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Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

Thirty-ninth session
Geneva, 9–13 December 2019

Report of the Executive Body on its thirty-ninth session

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I. Introduction

1. The thirty-ninth session of the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution was held from 9 to 13 December 2019 in Geneva.

A. Attendance

2. The session was attended by representatives of the following Parties to the Convention: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America. Delegates from Argentina, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, the Republic of Korea, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also attended the meeting.

3. Representatives from the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank and the European Investment Bank participated in the session.

4. Also present at the meeting were representatives from non-governmental organizations, academia, scientific institutions and international programmes, including: the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme; the Brazilian Academy of Sciences; the European Environment Bureau; the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane of the Arctic Council; the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative; the European Federation of Clean Air and Environmental Protection Associations; the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina; the International Union of Air Pollution Prevention and Environmental Protection Associations; Istanbul Technical University; Leibniz Research Institute for Environmental Medicine; the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences; and World Resources Institute Mexico.

B. Organizational matters

5. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Anna Engleryd (Sweden).

6. The Executive Body adopted the agenda for its thirty-ninth session, as set out in document ECE/EB.AIR/143.¹

7. The Executive Body adopted the report of its thirty-eighth session (Geneva, 10–14 December 2018) contained in documents ECE/EB.AIR/142, Add.1 and Add.2.

II. Report on credentials

8. Delegations were invited to submit their credentials during the session. The officers of the session reported that 36 Parties to the Convention, which constituted a quorum, were present with original credentials, and that the delegations of 2 Parties had submitted copies of their credentials. Out of 28 Parties to the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol), 21 Parties were present at the session with valid credentials, which constituted a quorum to take decisions related to the amendment of the Gothenburg Protocol. The Executive Body took note of the report on credentials.

¹ All documentation for the meeting is available on the web page for the session:
www.unece.org/index.php?id=50348.

III. Status of ratification of the Convention and its Protocols

9. The Executive Body considered the status of ratification, acceptance and approval of or accession to the three most recently amended Protocols to the Convention — namely, the Gothenburg Protocol, the Protocol on Heavy Metals and the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The secretariat reported that 13 Parties, including the European Union, had submitted informal reports on their progress in the ratification of those Protocols. In its report, the European Union had provided information on each of its member States.

10. The secretariat noted that 23 acceptances of the amendment to the Protocol on Heavy Metals were required for its entry into force at the time of the current session. Eighteen Parties to the original Protocol had already accepted the amendment and five Parties had indicated their plans to do so in 2019–2020.

11. With respect to the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the secretariat reported that 22 acceptances were required for the entry into force of each amendment to the Protocol at the time of the current session. Nineteen Parties had accepted amendments to annexes I to IV, VI and VIII (decision 2009/1), and 17 Parties had accepted amendments to annexes I and II to the Protocol (decision 2009/2). Three Parties to the original Protocol had indicated their plans to accept the amendments thereto in 2019–2020.

12. The secretariat further noted that the 2012 amendment to the Gothenburg Protocol had entered into force on 7 October 2019. Out of 28 Parties to the original Protocol, 23 Parties had accepted the amendment, and 3 Parties had indicated their intention to do so in 2019–2020.

13. The Executive Body took note of the information presented by the secretariat on the status of ratification of the three most recent Protocols to the Convention. It welcomed the entry into force of the 2012 amendment to the Gothenburg Protocol. The Executive Body encouraged Parties to the original Protocol on Heavy Metals and the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants to accept the amendments as soon as possible, noting with respect to the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants that two types of amendments had to be accepted. It furthermore encouraged all other Parties to ratify the Protocols as amended.

IV. Review of implementation of the 2018–2019 workplan

14. The chairs of the subsidiary bodies and the secretariat reported on the implementation of the 2018–2019 workplan (ECE/EB.AIR/140/Add.1).

A. Science

15. The Chair of the Steering Body to the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP) and the Chair of the Working Group on Effects reported on the implementation of item 1 (science) of the workplan and, in particular, on the outcomes of the fifth joint session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects (Geneva, 9–13 September 2019), including the conclusions and recommendations for the Executive Body's consideration (see ECE/EB.AIR/GE.1/2019/2–ECE/EB.AIR/WG.1/2019/2).

16. The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body summarized the main results of the scientific and technical work carried out under the EMEP programme. She drew attention to progress in emissions reporting and adjustment applications, including progress in the measurement and reporting of black carbon, linkages with the urban scale and the new set-up and priorities for the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution as reflected in its revised mandate. Furthermore, she presented the revised EMEP monitoring strategy (ECE/EB.AIR/2019/4), recommended for adoption by the Executive Body. In addition, she drew attention to the need for an update to the Guidelines for Reporting Emissions and Projections Data under the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/125) and proposed its inclusion in the workplan.

17. The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body reported on challenges related to accounting for the condensable part of particulate matter (PM) emissions. In particular, such accounting was essential for scientific assessments, including for source-receptor matrices for integrated assessment modelling, and it also raised certain policy issues related to national legislation, national monitoring standards and compliance. She noted the importance of separating the issues related to science from those related to policy and presented the EMEP Steering Body's recommendation that a decoupled stepwise approach be adopted. On the scientific side, Parties would be urged to correctly report their practices regarding PM emissions estimated in the Informative Inventory Reports. Based on those reported emissions, as well as complementary information and the most up-to-date scientific knowledge, science-based estimates accounting for condensables would be elaborated and used for all the modelling activities under EMEP (air quality assessments, scenario analysis, source-receptor calculations for integrated assessment modelling). Parties would be informed about the emissions used for modelling activities. At the same time, discussions should be initiated within the Working Group on Strategies and Review and the Executive Body on policy issues related to the condensable part of PM. She reported on a planned workshop on reporting of condensables in Gothenburg, Sweden, in March 2020, organized by Meteorological Synthesizing Centre-West (MSC-W) and financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

18. In the discussion that followed, several delegations reiterated their support for separating the discussion of the scientific questions from the policy discussion on the issue of condensables. The delegation of the European Union proposed establishing an ad hoc expert group to focus on the scientific issues and identify needs for further research and methodological improvements. Other delegations noted that many of the questions raised could be answered by the existing technical bodies and expressed the view that it might be premature to set up such a structure at the current time. Many delegations welcomed the planned workshop to be organized by MSC-West and stressed the importance of involving a wide range of experts, both geographically and in terms of type of expertise, in view of the complexity of the issue and its policy implications. It was also stressed that, following the workshop, relevant technical bodies should continue their work on the issue. It was agreed that the policy aspects should be discussed within the review of the Gothenburg Protocol. The delegation of the European Union proposed elaborating a non-paper outlining the questions for discussion at the workshop.

