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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Committee on Environmental Policy

#### Twenty-third session

Geneva, 14-17 November 2017

Item 9 (b) of the provisional agenda

**Programme of work of the Environment subprogramme:  
performance assessment of the Environment subprogramme  
in 2016-2017 and performance plan for 2018-2019**

## **Biennial performance report of the Environment subprogramme for 2016-2017**

### **Note by the secretariat\***

#### *Summary*

At its twentieth session in 2014, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Committee on Committee on Environmental Policy agreed to continue with the biennial performance assessment of the Environment subprogramme for another cycle, at least. At its twenty-first session in 2015, the Committee approved the biennial performance report of the Environment subprogramme for 2014-2015 (ECE/CEP/2015/6) and the biennial performance plan of the Environment subprogramme for 2016-2017 (ECE/CEP/2015/5).

Based on the plan, the secretariat prepared an assessment of performance of the Environment subprogramme in 2016-2017 for consideration by the Committee. The document is structured in accordance with the clusters grouping the Environment subprogramme's activities.

The Committee will be invited to consider the biennial performance report of the Environment subprogramme for 2016-2017 for prospective approval.

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\* This document was not formally edited.

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## Introduction

1. The Environment subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has four overarching expected accomplishments in the strategic framework for 2016-2017 (A/69/6 (Prog. 17) and Corr.1). It will report on their implementation to the General Assembly of the United Nations.
2. The activities in the Environment subprogramme for the biennium 2016-2017 are grouped into clusters of activities with their own expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement, on which the subprogramme reports to the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy, as set out below. The “actual 2016-2017” performance measures are presented generally as at 15 August 2017, given that this document was prepared before the end of the biennium under reporting.
3. The Committee will be invited to consider the biennial performance report of the Environment subprogramme for 2016-2017 for prospective approval.

## Cluster 1 Improved response to environmental challenges<sup>1</sup>

### *Expected accomplishment*

Improved response to environmental challenges by ECE constituencies

### *Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

4. Further progress was achieved in response to environmental challenges in the ECE region. The Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, June 2016) endorsed the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy (Strategic Framework) — a tool supporting countries’ efforts in transitioning to green economy and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. To operationalize the Strategic Framework until 2030, the ministers launched the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E) which includes, as of 15 August 2017, 117 voluntary commitments by 38 countries and organizations. Furthermore, the Conference endorsed the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (BACA), an initiative supporting countries’ efforts to improve air quality and protect public health and ecosystems. As of 15 August 2017, 108 initiatives in the framework of BACA were launched by 31 countries and other stakeholders aimed at improving air quality and protecting public health and ecosystems.

### *Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

5. Availability of political will, expertise and resources are the enabling conditions for countries to join the two Batumi initiatives and implement the commitments made. Country needs for capacity development and sharing of experience will be identified to provide demand-driven assistance. Green economy activities of organizations active in the region

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<sup>1</sup> This cluster includes outputs/activities from all other clusters, as appropriate. They may relate to the follow up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as well as to key outcomes of the Environment for Europe ministerial conferences, of Meeting of Parties to the ECE multilateral environmental agreements, and of High-level Meetings under the education for sustainable development and under the transport, health and environment processes.

are being mapped to facilitate inter-agency coordination, identify existing gaps and promote joined activities.

*Indicator of achievement*

Number of new measures taken by ECE constituencies in response to existing and emerging environmental challenges

*Performance measures*

2010-2011: N/A

2012-2013: N/A

2014-2015: N/A

Target 2016-2017: 2 measures

Actual 2016-2017 (as of 15 August 2016): 2 measures, which are the Strategic Framework supported by the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy, and the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air

## **Cluster 2**

### **Activities under the Environment for Europe process**

*Expected accomplishment*

Successful implementation of the reform of the Environment for Europe process

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

6. Pursuant to the provisions of the reform plan of the Environment for Europe process, during the period 2016-2017 the Committee on Environmental Policy, as the body responsible for the preparatory process of the Environment for Europe ministerial conferences, focused its work on organizing the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference held in Batumi, Georgia from 8 to 10 June 2016. The Conference addressed two main themes: greening the economy in the pan-European region; and improving air quality for a better environment and human health. The Conference gathered over 630 official delegates from Governments from 44 ECE countries, the international community, civil society, business and the media throughout the ECE region. There were over 700 participants in total, including those participating only in side events and exhibitions.

7. The key outcomes of the Conference include: the Batumi Ministerial Declaration; the Pan-European Strategic Framework on Greening the Economy and its Batumi Initiative on Green Economy; the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air; and the Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development.

8. The Conference was organized in an interactive format, including interactive discussions organized in a “talk show” format, four high-level multi-stakeholder round tables and panel discussions. To support multi-stakeholder discussions during the Conference and to facilitate decision-making, substantive documents on each of the two main themes were prepared by ECE jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other Environment for Europe partners. In addition, a number of valuable information documents and a set of 11 fact sheets, linking the ECE environment activities to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, were prepared by ECE and the Environment for Europe partners. The Batumi Conference was a paperless event.

*Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

9. Lessons learned from the organization of the Batumi Conference were assessed by means of a survey and included in the document ECE/CEP/2017/17 prepared for the twenty-third session of the Committee. Overall, the organization of the Conference was assessed as successful.

*Indicator of achievement*

Consensus reached by member States on the activities under the Environment for Europe process

*Performance measures*

2010-2011: Consensus was reached on the organization and outcomes of the Seventh Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Astana, September 2011)

2012-2013: Consensus was reached on the mid-term review (Geneva, October 2013)

2014-2015 (as of 31 July 2015): Consensus was reached on the follow-up to the mid-term review and preparing the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8-10 June 2016)

Target 2016-2017: Consensus to be reached on the follow-up to the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

Actual 2016-2017 (as of 15 August 2016): Consensus on the follow-up to the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the organization of the mid-term review, is expected to be reached at the twenty-third session of the Committee (Geneva, 14-17 November 2017)

### **Cluster 3**

## **Education for sustainable development**

*Expected accomplishment*

Enhanced implementation of the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development at the national level

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

10. Since 2005, the ECE member States are working together on implementation of the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, until 2014 serving as the regional pillar of implementation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development is the intergovernmental body for furthering education for sustainable development in the region. ECE is a key partner in the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

11. The Steering Committee prepared and submitted to the Batumi High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries the third evaluation report of the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, "Learning from each other: achievements, challenges and ways forward" (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2016/3). Conclusions and lessons learned through the report have been used in the preparation of the "Framework for the future implementation of the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development" (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/11) adopted in Batumi.

12. The publication “Ten Years of the ECE Strategy for Education for Development — Evaluation report on the implementation of the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2005 to 2015” has been prepared and submitted to the Batumi High-level Meeting. The report summarizes the progress, challenges and achievements of ECE member States from 2005 to 2015 in implementing the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.

13. Capacity-building activities included a capacity-building workshop on the promotion of education for sustainable development held on 25-26 April 2016 in Minsk organized in partnership with the Government of Belarus, with the financial support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation. ECE continued its activities in the Partner Networks of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.

*Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

14. The following key challenges in implementing education for sustainable development in the ECE region identified during the preparation of the Batumi High-level Meeting still remain relevant: the need for sustained leadership and political will among key decision-makers; securing structural reform of education systems, including embedding education for sustainable development in mainstream budgets; preparing educators; strengthening mechanisms for cooperation and engagement across a broader cross-section of stakeholders; and addressing the need for more education for sustainable development research, monitoring and evaluation.

15. The lack of dedicated resources (financial, staffing, etc.) remained an obstacle to education for sustainable development implementation at the national level but also at the level of the Steering Committee, where resources for the expected secretariat services have not been sufficient for hiring a dedicated staff member. As a result, the secretariat has met significant difficulties in its effort to maintain the level of support to the Steering Committee.

*Indicator of achievement*

Successful measures to implement the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development at the national level, assessed through the reporting by member States

*Performance measures*

2010-2011: 36 countries

2012-2013: 42 countries

2014-2015: 38 countries

Target 2016-2017: 38 countries

Actual 2016-2017: 16 countries<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development has not conducted a formal national implementation reporting during the biennium 2016-2017. The lower number includes countries that responded to the informal reporting questionnaire prepared for the twelfth meeting of the Steering Committee (20-21 April 2017, Geneva).

## Cluster 4

### Transport, health and environment

#### *Expected accomplishment*

Enhanced integration between transport, health and environment policies through exchanging experiences and good practice and capacity-building with a special focus on the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe

#### *Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

16. Member States continued working on the implementation of the five Priority Goals of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) and made good use of THE PEP implementation mechanisms (national transport, health and environment action plans; relay race workshops; Partnerships; and the Academy). Highlights for each implementation mechanism were:

(a) National transport, health and environment action plans: the organization of a workshop on the creation of an action plan in Serbia (Belgrade, 2 March 2017);

(b) Relay race workshops: the organization of a workshop on non-motorized modes of transport (29-31 May 2016, Petrozavodsk, Russian Federation); a workshop on decarbonisation (13-15 July 2016, Vienna); and a workshop on sustainable transport planning in big cities (Vladivostok, Russian Federation, 12-13 October 2016);

(c) Partnerships: the development of a masterplan for cycling promotion; the conclusion of the second phase of the work on jobs in green and healthy transport; and the launch of Transdanube Pearls to promote sustainable mobility in the Danube region;

(d) The Academy: the signing of an agreement between one French and one Russian university to organize a joint programme on sustainable urban transport.

17. The implementation of the Priority Goals was discussed at the fourteenth session of the Steering Committee (Geneva, November 2016). The fifteenth session will take place in November 2017 and will start preparations for the fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (Vienna, 2019).

18. The secretariat identified resources to tackle the technical problems faced by the Clearing House, though not enough for a Clearing House content manager.

#### *Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

19. Member States expressed appreciation for the results of activities carried out. More member States expressed an interest in receiving support in the form of capacity building or training materials. The current insufficient resources to provide the requested support to interested countries and the lack of capacity in the secretariat to implement assistance activities limit the secretariat's ability to respond to countries' needs. Consequently, additional efforts need to be made to enlarge the number of member States providing extrabudgetary resources financially and in-kind.

