

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Seventy-fifth Meeting
Geneva, 10 February 2015

EXCOM/CONCLU/75

CHAIRMAN'S CONCLUSIONS

Meeting of the Executive Committee
10 February 2015

FORMAL SEGMENT

Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda

1. The Chair proposed to revise the agenda, removing item 3 (Matters relating to the Committee on Environmental Policy) as the Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy could not attend and removing from item 9 (Extrabudgetary projects for approval) the extrabudgetary project “Support for the development of sustainable public transport in the broader area of Athens, Greece”.
2. The provisional agenda (ECE/EX/2015/1) was adopted as revised.

Item 2 – Chairman’s conclusions from the last meeting

3. The conclusions from the 74th meeting of EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/74) were adopted.

Item 4 – Matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy

- a. Meeting with the Acting Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy
- b. Decisions approving:
 - i. the extension of the 2013-2014 Work Plan of the Expert Group on Resource Classification until the end of 2015;
 - ii. the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency for 2014–2015;
 - iii. the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2014–2015.
4. EXCOM welcomed Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst (Germany), Acting Chair of the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy, and invited him to report on the Committee’s work in the past year.
5. Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst made his presentation about the activities from the past year of the Committee on Sustainable Energy. He emphasized that, in line with the global goals of achieving sustainable global energy architecture for the post-2015 era, mitigating climate change and enhancing sustainable development, the Sustainable Energy subprogramme would focus on decarbonising energy systems in the ECE region and on new activities in renewable energy and energy efficiency. The subprogramme would continue creating best-practice guidance and normative instruments. Mr. Keinhorst informed EXCOM of important energy-related events taking place in 2015 and hoped EXCOM would approve the three decisions put before it.
6. Regarding the formal adoption of the report of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, the Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that the report had not been adopted at the Committee’s meeting in November 2014 due to a shortage of time. Based on legal advice that UNECE has received from New York, the report should be adopted by the Committee itself and with the members present, which cannot happen until the next meeting of the Committee in November 2015. However, the conclusions and recommendations that do not require the approval of EXCOM can be considered as having taken effect at the time of their adoption by the Committee. Those conclusions and recommendations that require the approval of EXCOM are not in force until EXCOM has approved them. The Executive Secretary thanked Mr. Keinhorst for his strong and decisive role in strengthening the work on sustainable energy. He emphasized to EXCOM that UNECE needs member States’ best experts and financial contributions to support the implementation of the work of the Committee.
7. To the Chair’s question on whether postponing the adoption of the report of the Committee until November 2015 was legal, the Executive Secretary replied in the affirmative.

8. The representative of the Russian Federation thanked Mr. Keinhorst for the substantive report on the main results of the work of the Committee over the previous year, as well as for his significant personal involvement to make the work more attractive to member States. He said the Committee provided beneficial expert dialogue on a wide range of energy cooperation issues, as attested to by the heightened attention paid recently by member States to the Committee's subsidiary bodies. He said the latter should work based on objective data, using a bottoms-up approach. He supported the extension of the work plan of the Expert Group on Resource Classification until the end of 2015 and the approval of the work plans of the Groups of Experts on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy for 2014-2015.

9. The representative of the European Union and its member States thanked the CSE and its Chair for their hard work in the past years on formulating a programme of work for the subprogramme and the work plans of the Groups of Experts, which seek to contribute in a concrete way to the reduction of greenhouse gases and the carbon footprint of the energy sector in the UNECE region. She emphasized the importance of producing measures and technologies to improve renewable energy and energy efficiency performance. She stated that the meeting of the Committee had been very positive even though the report could not be adopted due to shortage of time and that the EU and its member States accepted the conclusions and recommendations included in the final CSE report that will be formally adopted at the next CSE session, as well as the three decisions put before EXCOM. She reiterated the long-standing position of the EU and its Member States that the Gas Centre should be fully integrated into the Group of Experts on Gas and that the Gas industry should not be allowed to meet under UN flag, when not within the framework of the Group of Experts. She added that, as the Gas Centre is an extrabudgetary project and not a subsidiary body of the Committee, any foreseen expenditures should be submitted to EXCOM as a project proposal for approval.

10. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Acting Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy for the clear and comprehensive report, and that EXCOM appreciates being informed about the activities and achievements of the Committee and being kept aware of the latest developments, issues of concern and future work directions. The Chair also concluded that EXCOM approves i) the extension of the 2013–2014 Work Plan of the Expert Group on Resource Classification until the end of 2015, as contained in document ECE/EX/2015/L.3; ii) the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency for 2014–2015 as contained in document ECE/EX/2015/L.4; and iii) the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2014–2015, as contained in ECE/EX/2015/L.5.

Item 5 - Decisions on matters relating to trade and economic cooperation (for approval)

- a. Establishment and terms of reference of the ECE Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (replacing the former Committee on Trade);
- b. United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business;
- c. Renaming the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration as the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships and revising its terms of reference.