19. The Chair recalled the request made by the Executive Body at its thirty-eighth session to the ad hoc group of legal experts to clarify whether the phrase "the emission factor or methodology used for determining emissions from this source category at the time that the emission reduction commitment was set" in paragraph 2 bis (b) as inserted by decision 2014/1 amending decision 2012/12, implied that, where the *EMEP/EEA air pollutant emission inventory guidebook* was used, the 1999 (or 1996) version of that guidebook should be used for the assessment of an adjustment (ECE/EB.AIR/142, para. 18 (b)). She reported that the advice of the ad hoc group of legal experts had been presented in an informal document made available on the Convention's website, together with an introductory note by the Executive Body Bureau noting that there was no consensus on the issue within the ad hoc group. In view of the entry into force of the amendments to the Gothenburg Protocol, in which the emission reductions were expressed in percentage terms, the need for adjustments was expected to decline and therefore the issue could be considered closed.

20. A representative of the European Commission provided background information on inventory adjustments in the European Union, including a gap analysis carried out by the European Commission that showed that the approaches taken to inventory adjustments by the European Union and the Convention were largely aligned, although some differences remained. The representative of the European Commission further noted that the clearer language in the European Union procedure was in line with the practice under the Convention and recalled that the deciding eligibility criterion for adjustment application by a Party was exceedance of its emissions reduction obligations. While it was agreed that the overall approach to adjustments in the longer term should be discussed within the review of the Gothenburg Protocol, the Executive Body discussed the possibility, for the sake of sound use of scarce resources, of down-prioritizing the review of compliance with emissions reduction obligations for historical years – i.e. prior to 2019 – as of 2020 for Parties to the amended Gothenburg Protocol. The European Union specifically proposed clarifying that issue in the

draft decision on the review of compliance by Parties to the Gothenburg Protocol. That proposal was further developed by multiple parties, including Canada and the United States of America, resulting in decision 2019/2.

21. The Chair of the Working Group on Effects gave an overview of the implementation of the 2018–2019 workplan by the International Cooperative Programmes (ICPs) and the Task Force on Health. She summarized the main findings of the scientific work, as well as the main conclusions of a thematic session on nitrogen, highlighting in particular the continued threat posed by eutrophication for the dynamics of nutrients in ecosystems, the insufficiency of currently legislated emissions reductions in the ECE region to remove pressure from species threatened by eutrophication and the need for further reductions in ammonia emissions to approach the WHO guideline for PM_{2.5}. She reported on progress in the cooperation with LifeWatch European Research Infrastructure Consortium, with results from the first call for proposals expected in early 2020, and presented the recommendation of the fifth joint session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects to transform the Joint Expert Group on Dynamic Modelling into an international designated centre under the International Cooperative Programme on Modelling and Mapping (ECE/EB.AIR/GE.1/2019/2–ECE/EB.AIR/WG.1/2019/2, para. 56 (a)).

22. The Executive Body:

- (a) Took note of the reports of the Chairs of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects;
- (b) Adopted decision 2019/1 on the monitoring strategy for the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe for the period 2020–2029;
- (c) Took note of the legal advice provided by the ad hoc group of legal experts regarding the assessment of adjustment applications, thanked the group and considered the matter closed;
- (d) Adopted decision 2019/2 on review of compliance by Parties to the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol);
- (e) Reiterated the relevance of its decision 2012/12, including the annex thereto, in which the exceedance of ceiling/reduction commitments was specified as a deciding criterion for eligibility of inventory adjustment applications;
- (f) Noted the recommendation of the Working Group on Effects to transform the Joint Expert Group on Dynamic Modelling into a designated international centre;
- (g) Took note of the step-wise approach to the treatment of the condensable part in PM as agreed by the EMEP Steering Body;
- (h) Requested the Working Group on Strategies and Review to discuss the policy implications of condensables reporting at its fifty-eighth session (Geneva, 26–29 May 2020) and to report back to the Executive Body at its fortieth session (Geneva, 14–18 December 2020);
- (i) Reiterated its request to the EMEP Steering Body, in cooperation with other relevant bodies, to continue its scientific work for accounting for the condensable part of particulate matter in scientific assessments of the Convention and to report on progress to the Executive Body at its fortieth session.

B. Policy

23. The Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review reported on the implementation of workplan item 2 (policy) and the outcomes of the fifty-seventh session of the Working Group (Geneva, 21–24 May 2019). She highlighted in particular the recommendations made by the Working Group with respect to the review of the Gothenburg Protocol, including the list of potential elements that could inform the scope and content of the review (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/122, annex I), and a proposed draft decision she had prepared in line with those recommendations. She further mentioned the Code of good

practice for wood-burning and small combustion installations (ECE/EB.AIR/2019/5) presented to the Executive Body for adoption, the proposed policy-related elements of the 2020–2021 workplan, the information-sharing session and the workshop on air pollution abatement, including to reduce air pollutants that were also short-lived climate pollutants.

24. A representative of Canada and the Co-Chair of the Task Force on Techno-economic Issues provided information on the outcomes of the workshop on open agricultural burning (Ottawa, 24 October 2019) organized by the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative and held back-to-back with the fifth meeting of the Task Force (Ottawa, 22 and 23 October 2019). A representative of the European Union informed participants of the workshop on integrated sustainable nitrogen management (Brussels, 30 September and 1 October 2019), co-organized by the European Commission and the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen, that had been aimed at finalizing the preparation of a guidance document on sustainable integrated nitrogen management.