#### *Indicator of achievement*

Number of member States, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in THE PEP Steering Committee and relevant workshops undertaken in this framework

*Performance measures*

2010-2011: Participation of 69 countries and 28 IGOs and NGOs in 5 substantive meetings, including 3 relay race (“staffette”) capacity-building workshops to disseminate best practice and 2 sessions of THE PEP Steering Committee

2012-2013: Participation of 62 countries and 31 IGOs and NGOs in 4 substantive meetings, including 2 capacity-building workshops and 2 sessions of THE PEP Steering Committee

2014-2015: Participation of 82 countries and 30 IGOs and NGOs in 5 substantive meetings, including 2 capacity-building workshops, 1 high-level meeting and 2 sessions of THE PEP Steering Committee

Target 2016-2017: Participation of 60 countries and 20 IGOs and NGOs in 6 substantive meetings, including 4 capacity-building workshops and 2 sessions of THE PEP Steering Committee

Actual 2016-2017 (as of 15 August 2017): Participation of 60 countries and 43 IGOs and NGOs in 6 substantive meetings, including 5 capacity-building workshops and 1 session of THE PEP Steering Committee<sup>3</sup>

## **Cluster 5**

### **Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention)**

*Expected accomplishment*

Increased ratification and strengthened implementation of the Air Convention and its three most recent protocols (Protocol on Heavy Metals, Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol)) by ECE members States, in particular countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

20. At its thirty-fourth session, the Executive Body for the Convention adopted its 2016-2017 workplan (ECE/EB.AIR/133/Add.1), which included a section on capacity-building and awareness-raising among the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. In accordance with the workplan, the secretariat organized workshops on further improving air pollutant emission inventories and data reporting in Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

21. In addition, the secretariat organized the analysis of the national air quality assessment and management policies and legislation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, identifying gaps with respect to the Convention’s requirements and providing recommendations on further steps towards ratification of the Convention and its key protocols. At the subregional level, the secretariat co-organized a workshop on best available techniques to reduce emissions and a workshop “Get your right to a healthy

<sup>3</sup> The figures include the fourteenth meeting of THE PEP Steering Committee in November 2016; workshops in Petrozavodsk (Russian Federation) in June 2016, Vienna in July 2016 and Vladivostok (Russian Federation) in October 2016; a capacity-building activity in Belgrade in March 2017 and a workshop in Ostrava (Czechia) in June 2017. The figures do not include the fifteenth meeting of THE PEP Steering Committee and a workshop in Mannheim (Germany), which have yet to take place (scheduled for November 2017 and September 2017, respectively).

community” to explain synergies in data collection with the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs). Moreover, the secretariat continued supporting the participation of the target countries in the activities under the Convention.

22. The interim results of the implementation of the assistance programme managed by the secretariat to build capacity and raise awareness in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, include: the accession by Republic of Moldova to the Protocol on Long-term Financing of the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP) in 2016; improved exchange of information and participation of countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe; and improved reporting under the Convention by a number of Parties.

23. The work under the Convention continued to focus on updating, revising and elaborating relevant guidance documents. For instance, the Task Force on Techno-economic Issues has updated the 1999 guidance document on control techniques for selected mobile sources (EB.AIR/1999/2) to assist Parties in meeting their obligations under the amended Gothenburg Protocol by identifying the best abatement options for mobile emission sources, with particular reference to best available techniques (ECE/EB.AIR/138). The report Towards Cleaner Air: Scientific Assessment Report 2016 (ECE/EB.AIR/2016/3) describing the effectiveness of air pollution abatement measures, assessing the achievements under the Convention and serving as a basis for considering new directions for policy development was prepared and approved by the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects in 2016. An ad hoc group of experts has been formed by the Executive Body to formulate a policy response to the assessment report. The Executive Body will consider the recommendations developed by the group of experts at its forthcoming thirty-seventh session (Geneva, 11-14 December 2017).

24. The Long-term Strategy for the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/106/Add.1, decision 2010/18, annex), adopted in 2010, calls for strengthened outreach activities with a number of relevant conventions and other international bodies dealing with air pollution issues. In 2016-2017, cooperation with a number of organizations, such as UNEP, the World Health Organization, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition and the Arctic Council was further developed (ECE/EB.AIR/2016/2).

#### *Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

25. The remaining challenges and strategic priorities for further work are identified in the Long-term Strategy for the Convention. These include, inter alia, the following areas for improvement:

(a) Increased ratification and related implementation of the three most recent protocols is particularly important for countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. This priority will be emphasized in the revision of, or amendments to, these protocols. Measures and action to facilitate wider ratification and implementation in these countries, including financial support, will be pursued vigorously;

(b) Parties recognized that the priorities for work and action under the Convention need to be regularly reviewed in the light of new priorities and progress already achieved, as well as wider policy developments on the regional and global scale. This will require a change in the balance of the activities of the Convention; it may be necessary to scale down or even stop work where it can no longer add value, while opening up opportunities for other newly relevant issues;

(c) The availability of stable and predictable funding by the Parties will have to be ensured for the continuity of scientific work not covered by the EMEP Protocol as well as capacity-building, outreach and communication efforts.

