ensuring sustainable funding of activities and an equitable and proportionate sharing of the financial burden among the Parties, and also invite signatories, other interested States, organizations and international financial institutions to contribute;
5. *Strongly urge* Parties that have so far only committed limited funds or in-kind contributions to raise their contributions during the current and future budget cycles;
6. *Request* donors to pledge, where possible, their yearly or multi-annual financial and in-kind contributions prior to the adoption of the workplan and the budget by the Meetings of the Parties.
7. *Adopt* the report prepared by the secretariat on the budget and financial arrangements during the present intersessional period contained in document ECE/MP.EIA/2017/3–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2017/3;
8. *Decide* that activities under the workplan for 2017–2020 that are included in the budget of the Convention and the Protocol for that same period, as set out in the annex to this decision, and which are not covered by the United Nations regular budget, should be covered by contributions of 1,183 shares of 1,000 United States dollars each, of which 625 shares would cover the core (priority 1) requirements and 558 shares would cover the remaining non-core (priority 2, 3 and 4) requirements;
9. *Agree* the budget of the Convention and its Protocol for 2017–2020, as set out in the annex hereto;
10. *Also agree* that contributions shall be allocated to the budgets of the individual items in the budget table contained in the annex in the order of priority set for each item, unless a contributor specifies that a contribution should be allocated to a particular item in the budget; where funds remain after the completion of such items, the surplus shall be transferred to the overall budget to be spent on the budget items in the order of priority set for each item;
11. *Further agree* that financial contributions should preferably be made towards the overall implementation of the workplan;
12. *Request* that Parties seek to transfer their contributions to the ECE trust fund on local technical cooperation under the Convention and the Protocol as early as possible in their budget year and, insofar as possible, contributions for a given calendar year should be made by the end of the preceding year so as to secure payment of staff costs and to provide greater certainty for future financial and project management;
13. *Request* the secretariat to prepare and submit to the Bureau annual financial reports with a view to assisting in the preparation of the report to the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol, at their eighth and fourth sessions, respectively, in accordance with paragraph 17 below, and further request the Bureau to consider the reports and to agree their circulation to the Parties;
14. *Also request* the secretariat to include in the reports information on the resources available (including in-kind contributions and United Nations programme support) and the expenditures, and to highlight significant developments;

15. *Further request* the secretariat to provide Parties with timely reminders concerning outstanding pledges;

16. *Decide* that the Executive Secretary of ECE has authority, after consultations with the Bureau, to make adjustments to the budget, up to a maximum of 10 per cent, where such adjustments are necessary before the next sessions of the Meetings of Parties, and that Parties be promptly informed of such adjustments;

17. *Request* the secretariat, in accordance with the financial rules of the United Nations, to monitor the expenditure of the funds and to prepare a report for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties, based on the information contained in the annual reports and giving a clear indication of the significant developments during the period in order that Parties can best meet future demands for resources under the Convention and its Protocol;

18. *Request* the Executive Secretary of ECE to seek additional staff funded by the regular budget of the United Nations to provide long-term and stable secretariat functions;

19. *Recognize* that the current financial constraints of ECE do not allow for the financing of sufficient administrative staff and, therefore, on an exceptional basis for the next intersessional period, are willing to support the secretariat by calling on Parties to provide additional contributions or to authorize the Bureau to redistribute available funding from the trust fund for this purpose;

20. *Underline* the need for appropriate and stable staffing of the secretariat by giving the highest priority to financing an external expert or experts to the secretariat to provide support for the Implementation Committee under the Convention and the Protocol;

21. *Decide* that the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment shall prepare a further draft decision on financial arrangements for adoption by the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol at their eighth and fourth sessions, respectively, based on the experience gained in the meantime under the financial arrangements adopted at the present joint session;

22. *Call upon* countries with economies in transition to finance to the extent possible their own participation in the activities under the Convention and its Protocol in order to ensure that the limited funds available are used efficiently;

23. *Urge* Parties and encourage non-Parties and relevant international organizations to contribute financial resources to enable countries with economies in transition and non-governmental organizations to participate in the meetings under the Convention and its Protocol;

24. *Urge* the secretariat to ensure that financial support is provided to participants in formal meetings, in accordance with the budget decided by the Meetings of the Parties and subject to the availability of funds for this purpose, and that, among participants, priority should be given first to representatives of Parties, then to non-governmental organizations and finally to non-Parties, according to criteria to be set by the Bureau;

25. *Recommend* that the Convention and its Protocol should apply the guiding criteria established and periodically updated by the Committee on Environmental Policy for financial assistance to support the participation of experts and representatives from countries with economies in transition in meetings and workshops organized within the framework of the Convention and its Protocol and other relevant activities, depending upon the availability of funds for this purpose;

26. *Request* the secretariat to grant, subject to the availability of funds for this purpose, in accordance with the budget decided by the Meeting of the Parties, financial assistance to designated experts from non-governmental organizations

identified by the Bureau for their participation in meetings under the Convention and under the Protocol, unless otherwise decided by the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment;

27. *Decide* that the Bureau shall, depending on the availability of funding for this purpose, in accordance with the budget decided by the Meeting of the Parties, and subject to priority being given to funding the implementation of the workplan, examine requests for possible financial assistance for the participation by representatives and experts from States outside the ECE region in meetings under the Convention and its Protocol;

28. *Decide* that, as a rule and in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Convention and its Protocol, the sessions of the Meetings of Parties shall take place in Geneva, unless otherwise decided by the Parties based upon an offer of a contracting Party to host the sessions.