25. A representative of the European Union suggested expanding the list of potential elements that could inform the scope and content of the review of the Gothenburg Protocol (see para. 23 above) by adding the following:

- (a) Under its section B “Elements in the existing Protocol”:
 - (i) Condensable part of emissions from residential heating and their implications for compliance and the set reduction commitments;
 - (ii) Current mechanisms and criteria for adjustment procedures in relation to emission inventories and reduction commitments;
- (b) Under its section C “Elements meant to address gaps”: Air pollution effects on marine ecosystems.

26. A representative of the European Environmental Bureau expressed the Bureau’s expectations regarding any potential revision of the Gothenburg Protocol. In particular, it expected that the Protocol would:

- (a) Continue to be based on a multi-pollutant and multi-effect approach and introduce a long-term vision of zero pollution;
- (b) Set an objective to decrease, by 2030 at the latest, emissions of air pollutants to levels that would not exceed the WHO air quality guidelines level and critical loads to protect health and environment;
- (c) Establish binding national emission reduction commitments for 2030 and indicative objectives for 2035 and 2040 required to move towards zero pollution. The new commitments would be elaborated through the application of integrated assessment modelling using up-to-date scenarios in conformity with the Paris Agreement;
- (d) Expand the number of pollutants covered by binding reduction commitments, adding methane, black carbon and mercury;
- (e) Include mandatory technical annexes that would set binding minimum requirements, such as emission limit values and abatement measures for the main source sectors;
- (f) Give a special focus to achieving further reductions in emissions of ammonia and methane from agriculture;
- (g) Include a mechanism for review and revision, so that, at the latest by 2030 and 2035, respectively, the indicative national emission reduction commitments for 2035 and 2040 would be reviewed and made binding;
- (h) Remove the current adjustment procedure and the three-year average option.

27. The Executive Body:

- (a) Took note of the report of the Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review;

(b) Adopted decision 2019/3 on the code of good practice for wood-burning and small combustion installations, as contained in document ECE/EB.AIR/2019/5, and requested the secretariat to issue it as an official publication;

(c) Took note of the proposed additions to the list of potential elements that, in addition to those contained in annex I to the report of the Working Group on Strategies and Review at its fifty-seventh session, would provide the basis for defining the scope and content of the review of the Gothenburg Protocol, and forwarded the list to the Working Group on Strategies and Review for consideration and continued elaboration at its fifty-eighth session, notably further discussion on ratification barriers;

(d) Took note of the statement of the European Environmental Bureau on expectations regarding any potential revision of the Gothenburg Protocol;

(e) Adopted decision 2019/4 on the review of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012.

C. Compliance

28. The Chair of the Implementation Committee reported on the implementation of workplan item 3 (compliance), presenting the outcomes of the Committee's forty-second and forty-third sessions (Stockholm, 7–9 May 2019, and Geneva, 10–12 September 2019, respectively), as contained in the Committee's twenty-second report to the Executive Body (ECE/EB.AIR/2019/3). He provided an overview of cases of compliance by Parties with their emissions reduction and reporting obligations, noting overall progress in emissions data reporting. He further noted that all cases of compliance with emissions reduction obligations reviewed by the Committee in 2019 would continue to be reviewed in 2020.

29. In accordance with decision 2018/3, a representative of Latvia delivered a presentation on the efforts of Latvia to achieve compliance under the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants with respect to emissions of hexachlorobenzene (HCB). She explained that the internal review launched by Latvia had concluded that HCB emissions from pesticides used in agriculture had been underestimated for 1990 and following years. The speaker listed sources of data used for recalculations and noted that there had been a significant decrease in emissions due to the phasing out of those plant protection products. She expressed the hope that, as a result of that recalculation, Latvia would be back in compliance with its obligations under the Protocol.

30. The Executive Body:

(a) Took note of the report of the Chair of the Implementation Committee on the implementation of the workplan item 3 (compliance);

(b) Also took note of the information presented by Latvia and encouraged the Party to continue its efforts to achieve compliance.

D. Capacity-building to promote ratification and implementation in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

31. The Chair of the Coordinating Group on the promotion of actions towards implementation of the Convention in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Coordinating Group) informed the Parties of its activities, in particular the meeting of the Coordinating Group held on the margins of the current session. He noted the progress in countries with respect to the revision of national legislation in line with the requirements under the Convention and its Protocols. He highlighted the outcomes of the workshop to promote the ratification of Protocols to the ECE Air Convention with focus on countries in the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia region (Berlin, 14–16 May 2019) and of the workshop on emissions of volatile organic compounds from installations (Minsk, 11 and 12 November 2019) and thanked their organizers. He expressed the need to continue organizing similar workshops and stressed the importance of maintaining the flexibility arrangement under the Gothenburg Protocol as a precondition for ratification.

32. Representatives of Belarus and the Republic of Moldova expressed appreciation to Germany, the Task Force on Techno-economic Issues, led by France and Italy, and the secretariat for organizing the above-mentioned workshops. The representative of the Republic of Moldova thanked Germany for support in developing national air quality-related policies and legislation. Representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan thanked the secretariat and the Parties for providing their contributions supporting analysis of national legislation, development of national action plans for ratification and improvement of the skills of their experts in emissions reporting under the Convention. A representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed appreciation to Sweden for support within the project on air quality, which also facilitated ratification of the Protocols. A representative of Albania informed participants about the support Albania had received from Austria and the European Union in improving its emission inventories.

33. A representative of Switzerland encouraged countries making steps towards ratification to officialize their progress by submitting voluntary commitments under the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air initiative. A representative of the United States of America noted its plans to organize – in the first quarter of 2020 and in coordination with the secretariat – a subregional workshop on air quality management, with a focus on countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

34. The secretariat presented the capacity-building activities it had organized and co-organized in 2019, including:

- (a) Awareness-raising at a high political level and support to Armenia and Azerbaijan in adjusting national legislation and development of national action plans for ratification of the key Protocols to the Convention and improving their emissions reporting;

- (b) The above-mentioned workshops to promote ratification and application of best available techniques.

35. The representative of the Republic of Moldova suggested that the secretariat organize a workshop for its experts to improve reporting under the Convention in 2020. A representative of Turkey informed the Executive Body of its need for support in building its capacity and raising awareness in order to facilitate ratification of the key Protocols.