*Indicators of achievement*

Indicators of progress in implementing the Air Convention and its three most recent Protocols through:

- (a) Number of reports on emission reduction commitments;
- (b) Intensity of capacity development in non-Parties to the Air Convention (average participant-days per non-Party);
- (c) Number of ratifications of the three most recent Protocols to the Air Convention;
- (d) Number of training sessions targeting implementation of the Air Convention and its protocols in the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe

*Performance measures*

2010-2011: (a) N/A; (b) 26; (c) 87; (d) 6

2012-2013: (a) 37; (b) 27; (c) 91; (d) 6

2014-2015: (a) 45; (b) 28; (c) 92; (d) 6

Target 2016-2017: (a) 45; (b) 28; (c) 93; (d) 6

Actual 2016-2017: (a) 46; (b) 35; (c) 93; (d) 6

## **Cluster 6**

### **Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)**

*Expected accomplishment*

Increased ratification and strengthened implementation of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

26. The Aarhus Convention helps Parties to strengthen transparency, accountability, inclusive and effective public participation and access to justice and hence also supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). In 2016-2017, the work on access to environmental information focused on widening access to such information in the Digital Age, through electronic information tools and allowing its re-use whenever possible free of charge. In addition, the scope of environmental information and information on emissions, along with restrictions on access to information in accordance with the Convention's provisions, were discussed.<sup>4</sup>

27. Promotion of public participation in decision-making had a thematic focus on energy-related planning<sup>5</sup> and applied to a wide range of activities related to sustainable development.<sup>6</sup> Parties, non-Parties, NGOs and other stakeholders also exchanged

<sup>4</sup> For more information see materials on the ECE website ([www.unece.org/index.php?id=41961](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41961)).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. [www.unece.org/index.php?id=41356](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41356).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. [www.unece.org/index.php?id=42573](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42573).

information on challenges to identify and notify the public concerned and effective public participation in a transboundary context. In the area of access to justice, topics included scope of review, standing, costs and protection from persecution and harassment when exercising the rights in conformity with the Convention. Furthermore, a study on the scope of review for strengthening access to justice in environmental matters in South-Eastern Europe was realized in 2016.<sup>7</sup>

28. The work on promoting public participation and transparency in biosafety at the global level continued in cooperation with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The principal aim of this synergy was to build capacity of authorities to engage the public effectively in decision-making on genetically modified organisms.<sup>8</sup> In addition, a workshop and a study tour for authorities in Belarus were organized in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Also, a number of Aarhus Centres are established and supported by OSCE. The secretariat regularly coordinated capacity-building activities for the Convention and the Protocol implemented by partners.

29. The Convention's Compliance Committee provided a number of targeted recommendations to Parties, including on persecution of activists, public participation in a transboundary context and standing in access to justice. Eleven new draft decisions on non-compliance by Parties were prepared on the basis of these recommendations for adoption at the sixth session of the Meeting of Parties in September 2017. The Committee has adopted 15 findings concerning the compliance of Parties in 2016 and 2017, until 15 August 2017. In addition, the Committee was following up on the implementation of 14 previous decisions of non-compliance.

30. Furthering transparency and public participation in international decision-making on climate and on finance remained priority areas in 2016.<sup>9</sup> Public participation and access to information during the European Environment and Health Process were looked at for the first time in 2017. Moreover, the promotion of the Convention's principles throughout the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was reviewed regularly.

31. The Convention continued to attract the attention of countries outside the ECE region. For that reason, the secretariat continued to provide advisory support to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), notably assisting in the development of a regional instrument on environmental rights in the ECLAC region and, in cooperation with UNEP, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), promotes the establishment of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) in non-ECE countries. Guinea-Bissau expressed its formal interest in acceding to the Convention. The secretariat is assisting the country in the accession process.

32. The Protocol on PRTRs offers solutions for strengthening human rights and transparency on hazardous substances, thereby also helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by improving data collection and reporting on emissions into the soil, water and the air.<sup>10</sup> In 2016-2017, this objective was pursued, inter alia, through developing a guidance material and holding subregional workshops aiming to help Parties and

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<sup>7</sup> The study addresses decisions, acts or omissions that could be the subject of administrative appeal and judicial review in accordance with the domestic legislation implementing article 9 of the Aarhus Convention, including the grounds for their review and to what extent both procedural and substantive issues may be reviewed.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. [www.unece.org/index.php?id=42179](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42179).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. [www.unece.org/index.php?id=41956](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41956).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. [www.unece.org/index.php?id=42177](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42177).

interested non-Parties create the appropriate institutional and legal frameworks, develop the list of substances and enterprises and manage data and its dissemination.

*Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

33. There are four challenges going forward. First, the innovative compliance mechanism is what makes the Convention a living treaty: Parties need to implement decisions on compliance matters even more effectively. Second, after the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, requests for advisory support from the secretariat by States, international financial institutions, other organizations and international forums are noticeably increasing, though the secretariat is not always able to respond to these requests fully due to its limited capacity. Third, accession to and implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs is more challenging for countries with economies in transition, mainly due to its technical requirements. This requires political decisions in those countries to allocate appropriate resources. At the same time, it also offers potential for partner organizations to engage in capacity-building activities and consequently enhance accession and implementation. Finally, due to the cross-cutting nature of the Convention and its Protocol, interdepartmental and cross-sectoral cooperation at the national level is a crucial precondition for their effective implementation, in particular with the view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

*Indicators of achievement*

Increased number of countries working to improve implementation of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs through:

- (a) Intensity of capacity development for non-Parties to the Aarhus Convention (average participant-days per non-Party);
- (b) Intensity of capacity development for non-Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs (average participant-days per non-Party);
- (c) Number of ratifications of the Aarhus Convention;
- (d) Number of ratifications of the Protocol on PRTRs;
- (e) Number of countries submitting national implementation reports to the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, indicating progress in implementing key obligations;
- (f) Number of countries submitting national implementation reports to the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs, indicating progress in implementing key obligations

*Performance measures*

2010-2011: (a) 8; (b) 4; (c) 45; (d) 27; (e) 41; (f) N/A

2012-2013: (a) 4; (b) 3; (c) 46; (d) 33; (e) N/A;<sup>11</sup> (f) N/A

2014-2015: (a) 6 (b) 6; (c) 47; (d) 33; (e) 46; (f) 32

Target 2016-2017: (a) 2; (b) 3; (c) 47; (d) 34; (e) 46; (f) 32

Actual 2016-2017 (as of 15 August 2017): (a) 3; (b) 7; (c) 47; (d) 35; (e) 40;<sup>12</sup> (f) 30<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> In 2012-2013 no national implementation reports were due. The next reporting cycle was in 2014 both for the Aarhus Convention and the Protocol on PRTRs.

## **Cluster 7**

### **Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)**

#### *Expected accomplishment*

Increased ratification and strengthened implementation of the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA)

#### *Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

34. The ratifications of the Protocol on SEA and the Espoo Convention amendments increased significantly over the biennium 2016-2017. As at 15 August 2017, having gained six new Parties, the Protocol's membership reached 32. The Convention had 45 Parties. With seven new ratifications of the 2001 and 2004 amendments to the Convention, the 2004 amendment will enter into force in October 2017, enlarging the scope of application of the Convention. Eight ratifications are still needed for the 2001 amendment to have effect, allowing also non-ECE countries to accede to the Convention.

35. In June 2017, Parties to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol, meeting in Minsk, stressed the important role that the two instruments can play in helping countries attain Sustainable Development Goals and in addressing climate change. Parties also celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention and focused on the implementation of the treaty in the field of nuclear energy. They adopted "Good practice recommendations on the application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities" and decided to develop further guidance on how to apply the Convention to the life-time extension of nuclear power plants—given the large number of aging nuclear power plants in the ECE region.

36. The Parties welcomed the outcomes of the extensive assistance that the ECE secretariat had facilitated to enhance the implementation of the treaties in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, namely: legislative reforms, increased awareness and capacities in the countries. The Parties learned that the European Union was likely to continue to fund the assistance in the future.

#### *Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

37. The areas of challenges or where further improvement is needed, under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol include the following:

(a) Despite several new ratifications in the biennium, the 2001 amendment to the Convention should still be ratified by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom and Ukraine to allow countries from outside to ECE region to join the Convention;

(b) It is necessary to raise awareness of the Governments and, in particular of their Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of the Protocol on SEA and the Espoo Convention as useful tools for assisting the Governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and in addressing climate change, at regional and global levels; as well as to promote intersectoral cooperation for their implementation;

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<sup>12</sup> The total number of national implementation reports might still change as more reports are being submitted by Parties to the Aarhus Convention or the Protocol on PRTRs.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

(c) The number and the complexity of the compliance cases brought before the Implementation Committee under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol continues to increase, making it more challenging for the Committee to fulfil its mandate and for the Parties to reach consensus on the decisions on compliance. The secretariat resources for servicing the review of compliance and implementation work are also increasingly stretched;

(d) It would be timely to harness sufficient resources to follow-up and to build on the extensive capacity building efforts on strategic environmental assessment already carried out in the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, to further enhance and to sustain their positive impacts. This would allow these countries to join the Protocol and would further their transition to green economy.

#### *Indicators of achievement*

Increased number of countries working to improve implementation of the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA through:

(a) Number of countries contributing to subregional cooperation under the Espoo Convention;

(b) Number of Parties reporting on their implementation of the Espoo Convention;

(c) Intensity of capacity development in non-Parties to the Espoo Convention (average participant-days per non-Party);

(d) Intensity of capacity development in non-Parties to the Espoo Convention's Protocol on SEA (average participant-days per non-Party);

(e) Number of ratifications of the Protocol on SEA

(f) Number of ratifications, approvals or acceptances of the Espoo Convention

(g) Number of ratifications, approvals or acceptances of the two amendments to the Espoo Convention

(h) Number of Parties reporting on their implementation of the Protocol on SEA

#### *Performance measures*

2010-2011: (a) 28; (b) 42; (c) 31; (d) 9; (e) 23; (f) 45; (g) first amendment 21, second amendment 20; (h) N/A