11. The Chair stated that he was very pleased to be in a position to finalize these decisions which had been pending for a long time. He thanked the delegations of the Russian Federation, Belarus, the United States and the European Union and its member States for their role in crafting these decisions.

12. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed satisfaction that the joint efforts of member States had found a mutually beneficial approach on trade and economic cooperation and integration issues. He also thanked the Chair for his effective mediation and the delegates of the European Union and its member States, the United States and Belarus for their constructive collaboration and readiness to compromise on the draft terms of reference of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards. He stressed the importance of maintaining an intergovernmental expert organ in ECE to lead the implementation of the subprogramme on trade in the interest of all member States. He stated his belief that the activities of this Steering Committee and the Committee on

Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships will facilitate the implementation of the main goal of ECE which is economic integration. He supported the need to evaluate the work of UN/CEFACT, its results of the past two years and the effectiveness of the functioning of its structures, by the end of 2015.

13. The representative of Belarus expressed his appreciation for the approval of the establishment and terms of reference of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and said this was an optimal approach to carrying out the work on strengthening trade facilitation and standards in the interest of all member States.

14. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approved: i) the establishment and terms of reference of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (replacing the former Committee on Trade); ii) the decision on matters relating to United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business; and iii) the renaming of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration (as the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships) and its revised terms of reference as contained in ECE/EX/2015/L.6, ECE/EX/2015/L.7 and ECE/EX/2015/L.8 respectively.

15. The representative of the European Union and its member States underlined their position that a steering committee is not a sectoral committee but a subsidiary body with a more limited mandate and a limited annual meeting of, at most, one and a half day, a maximum to be strictly respected; that the Steering Committee must work with and for all member States, and not for subregional groups; and that UN/CEFACT should continue to work under the guidance of EXCOM as provided in Commission decision A(65) even if in 2015 EXCOM decides that UN/CEFACT reports can also be shared with the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards. She added that there must be increased synergy in ECE's work on trade and innovation to help countries translate their innovative ideas into local productivity and export capacity, and thus into jobs and growth, and that the Steering Committee should work in full synergy with Teams of Specialists on Innovation and on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and under the guidance of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships.

16. The delegate of the Russian Federation stated that the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards has the features of a sectoral committee in that it reports to EXCOM, receives reports from Working Party 6 and Working Party 7 and has its own programme of work.

17. The Chair, having listened to these different interpretations, reiterated his conclusion that EXCOM approves the three decisions put before it exactly as they were formulated.

Item 6 - Decisions on matters relating to the Working Group on Ageing: Programme of work of the Working Group on Ageing for 2014-2015 (for approval)

18. The Chair recalled that, at the previous meeting of EXCOM, the representative of the Russian Federation had requested that General Assembly (GA) Resolution 67/139 and Commission on Social Development (CSD) Resolution 47/3 be removed from the list of legislative mandates of the programme of work of the Working Group on Ageing for 2014-2015. The Chair also recalled that, at the previous meeting of EXCOM, the expected accomplishment of cluster 2 of the programme of work had been revised as follows: "Improved national and international knowledge base for policymaking on issues related to intergenerational and gender relations".

19. The Executive Secretary stated that the above-mentioned resolutions had not yet been removed from the programme of work as there had been no agreement yet among member States on this matter but they would of course be removed if this was the wish of member States. He also explained that the secretariat had taken the opportunity to update the list of legislative mandates, which had not been revised for two years. As a result, General Assembly Resolution 68/134 which specifically mentions the Regional Commissions in the context of the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing,

as well as ECOSOC Resolutions 2011/28 and 2013/29 which had been formally adopted by the Commission on Social Development, had been added to the list of legislative mandates. He informed member States that ECE/EX/2011/L.6 had been deleted from the list.

20. The representative of the European Union and its member States supported the changes proposed by the secretariat.

21. The representative of Austria opposed the removal of GA resolution 67/139 and CSD resolution 47/3 on the grounds that these refer to the Regional Commissions or the work on the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) within the regions.

22. The delegate of the Russian Federation asked the Austrian delegate to clarify her position, stating that the Commission on Social Development was not in a position to give mandates to Regional Commissions which receive their mandates from ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

23. The delegate of Austria explained that the original mandate of ECE to work on issues relating to ageing came from ECOSOC, not from the Commission on Social Development. The basis of this mandate from ECOSOC can be found in paragraph 128 of the MIPAA, which states: "The United Nations regional commissions have responsibility for translating the International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, into their regional action plans. They should also assist, upon request, national institutions in implementation and monitoring of their actions on ageing." She also explained that, as a follow-up of the first review that took place in 2007, it was decided to task all Regional Commissions to support the implementation and review of the MIPAA. With respect to the Russian Federation's concern on the human rights aspect of these resolutions, she referred to Mr. Kofi Annan's foreword to the MIPAA, which states that the MIPAA represents the first time that Governments agreed to link questions of ageing to other frameworks for social and economic development and human rights. She stated that the work of the Working Group on Ageing and ECE's Population Unit was thus linked to social and economic issues and also to human rights issues. Therefore, she believed that the resolutions in question should remain in the programme of work.