36. The Executive Body:

- (a) Took note of the report of the Chair of the Coordinating Group;

- (b) Also took note of the report of the secretariat on the implementation of the capacity-building programme;

- (c) Noted with appreciation the contribution of the capacity-building programme managed by the secretariat and other bilateral projects towards improved ratification and implementation of the Protocols to the Convention in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;

- (d) Also noted the needs and requests for further support expressed by countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and requested the secretariat to continue to support those countries in their efforts regarding ratification and implementation of the Convention and its Protocols;

- (e) Further noted the needs and request for support expressed by other Parties;

- (f) Requested Parties to continue to support financially the capacity-building and awareness-raising activities managed by the secretariat.

E. Communication and outreach

37. The secretariat reported on workplan item 5 (communication and outreach), presenting the activities it had carried out to promote the Convention. A summary of those activities was presented in informal document No. 3 for the session. A representative of the European Union reported on European Union efforts to promote the Convention and its anniversary through social media, and a representative of Norway informed participants

about the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers and its new cooperation programme, which included priorities related to air pollution.

38. The secretariat noted that, following decision 2018/4, most of the delegations had designated their focal points for the Convention, which had considerably facilitated communication with Parties. The secretariat thanked Parties for their responses and asked delegations to inform the secretariat in case of any changes.

39. The Executive Body:

(a) Took note of the progress report by the secretariat on outreach and communications activities and of the information presented by Parties;

(b) Took note of the financial requirements for communication and outreach activities managed by the secretariat and requested Parties to continue to support those activities financially;

(c) Invited Parties and Signatories to designate focal points for the Convention if they had not already done so.

V. Forum for international cooperation on air pollution

40. The Executive Body discussed the proposal elaborated by the Bureau, as contained in informal document No. 4, and respective recommendations of the subsidiary bodies and welcomed the expected launch of the forum for international cooperation on air pollution at the fortieth anniversary special session.

41. The Executive Body:

(a) Adopted decision 2019/5 on the establishment of the forum for international cooperation on air pollution;

(b) Took note of the proposed additions to the proposal and invited Parties to submit further comments until 25 February 2020 (see annex I below).

VI. Revised mandates of task forces and centres under the Convention

42. The Chairs of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects presented the revised mandates for the task forces and centres under the Convention as contained in documents ECE/EB.AIR/2019/7, ECE/EB.AIR/2019/8 and ECE/EB.AIR/2019/9. Regarding the mandates of the ICPs under the Working Group on Effects, the European Union encouraged closer cooperation between ICPs, European Union ecosystem monitoring activities and other regional and global ecosystem monitoring activities and assessment processes, to support synergies between the ICPs and other relevant conventions, organizations and platforms at the regional and global levels.

43. The Executive Body adopted:

(a) Decision 2019/6 on the revised mandate of the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections;

(b) Decision 2019/7 on the revised mandate of the Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling;

(c) Decision 2019/8 on the revised mandate of the Task Force on Measurements and Modelling;

(d) Decision 2019/9 on the revised mandate of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution;

(e) Decision 2019/10 on the revised mandate for the Chemical Coordinating Centre;

- (f) Decision 2019/11 on the revised mandate for the Meteorological Synthesizing Centre-East;
- (g) Decision 2019/12 on the revised mandate for the Meteorological Synthesizing Centre-West;
- (h) Decision 2019/13 on the revised mandate for the Centre for Integrated Assessment Modelling;
- (i) Decision 2019/14 on the revised mandate for the Centre on Emission Inventories and Projections;
- (j) Decision 2019/15 on the revised mandate for the ICP on Assessment and Monitoring of the Effects of Air Pollution on Rivers and Lakes;
- (k) Decision 2019/16 on the revised mandate for the ICP on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests;
- (l) Decision 2019/17 on the revised mandate for the ICP on Effects of Air Pollution on Natural Vegetation and Crops;
- (m) Decision 2019/18 on the revised mandate for the ICP on Integrated Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Ecosystems;
- (n) Decision 2019/19 on the revised mandate for the ICP on Effects of Air Pollution on Materials, including Historic and Cultural Monuments;
- (o) Decision 2019/20 on the revised mandate for the ICP on Modelling and Mapping of Critical Levels and Loads and Air Pollution Effects, Risks and Trends;
- (p) Decision 2019/21 on the revised mandate for the Joint Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution.

VII. Fortieth anniversary special session

44. In a special session dedicated to the fortieth anniversary of the Convention, organized as an informal segment of the session, representatives of Parties, countries from the ECE region and outside of it, non-governmental organizations and international financial institutions endorsed the Declaration on Clean Air for 2020–2030 and beyond as contained in document ECE/EB.AIR/2019/6, discussed the progress made by Parties and shared their vision for the future of the Convention and ideas for international cooperation beyond the ECE region, in particular through the forum for international cooperation on air pollution launched at the special session. A summary of the session prepared by the Chair in cooperation with the secretariat is appended to the present report (see annex II below).

45. Following the special session, the Executive Body:

- (a) Took note of the discussions during the anniversary special session;
- (b) Adopted the Declaration on Clean Air for 2020–2030 and beyond in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region (see annex III below).

VIII. Draft 2020–2021 workplan for the implementation of the Convention

46. The Executive Body adopted the 2020–2021 workplan for the implementation of the Convention, including the list of meetings of the Executive Body, its subsidiary bodies, their Bureaux and the Implementation Committee, and the list of official documents for the sessions of the Executive Body and its subsidiary bodies in 2020–2021 (see ECE/EB.AIR/144/Add.2).

IX. Financial requirements for implementation of the Convention

47. The secretariat introduced the note on the financial requirements for the implementation of the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/2019/2) and informed the Executive Body about the status of Parties' contributions to the trust funds for financing the Convention's implementation in 2018–2019 and the use of resources in 2018. It also presented a revised annex to the EMEP Protocol and a revised scale of mandatory contributions for the period 2020–2021, based on the most recent United Nations scale of assessments. The secretariat noted that the increased number of Protocols, amendments and Parties thereto had led to a significant increase in the volume of Executive Body decisions, guidance documents, obligations for review of compliance and queries by Parties that required strengthening of the secretariat's legal expertise. It invited Parties to make contributions in that regard.