2012-2013: (a) 16; (b) 38; (c) 11; (d) 10; (e) 25; (f) 45; (g) first amendment 24, second amendment 24; (h) N/A

2014-2015: (a) 30; (b) 41; (c) 37; (d) 71; (e) 26; (f) 45; (g) first amendment 26, second amendment 26; (h) N/A

Target 2016-2017: (a) 35; (b) 45; (c) 18; (d) 35; (e) 31; (f) 47; (g) first amendment 32, second amendment 31; (h) 26

Actual 2016-2017 (as of 15 August 2017): (a) 35; (b) 43; (c) 18; (d) 44; (e) 32; (f) 45; (g) first amendment 32, second amendment 31; (h) 24

## **Cluster 8**

### **Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)**

#### *Expected accomplishment*

Increased ratification and strengthened implementation of the Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health

#### *Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

38. Work under the Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health was significantly influenced by the adoption in 2015 of the 2030 Agenda, including Sustainable Development Goal 6 on Water and Sanitation.

39. In general, transboundary water cooperation and the Convention have gained increased attention at the global level, as demonstrated for example by the first open debate on water, peace and security at the United Nations Security Council in November 2016, followed by a high-level briefing on preventive diplomacy and transboundary waters in June 2017, where the Convention and its importance for development and stability was underlined by several Parties.

40. The introduction of a dedicated target among the Sustainable Development Goals calling for transboundary water cooperation, and the subsequent adoption of a dedicated indicator (indicator 6.5.2) that will help drive and monitor progress in this regard, can be considered as major breakthroughs. ECE and UNESCO are jointly custodian agencies for this indicator. The Water Convention and its institutional framework support countries towards the implementation and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal target 6.5. Even before the adoption of indicator 6.5.2, a regular reporting mechanism under the Convention was decided upon by the Meeting of the Parties in 2015 in Budapest. This new feature of the Convention will strengthen its implementation by tracking progress and identifying gaps and areas for improvement. It is also noteworthy that the reporting under the Convention was combined with the reporting on indicator 6.5.2. Combining the reporting avoids duplication of efforts, allows forming a more detailed picture of progress in cooperation and links the indicator to an intergovernmental framework. In early 2017, Parties and all other countries worldwide sharing transboundary waters were invited to report. The Convention will thus contribute to the establishment of a global baseline and regular review of progress on the status of transboundary water cooperation worldwide.

41. The biennium has also seen a globalization of activities under the Water Convention. More than 110 countries have been involved in the Convention's activities, including more than 60 countries from outside the ECE region. Several countries from outside the region, particularly from Africa and the Middle East, have expressed their interest in acceding to the Convention and have started national processes to that end. National and regional workshops for countries outside the ECE region were organized in 2016 and 2017. The Convention's global opening has already borne fruit in terms of enhanced exchanges and the stimulation of good practices.

42. At the request of Parties, the Convention started addressing new issues of transboundary cooperation. For example, work on financing adaptation to climate change, and more generally financing transboundary water cooperation, was initiated in cooperation with international financing institutions.

43. Several transboundary agreements were developed or entered into force in the biennium, which corresponds to the main obligation of the Convention. Most importantly, the Treaty on Cooperation in the Field of Protection and Sustainable Development of the

Dniester River Basin, which ECE and OSCE had supported, has been ratified by its two Parties — the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

44. Finally, a tool aimed at supporting implementation of the Convention was revived. In May 2017, a memorandum of understanding was signed between Kazakhstan and ECE on the establishment of the International Water Assessment Centre, the Water Convention's collaborative centre, in Astana.

45. As regards the Protocol on Water and Health, the present biennium was marked by the organization of and follow up to the fourth session of the Meeting of its Parties (Geneva, 14-16 November 2016). The meeting was an important milestone in moving forward the water and health agenda in the pan-European region. It reviewed progress and the main achievements of the past triennium in the water, sanitation and health domain and adopted an ambitious programme of work for 2017-2019.

46. A special high-level session highlighted how the Protocol can best fulfil its role in supporting countries and other stakeholders in achieving the 2030 Agenda. The Protocol was recognized as a powerful platform that provides concrete tools to operationalize the achievement of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals in the national and regional contexts by promoting integration of policies, a holistic and preventive approach to water, sanitation and health and a focus on sustainable water management and equity issues.

47. The Meeting of the Parties also adopted a decision on reporting in accordance with article 7 of the Protocol, which revises the guidelines and template for summary reports in order to reflect the new developments of work under the Protocol, including in relation to the 2030 Agenda, and three decisions submitted by the Compliance Committee, including a decision on general issues of compliance.

48. In the biennium, assistance to several projects has prompted progress towards the improvement of equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region. Equitable access self-assessments using the Equitable Access Score-card have been completed in Armenia, Hungary, Spain and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Self-assessments are ongoing in Azerbaijan and Serbia.

#### *Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

49. The regular reporting under the Convention and on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 brings many new opportunities, to strengthen transboundary cooperation, but also challenges, including resource requirements.