48. With respect to the financing of EMEP activities, the Executive Body:

(a) Decided on the detailed use of resources in 2020, as set out in table 2 of document ECE/EB.AIR/2019/2;

(b) Agreed on the schedule of mandatory contributions from Parties for 2020 and provisionally agreed on those for 2021, as set out in table 3 of document ECE/EB.AIR/2019/2;

(c) Supported the Steering Body's call on the Parties to the EMEP Protocol to consider making additional voluntary contributions (in-kind or in cash through the trust fund) to ensure that the work in 2020 could be accomplished as foreseen in the 2020–2021 workplan for the implementation of the Convention;

(d) Requested the Steering Body, with the assistance of its Bureau, to present the details of the 2021 budget for approval by the Executive Body at its fortieth session;

(e) Urged Parties that had not yet done so to pay their 2019 contributions in cash to the trust fund and, in 2020, to pay their contributions so that they reached the trust fund in the first half of the year;

(f) Urged Parties with arrears to pay them in full to the trust fund;

(g) Amended the EMEP Protocol by adopting, in accordance with article 4 (3) of the Protocol, the revised annex set out in the annex to document.

49. With respect to effects-oriented activities, the Executive Body:

(a) Took note of the contributions made to the trust fund for effects-oriented activities for 2019, and welcomed the payments made, but also expressed disappointment at the lack of response by many Parties;

(b) Urged all Parties that had not yet done so to consider providing the recommended contributions to the trust fund for financing core activities without undue delay;

(c) Decided that the essential international coordination costs for financing the core activities of the Convention and its Protocols, other than those covered by the EMEP Protocol, would be \$2,152,700 in 2020, and would provisionally be \$2,152,700 in 2021 and \$2,152,700 in 2022;

(d) Invited the secretariat to provide information on the amount of contributions made to the trust fund for effects-oriented activities as of 30 November 2020 at the fortieth session of the Executive Body, and to use the amount as a basis to co-fund the effects-oriented activities in 2021;

(e) Decided that, in the event that the amount of contributions was lower than the agreed costs of \$2,152,700, unearmarked contributions should be divided equally between the centres;

(f) Requested the secretariat to inform Parties of the recommended contributions to the trust fund to meet the 2020 budget, inviting them to make those contributions as agreed in revised decision 2002/1;

(g) Encouraged the Parties to make the recommended contributions to the trust fund before 30 November each year;

(h) Noted with appreciation the essential support provided to the Convention and its bodies by lead countries, countries hosting centres and those organizing meetings, as well as countries that funded activities of their national focal centres/points and the active participation of national experts;

(i) Adopted decision 2019/22 on amendment to decision 2002/1 on the financing of core activities; and

(j) Agreed on the recommended schedule of contributions from Parties for 2020, and provisionally agreed on those for 2021, as set out in table 12 of document ECE/EB.AIR/2019/2.

50. With respect to promotion and implementation of the Convention, the Executive Body:

(a) Reiterated its support for that element of the work programme, the successfully enhanced implementation of the Convention in countries in transition of Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as Turkey, being crucial for the future of the Convention;

(b) Invited all Parties, but especially those that led task forces and expert groups, to promote activities such as special workshops in countries of Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as Turkey, and to collaborate with the secretariat in developing and carrying out such projects;

(c) Approved the proposed 2020–2021 budget of \$1,880,000 for promotion and implementation of the Convention;

(d) Welcomed the contributions to the trust fund and thanked those countries that had contributed.

51. With respect to the trust fund to support the secretariat, the Executive Body invited Parties to make voluntary contributions to strengthen the Convention secretariat.

X. Amendments to article 3 bis of, and annex VII to, the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone

52. The delegation of the United States of America presented its proposal for amendments to article 3 bis of, and annex VII to, the Gothenburg Protocol, in accordance with article 13 bis thereof. Representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation, as well as the Chair of the Coordinating Group, expressed their gratitude to the United States of America for the proposal and stressed the need for flexible transitional arrangements as a precondition for accession of new Parties to the Protocol. A number of delegations suggested that the Parties to the Gothenburg Protocol give further consideration to:

(a) Further extension of timescales for the application of limit values taking out the deadline for accession;

(b) Possibilities for a step-wise applicability of obligations upon ratification in view of a number of factors, including the economic and political diversity of countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and different level of preparedness from one sector to another.

53. The Parties to the Gothenburg Protocol agreed that further discussion is needed on the flexible arrangements and the flexibility provisions contained in the Protocol, and that the

amendments to annex VII would provide the most immediate assistance to those countries who are very close to ratification. As a result, the amendment to article 3 bis was withdrawn.

54. The Parties to the Gothenburg Protocol adopted decision 2019/23 on the amendment of annex VII to the Protocol.

55. The Executive Body agreed that further discussions of flexible arrangements for new Parties to the Gothenburg Protocol would be held as part of the fifty-eighth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review.

XI. Amendments to the rules of procedure for the Executive Body

56. The delegation of Canada suggested that the Executive Body review its rules of procedure (adopted by decision 2010/19 and amended by decision 2013/1) in 2020 for any possible improvements that could be introduced based on the ten years' practice of their application. Parties could, in particular, consider clarifying the role of vice-chairs and observers and extending the term of office of chairs (informal document No. 7 of the session).

57. The Executive Body:

(a) Requested the Working Group on Strategies and Review at its fifty-eighth session to discuss possible amendments to the rules of procedure and to report back to the Executive Body at its fortieth session;

(b) Invited Parties to submit their proposals by 15 March 2020 to the secretariat.

XII. Election of officers

58. The Chair recalled that, in accordance with rule 17 of the rules of procedure, the Executive Body had re-elected its Chair and three Vice-Chairs at its thirty-eighth session. She informed the Executive Body that, in April 2019, the United States of America had reported that Ms. Katherine Weber would not complete her mandate and had appointed Ms. Elizabeth Nichols as her replacement.