50. The application and implementation of the Water Convention at the global level is a priority to promote transboundary cooperation worldwide. The opening of the Convention beyond the ECE region entails new opportunities as well as new challenges and resource and partnership requirements. Awareness-raising, capacity-building and activities on the ground in other regions will be needed and have already started. To best respond to this new situation, a strategy is under development for implementation of the Convention at the global level, which strongly underlines partnerships, in particular partnerships with regional organizations.

51. As regards the Protocol on Water and Health, its programme of work for the period 2017-2019 will aim at closing the water, sanitation and health gap in the pan-European region by further addressing the main challenges in the strategic areas of importance prioritized by Parties and other States, namely setting targets and reporting, preventing and reducing water-related diseases, small-scale water supplies and sanitation and equity of access. In accordance with the 2030 Agenda, the new programme of work will also increase attention to the issues of safe sanitation and wastewater reuse, resilience to climate change and water, sanitation and hygiene in schools and health care facilities.

*Indicators of achievement*

Increased number of countries indicating progress in implementing the Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health through:

- (a) Intensity of capacity development in non-Parties to the Water Convention (average participant-days per non-Party);
- (b) Intensity of capacity development in non-Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health (average participant-days per non-Party);
- (c) Number of ratifications of the Protocol on Water and Health;
- (d) Number of accessions to the Water Convention by non-ECE States<sup>14</sup>

*Performance measures*

2010-2011: (a) 50; (b) 20; (c) 25; (d) N/A

2012-2013: (a) 66; (b) 25; (c) 26; (d) N/A

2014-2015: (a) 67; (b) 50; (c) 26 (d) 0<sup>15</sup>

Target 2016-2017: (a) 50; (b) 35; (c) 27; (d) 1

Actual 2016-2017 (as of 15 August 2017): (a) 35; (b) 31; (c) 26; (d) 0

## **Cluster 9**

### **Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention)**

*Expected accomplishment*

Strengthened implementation of the Industrial Accidents Convention

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

52. During the biennium, Guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects was developed, in cooperation with the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA, the Committee on Housing and Land Management and the European Investment Bank. A related workshop led to the sharing of experiences and good practices and enhanced cooperation among industrial safety and environmental assessment authorities. In December 2016, on the occasion of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the 41 Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention took note of the Guidance developed.

53. In the framework of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a seminar was held jointly with OECD on fostering the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The seminar led to a better understanding of how ECE, through the Industrial Accidents Convention, and OECD contribute to promoting industrial accidents prevention, preparedness and response in work on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework. It also provided a means for sharing national experiences and good practices on promoting risk evaluation and

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<sup>14</sup> The delay in the ratification by all Parties which had adopted the amendment opening the Water Convention prevented accession by countries outside the ECE region until March 2016.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

assessment, taking preventive measures to reduce technological disaster risk, investing in preparedness for response, developing and implementing national policies and cooperating across borders to strengthen resilience.

54. Under the Convention's Assistance Programme, a project on strengthening industrial safety in Central Asia has begun to be implemented in the biennium, with national expert meetings held in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and others to follow. These activities have already led to the preparation of national self-assessments and action plans conducive to the identification of actions to strengthen industrial safety in line with the Convention's requirements. Furthermore, two subregional workshops on chemicals management, identification and notification of industrial hazardous activities were held: one for the countries of South-Eastern Europe, the other for the Caucasus and Eastern Europe. These workshops led to an improved understanding of the revised annex I of the Convention, the requirements to implement it and enhanced national and cross-border cooperation in this regard.

55. Numerous publications and guidance materials were developed and issued to support ECE member States in the Convention's application: (a) Cross-border concerns, shared strategies. Why transboundary cooperation matters in preventing industrial accidents; (b) International efforts for industrial and chemical accidents prevention, preparedness and response (prepared in the framework of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Industrial Accidents); (c) Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (reissue with amended annex I); (d) Checklist for contingency planning for accidents affecting transboundary waters; and (e) Guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects (general and technical guidance). The preparation of guidance on fire-water retention strategies has begun, through the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (with the Water Conventions) and its Expert Group on Firewater Retention.

#### *Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

56. Capacity development in Assistance Programme beneficiary countries, through projects implemented in the framework of the Convention, has been essential to enable countries to strengthen industrial safety in line with the Convention's requirements. The preparation of national self-assessments and action plans — key tools of the Assistance Programme's Strategic Approach — has been supported through the holding of national expert meetings. These meetings have led to improved national coordination among the authorities responsible for industrial accident prevention, preparedness and response. The organization of subregional activities has been instrumental in strengthening transboundary cooperation in the identification of hazardous activities and their notification to neighbouring or riparian countries.

57. Working in partnership with other international organizations has continued to provide for synergies. For example, a joint publication was issued with the other member organizations of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Industrial Accidents. A joint seminar was organized with OECD on the linkages between the Convention and OECD tools, on the one hand, and the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai commitments, on the other hand. Cooperation with OSCE and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction has been pursued in the organization of workshops and seminars. The partnership with the Commonwealth of Independent States Inter-State Council on Industrial Safety has been strengthened during the biennium, ECE becoming an observer organization to the Council. Cooperation with other ECE multilateral environmental agreements and programmes has continuously been pursued, including with: (a) the United Nations Sub-committee of experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, in support of Annex I capacity-building; (b) the Espoo Convention, its Protocol on SEA

and the ECE Committee on Housing and Land-Management, on safety and land-use planning; (c) the Water Convention through the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents.

*Indicators of achievement*

Increased number of reports from countries indicating progress in implementing the Industrial Accidents Convention in five key areas:

- (a) Intensity of capacity development in non-Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention (average participant-days per non-Party);
- (b) Intensity of capacity development in Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention (average participant-days per Party);
- (c) Identification of hazardous activities through training sessions;
- (d) Prevention — application and strengthening of preventive measures for hazardous activities through capacity-building sessions;
- (e) Notification of industrial accidents using the Industrial Accidents Notification System implemented through training sessions

*Performance measures*

2010-2011: (a) 31; (b) 23; (c) 40; (d) 40; (e) 40

2012-2013: (a) 26; (b) 32; (c) 32; (d) 39; (e) 16

2014-2015: (a) 26; (b) 30; (c) 33; (d) 40; (e) 14

Target 2016-2017: (a) 17; (b) 15; (c) 34; (d) 40; (e) 15

Actual 2016-2017 (as of 15 August 2017): (a) 30;<sup>16</sup> (b) 12;<sup>17</sup> (c) 33;<sup>18</sup> (d) 40;<sup>19</sup> (e) 25<sup>20</sup>

## **Cluster 10 Environmental monitoring and assessment**

*Expected accomplishment*

Strengthened national capacity for environmental monitoring and assessment systems in the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

58. National capacity for environmental monitoring was further strengthened and progress was made in enhancing environmental assessment systems in a majority of target countries. 54 per cent of ECE recommendations on environmental monitoring were implemented in 2016, as evidenced by countries' progress reports and the secretariat's

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<sup>16</sup> During the biennium 2016-2017, there was a focus on capacity-building activities in non-Parties, which explains the increase of (a) and the decrease of (b).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> This is based on data from the national implementation reports for the reporting round 2014-2015 submitted in 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Training on the implementation of the Industrial Accidents Notification System was implemented through an online consultation.

desktop research. Fifteen out of 17 target countries improved online accessibility of environmental indicators and associated datasets in line with the ECE Guidelines on environmental indicators (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine). Fourteen out of 17 countries improved national methodologies for the majority of ECE indicators (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine). Six countries were working on projects to strengthen cooperation among institutions involved in monitoring and assessment (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). Eight countries made improvements to the legislative framework related to environmental monitoring and assessment (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Ukraine). Nine countries reported on improvements in their water, waste and air monitoring networks, ranging from updating methodologies, adding new parameters for monitoring to introducing new monitoring stations (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Ukraine).

#### *Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

59. The majority of target countries have improved the process of producing and publishing indicators in line with the ECE core set of environmental indicators. This work needs to be further expanded to include other core indicators, to ensure that the Shared Environment Information System is in place by 2021 in accordance with the Batumi Ministerial Declaration. This work also needs to be harmonized with other indicators (e.g., those under the Sustainable Development Goals).

#### *Indicator of achievement*

Increased percentage of implementation of ECE recommendations on environmental monitoring by member States

#### *Performance measures*

2010-2011: N/A

2012-2013: N/A

2014-2015: N/A

Target 2016-2017: 50 per cent

Actual 2016-2017 (as of 31 December 2016): 54 per cent<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> A revised actual value is expected to be calculated following the fourteenth session of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (Rome, 2-3 October 2017) and the receipt of responses to a questionnaire on the Shared Environment Information System expected by the end of 2017.

## Cluster 11

### Environmental performance reviews

#### *Expected accomplishment*

Improved environmental performance of interested countries

#### *Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

60. Seventy-five per cent of the environmental performance review recommendations were implemented by Tajikistan, as identified during its third review in 2016. More specifically, Tajikistan reported on full or partial implementation of 48 recommendations contained in its second review and demonstrated an improved environmental performance. Recommendations comprising large areas of expertise or involving many actors and those requiring considerable financial resources, usually took longer time to implement. Two countries, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, will be reviewed by ECE in 2017.

#### *Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

61. Full implementation of the recommendations from the second review has yet to be achieved in Tajikistan. Lack of capacity and resources, as well as gaps in legislation, institutional development and administrative organization, and frequent changes in the institutional framework and/or in governmental policy have been major obstacles to this country's efforts to implement the environmental performance reviews' recommendations.

#### *Indicator of achievement*

Percentage of environmental performance review recommendations implemented by countries reviewed during a biennium

#### *Performance measures*

2010-2011: N/A

2012-2013: N/A

2014-2015: N/A

Target 2016-2017: 65 per cent

Actual 2016-2017 (as of 31 December 2016): 75 per cent<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The 75 per cent increase includes the implementation rate of recommendations by Tajikistan, reviewed in 2016. The actual value for the biennium will be calculated following the completion of reviews for Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consequently, the final average for 2016-2017 may change.