59. The Executive Body elected Ms. Elizabeth Nichols for the remainder of the Vice-Chair's mandate.

XIII. Adoption of decisions taken at the thirty-ninth session

60. The Executive Body adopted its decisions and agreed on the conclusions of its thirty-ninth session.

Annex I

Forum for international cooperation on air pollution: proposal

I. Background

1. The need for coordinated actions has been recognized in many different international forums (for example, through United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme and World Health Assembly resolutions and the 2019 International Law Commission draft guidelines on protection of the atmosphere). The importance of cooperation beyond the ECE region has also been recognized in the updated long-term strategy for the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/142/Add.2, decision 2018/5, annex, para. 76). Given its 40 years of experience in tackling transboundary air pollution on a regional basis, the Convention is keen to cooperate with other regions to ascertain common challenges and to exchange experiences on air pollution policy.

2. Following a special event on clean air globally, the Executive Body, at its thirty-eighth session (Geneva, 10–14 December 2018), agreed to establish a forum for collaboration on reducing air pollution and requested the Bureau of the Executive Body to further elaborate the proposal (ECE/EB.AIR/142, para. 68 (b)). The proposal has been updated based on discussions during the event on clean air globally, at which it was recommended that the forum should be steered by the Air Convention in close cooperation with other key stakeholders and especially with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to link the initiative to the platform called for in United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 3/8 on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally. In these discussions, it was also recommended to reach out to countries and organizations not present at the session. The forum promotes integrated approaches to addressing air pollution aimed at achieving multiple benefits to human health, the economy, ecosystems and climate and efforts across sectors that improve air quality.

II. Purpose

3. The forum for international cooperation on air pollution is a forum for international exchange of information and mutual learning on both the scientific/technical and policy levels. It is intended to be a repository for technical information and a convenor of countries and organizations, with the goal of increasing international cooperation on addressing air pollution.

III. Vision

4. The forum's vision is to promote international collaboration towards enhancing scientific knowledge and awareness related to air pollution and preventing and reducing air pollution, in particular transboundary transport, to improve air quality globally.

5. The forum aims to fulfil its purpose, among other things, by:

- (a) Acting as an international platform for information-sharing, mutual learning and collaboration on air pollution;
- (b) Fostering emissions reductions of air pollutants through exchange of information on best practices, clean air technological solutions and policy approaches;
- (c) Promoting integrated environmental policy in addressing international air pollution;
- (d) Facilitating the matching of funding opportunities with country efforts and needs;

- (e) Promoting an evidence-based approach to air quality management;
- (f) Working to raise public awareness of the health and environmental impacts of air pollution;
- (g) Collaborating and communicating with partners and stakeholders.

IV. Proposed structure and operation

6. The forum is open to participation by ECE and non-ECE country representatives, as well as representatives of organizations and conventions with an interest in reducing air pollution.

7. The aim is, that in the initial phase, the forum will be led by one or more countries, including at least one from the ECE region, which are to appoint a chair/chairs. Interested countries are invited to express their interest to the ECE secretariat.

8. The forum's operation and activities will be funded through voluntary financial and in-kind contributions.

9. The forum will mainly be a web-based platform. Efforts should be made to make use of tools that enable virtual meetings. Periodic face-to-face meetings will be held as decided by the forum's lead countries (chairs). Forum members could also attend existing relevant meetings to leverage resources and share information on similar efforts. Meetings or workshops may also be held to implement specific projects decided upon by the forum.

V. Activities of the forum

10. Activities of the forum could include:

Information-sharing on policy

- (a) Providing a platform to exchange information and views on addressing air pollution and raise awareness of its health and environmental impacts;
- (b) Providing an overview of international policy initiatives in the air pollution field and summarizing the state of international efforts to address air pollution;
- (c) Seeking connections with relevant organizations or bodies involved in practical efforts to reduce air pollution;
- (d) Sharing experiences on regional cooperation, including the Air Convention's multilateral regional structure and framework as a model for other regions;
- (e) Promoting tools such as the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air initiative;
- (f) Promoting an integrated approach to the management of air quality and other environmental issues to achieve multiple benefits and coordinating to that end with relevant organizations, as appropriate;
- (g) Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution in existing or future networks.

Information-sharing on science

- (a) Facilitating access to scientific information, for example, online databases for best available control technologies;
- (b) Encouraging sharing of information related to international transport and global emissions of air pollution and their impacts on ecosystems and human health;
- (c) Helping to establish contacts for science cooperation (for example, to share lessons learned with harmonized handbooks, monitoring methods, risk assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness and benefits of air pollution reductions on health and the

environment and targeted “hands-on” training workshops) and possibly adaptation of Air Convention tools for other geographic scopes or activities.

Technical capacity-building and information-sharing on funding opportunities

- (a) Reaching out to funding organizations and providing a platform for information-sharing on funding opportunities for country participants and other organizations;
- (b) Providing a platform for information-sharing on available capacity-building and training opportunities;
- (c) Sharing experience and information that could inform the development of action plans for addressing air pollution, including in urban centres;
- (d) Promoting an evidence-based approach to air quality management, including related to the development of emission inventories and the communication of health and ecosystem impacts to the public.

VI. Next steps

- (a) Developing terms of reference for the forum, for consultation with forum participants (led by the Executive Body Bureau);
- (b) Identifying countries willing to lead the forum;
- (c) Organizing the first meeting of the forum;
- (d) Continuing to develop a website for the forum, based on an analysis of similar existing websites to avoid overlaps;
- (e) Reaching out to organizations such as UNEP, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Health Organization, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the Global Methane Initiative, the World Resources Institute, the International Union of Air Pollution and Environmental Protection Associations and C40 to explore possible synergies in activities.

Annex II

Chair's summary of the fortieth anniversary special event

I. Introduction

1. To celebrate 40 years of successful cooperation under the Convention, the Executive Body held a special event, which was aimed at raising awareness of the achievements of the Convention, sharing visions for future development of the Convention and discussing cooperation on clean air.

2. The present summary was prepared by the Chair of the Executive Body in cooperation with the secretariat.

3. The special event was opened by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), who emphasized the importance of cooperation on the issue of air pollution, which had resulted in major achievements in the ECE region and which would continue to be fostered within and beyond the ECE region to further improve air quality. In a congratulatory video message, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the National Council on Climate and Air Quality of the Republic of Korea, commended the impact of the Convention over the past 40 years.

4. A representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) highlighted efforts undertaken to address air pollution through the implementation of United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 3/8 on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally, including through monitoring and assessment, policy and technology support and awareness-raising and communications. He also expressed the support of UNEP for the new forum for international cooperation on air pollution, as it was in line with resolution 3/8.

5. A representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) reflected on the outcomes of the First WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health (Geneva, 30 October–1 November 2018), which had clearly shown the need to reduce air pollution to prevent health impacts. She also stressed the need for regional and international cooperation to address air pollution and highlighted the work under the Joint Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution.

6. A representative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) underlined the involvement of the Organization in the work under the Convention from the beginning and the important role it had played in co-chairing the Task Force on Measurements and Modelling. She also reflected on the interlinkages between climate change and air pollution, highlighting that prolonged heat waves would come with more air pollution, including as a result of more forest fires. She also expressed the support of WMO for the sharing of the knowledge and expertise in the ECE region with other regions through the forum for international cooperation on air pollution.

II. Looking back and ahead – 40 years, progress and visions for the future

7. Participants reflected on the milestones of the Convention that were also highlighted in an anniversary video and video messages by Ms. Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister and former Minister of the Environment of Norway, and Mr. Valentin Sokolowsky, first Chair of the Executive Body for the Convention.

8. Participants agreed that the Convention was a success story, which had substantially contributed to the development of international environmental policy and law. The Convention's strength also lay in accommodating different approaches to environmental policymaking in the negotiation of legally binding international protocols, based on a flexible and consensual negotiation process.

9. Participants also agreed that the science-based approach of the Convention was a decisive factor for its success. Scientific evidence that air pollution was transboundary had helped to convince countries in the beginning and thus had helped in making the shift from focusing on local measures to joint policymaking at the international level. In addition, the science-policy dialogue, the transparency and accessibility of data and the joint development of technical and scientific standards in the region had created legitimacy and trust among countries.

10. Participants also pointed to the remaining challenges in the region and globally, such as reducing emissions from residential and industrial sources, further integration of air pollution and climate change policies and urban air quality. They pointed out that particulate matter, ground-level ozone and nitrogen were still of major concern in the region; a situation that required an integrated approach to environmental policymaking. Participants also emphasized the need to provide further support to countries in the ECE region to facilitate ratification and implementation of the Convention and its Protocols.

11. Participants highlighted that international cooperation was and still is key to reducing emissions. In addition to cooperation within the ECE region, they supported sharing the Convention's 40 years of experience and expertise with countries in other regions in the framework of the forum for international cooperation on air pollution, as an important step to implement the Long-Term Strategy for the Convention. They pointed to the model effect of the Convention, which has already inspired other global conventions – such as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Minamata Convention on Mercury – and could facilitate mutual learning between regions. In addition, several participants highlighted the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air initiative as a means of further outreach and awareness-raising.

12. A participant in the Air Simulation game presented the outcomes of the negotiation simulation. She emphasized that the game was important for building capacity regarding, and raising awareness of the importance of, air pollution and for making the work within the Convention more accessible to new negotiators. Participants endorsed the Anniversary Declaration.

III. Recent progress in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

13. Participants showcased concrete progress in their countries and discussed steps forward in the region.

14. Participants from countries not yet Parties to the Convention highlighted important steps taken in the ratification process, such as, in the case of Uzbekistan, amendments to the law on air protection on: transboundary air pollution; economic incentives to reduce emissions; and gradual introduction of environmental standards related to emissions from stationary and mobile sources. The representative of Tajikistan stated that efforts were being made to strengthen the country's capacity to ratify and implement the requirements of the Convention and its Protocols. Participants also stressed the need for further support and advice on the way to ratification.

15. Several representatives of Parties to the Convention drew attention to efforts undertaken to ratify the three most recently amended Protocols to the Convention, namely: the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol); the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants; and the Protocol on Heavy Metals. The representative of Belarus highlighted the development of a programme to reduce emissions of pollutants under the Gothenburg Protocol and an accompanying draft regulatory act to implement the programme. The representative of Armenia pointed to the work undertaken on the framework law on air, institutional arrangements to reform the environmental permits system and the negotiation process regarding the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Armenia, which included a significant number of actions on air protection. In a similar vein, the representative of North Macedonia also highlighted amendments to the law on air quality, which were necessary for the country to be able to ratify the amendments to the Gothenburg Protocol by 2022. He also

highlighted the need to intensify subregional cooperation to tackle transboundary pollution. Recognizing the close interlinkages between climate and air policies, several participants also emphasized prioritizing renewable energy sources, improvements in public transport, electric mobility, change-out programmes for heating systems, reforestation and other measures that would have benefits for both climate and air quality.

16. Participants also reflected on how their countries had benefited from the Convention's work. Several participants praised the vast scientific knowledge accumulated under the Convention and the science-policy interaction, which had formed the basis for policy recommendations. The representative of Canada also commended the integrated multi-pollutant multi-effect approach and the amendments to include short-lived climate pollutants, such as black carbon, in the Gothenburg Protocol. The representative of the European Union specifically highlighted the strong link between the Gothenburg Protocol and European Union clean air legislation and the valuable work on ecosystems monitoring under the Convention. He also emphasized the importance of cooperating with and supporting the Eastern Neighbourhood through the Convention framework and of engaging with countries from outside the ECE region in the Convention's future work. The Chair of the Coordinating Group on the promotion of actions towards implementation of the Convention in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia highlighted the constructive spirit within the group, which had helped in the development of shared positions.

IV. Forum for international cooperation on air pollution

17. Participants launched the forum for international cooperation on air pollution. Its purpose was to provide a shared response to help address the threat to human health and ecosystems from air pollution. It also provides a platform for exchange and mutual learning and a repository of technical information.

18. Participants emphasized the need for exchange of technical knowledge with countries from outside the ECE region on issues such as the development of emission inventories, source apportionment and costs-of-inaction studies, standardized measurements and monitoring, modelling and mapping. In addition, participants also stressed the need for high-level political buy-in to ensure that actions to improve air quality were linked to the development agenda at the country level. Participants highlighted progress on: inventory work in the Latin American region; the West and Central African Regional Framework Agreement on Air Pollution; global networks such as the International Union of Air Pollution Prevention and Environmental Protection Associations; and national efforts in the framework of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition.

19. Participants also drew lessons from the experiences under the Convention for further development of information-sharing in the framework of the forum. In particular, participants pointed to: the flexibility mechanisms under the Convention, which had helped to bring a group of heterogeneous actors together; the Convention's ability to build up a common body of evidence; and the importance of the agility and adaptability of the Convention with regard to engaging a variety of stakeholders, including non-Parties.

20. The representative of Argentina announced that the country would host the first meeting of the forum in Buenos Aires, in October 2020.

V. Connecting the dots: learning best practices from each other

21. Participants representing countries outside the ECE region, academia, international financial institutions and international organizations discussed the next concrete steps for the forum.

22. Reporting on recent efforts undertaken by the Republic of Korea, including science and policy cooperation initiatives in North-East Asia, the representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea pointed to three lessons learned from the Convention that could help facilitate further intraregional cooperation in Asia. He specifically mentioned: the need to strengthen science and technical cooperation to create common scientific understanding;

the need to create a monitoring and compliance mechanism; and the importance of developing, and adhering to, a coherent regional air quality strategy.

23. Several participants highlighted recent efforts carried out by the international community and new initiatives that could be linked to the forum. Representatives of the initiative on air pollution and health of the five National Academies of Science and Medicine of Brazil, Germany, South Africa and the United States of America emphasized that sharing scientific expertise and lessons learned and involving other academies of science in undertaking research on specific topics could be an area of common interest with the forum. The representative of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition pointed to the new vision 2030 and the common interest in improving international cooperation and promoting best climate and clean air policy solutions. The representative of UNEP considered the forum an opportunity to deliver on the mandate in United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 3/8 to create a platform for knowledge-sharing. The representative of WHO reminded participants of the urgent need to step up action and highlighted recent WHO efforts, including the First WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health. Pointing to work on standardized emission measurements, the representative of WMO considered the forum suitable to promote that work and lessons learned from the Convention at the global level.

24. Representatives from the international financial institutions pointed to investments projects in the field of low carbon infrastructure and highlighted the demand for air quality management support and advice. In particular, the representative of the World Bank pointed to the challenge that countries needed to act quickly while also carefully planning air quality management. He considered the forum to be an opportunity to upscale existing collaboration with stakeholders and Parties under the Convention to create a group of experts that could give advice to countries outside the ECE region, which could lead to more substantial lending from the Bank. He also suggested that the forum needed to be engaged on the ground to be able to consider specific circumstances in different countries.

25. Participants agreed that there were opportunities to connect different initiatives and to work together on the science and policy side. Upcoming events to promote the forum included the Climate and Clean Air Coalition Working Group meeting (Manila, 27–29 April 2020), the Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 Summit (Seoul, June 2020) and the first International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies (7 September 2020).

Annex III

Declaration on Clean Air for 2020–2030 and beyond in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

1. We, the representatives of the Parties to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention), recognize that air pollution is the single greatest environmental risk to human health and one of the main avoidable causes of death and disease globally, and that it also affects other aspects of society, such as the economy, ecosystems and climate.
2. We met in Geneva, in December 2019, in the framework of the thirty-ninth session of the Executive Body for the Air Convention, concerned that air pollution is a problem with far-reaching impacts owing to its transport over long distances.
3. We strongly appreciate the substantial contribution of the Air Convention to the development of international environmental law. Since its inception 40 years ago, the Air Convention has developed into a successful regional framework for controlling and reducing the damage to human health and the environment caused by transboundary air pollution. This has been demonstrated through: the decoupling of pollutant emissions and economic growth; the substantial reduction of emissions of certain air pollutants; and the reversal or deceleration of acidification in forest soils and lakes.
4. Yet we remain concerned that air pollution still causes significant environmental threats and health problems, and that new challenges continue to emerge. In this context, we reaffirm our commitment to improving air quality, for the purposes of fostering a better environment and reducing negative impacts on human health.
5. We therefore urge action to address the priorities for future work under the Air Convention, as identified in its long-term strategy for 2020–2030 and beyond, including, among other things:
 - (a) Maximizing the impact of the Air Convention, including by increasing ratification and implementation of its Protocols;
 - (b) Ensuring the provision of resources for the effective long-term operation of the Air Convention’s monitoring, modelling and assessment capabilities;
 - (c) Continuing to focus on the pollutants best controlled at the regional level and considering the need for further action to address remaining and emerging issues;
 - (d) Supporting scientific activities that respond to policy needs and questions, influence priorities and guide decisions, both in terms of what policy should address and how it should be developed;
 - (e) Improving cooperation between different levels of government, recognizing the increasing challenge of hemispheric influence on air quality in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region; recognizing also that local air pollution, including in cities, is heavily influenced by transboundary air pollution and vice versa;
 - (f) Promoting an integrated approach to environmental policymaking, recognizing that air pollution is the central link in the interaction between ground-level ozone, nitrogen, human health, climate change and ecosystems;
 - (g) Improving communication on work under the Air Convention, achievements and remaining challenges, in order to raise awareness among policymakers and the public, including through the promotion of tools that help to raise awareness at the political level of the need to improve air quality, such as the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air initiative;

(h) Sharing the Air Convention's 40 years of experience and scientific expertise, striving to play a key role in the development of further policy cooperation between regions and working towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. We welcome the establishment of a forum for international cooperation on air pollution, as agreed by the Executive Body for the Air Convention, focusing on exchange with other regions and working closely with other relevant initiatives, in line with the objectives of United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 3/8 on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally.

7. We recognize the important contributions made during the first forty years of the Air Convention's existence and we commit ourselves to continuing to use the best available science to advance efforts to address air pollution.