24. The Executive Secretary explained that GA resolution 67/139 had originally been included in the list of legislative mandates because it invited regional commissions to make contributions to the work entrusted to the Working Group on Ageing, and that CSD resolution 47/3 had been included because it recommended that Member States work with the regional commissions to exchange best practices and undertake a range of awareness-raising activities. He reiterated that these resolutions would be removed from the programme of work if member States desired it.

25. The representative of the Russian Federation explained that, while both the regional commissions and the Commission on Social Development had their own mandates for implementing MIPAA, there were no direct relations between the two bodies. With regard to GA resolution 67/139, he said that it was not, in principle, a major resolution on the implementation of MIPAA. It is a resolution on other issues related to human rights bodies, and therefore there seemed to be no relation to ECE. He said that maintaining this resolution in the list of legislative mandates would be pushing ECE to work on human rights, which is outside its current core mandate of economic integration in the pan-European region.

26. The Austrian delegation explained that she would not oppose the removal of GA 67/139 as ECE could still contribute to the work of the Working Group on Ageing in New York within its mandate on ageing without specific reference to GA 67/139. However, she opposed deleting CSD resolution 47/3 as this had already been included in the Strategic Framework for 2014-2015 which had been agreed upon in New York.

27. The Chair proposed removing GA resolution 67/139, but not CSD resolution 47/3, from the programme of work.

28. The delegate of the Russian Federation opined that removing both resolutions would not in any way reduce ECE's mandate for implementing the MIPAA. Including them, however, could lead to a reduction of clarity in the future direction of work.

29. The Austrian delegate reiterated that CSD resolution 47/3 should not be removed as it has already been included for a long time in the Strategic Framework for 2014-2015 which had been agreed upon in New York.

30. The delegate of the Netherlands recalled that, at its meeting of 14 November 2014 where the issue of legislative mandates had been discussed under agenda item 6, EXCOM had concluded that the programmes of work of ECE subprogrammes should refer to the legislative mandates in the Strategic Framework, and that the secretariat would provide to EXCOM a list of the relevant legislative mandates to inform the preparation of the next Strategic Framework. He then suggested that EXCOM discuss the legislative mandates in the future and for now, implement the agreement from the 14 November EXCOM meeting and not remove from the programme of work the references to those legislative mandates which are already in the agreed Strategic Framework.

31. The Executive Secretary explained that CSD resolution 47/3 had already been included in the 2012-2013 programme of work of the Working Group on Ageing which EXCOM had approved. He also confirmed that the secretariat would indeed provide to EXCOM the list of legislative mandates.

32. The Chair proposed removing GA resolution 67/139 from the programme of work, keeping CSD resolution 47/3 in the programme of work and also specifying in the conclusions of the 75th meeting of EXCOM that EXCOM awaited a document on future legislative mandates from the secretariat.

33. The representative of the Russian Federation recalled that the proposed discussion on legislative mandates had first arisen in the context of renewing the mandates of the Committee on Sustainable Energy. He stated that, although in that situation some of the mandates had been removed from the programme of work of Sustainable Energy, he was now ready to compromise by agreeing to keep CSD resolution 47/3 in the programme of work of the Working Group on Ageing with the understanding that the discussion on the principles of reflecting legislative mandates in programmes of work will be held in the near future so that lengthy discussions could be avoided in the future.

34. The Chair concluded that GA resolution 67/139 would be removed from the programme of work and that CSD 47/3 would be kept in, and that the programme of work of the Working Group on Ageing under the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2014-2015 as contained in ECE/EX/2015/L.9 was approved after taking into account the above-mentioned amendments. He also concluded that the secretariat will provide EXCOM with the list of legislative mandates so that the structural discussion on the topic can be held at the meeting of EXCOM in May 2015.

INFORMAL SEGMENT

Item 7 – Important new developments: briefing by the Executive Secretary

35. The Executive Secretary updated EXCOM on major developments since the last meeting:

- 12 & 16 January, Brussels, meetings at the European Commission: Mr. Bach held bilateral meetings with the European Commissioners for International Cooperation and Development, Transport and Environment, and the heads of cabinet of the Commissioners for Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations and for Trade. He had very fruitful discussions on extending ECE's already excellent collaboration with the European Union.

- 19 January, Geneva, meeting with the International Trade Centre (ITC): Mr. Bach met the Executive Director of ITC to discuss deepening cooperation on trade facilitation issues. ITC and ECE, together with UNCTAD, will shortly sign an MoU to collaborate on providing effective capacity-building, technical assistance, outreach and support to member States.
- 20 January, Geneva, second session of the Group of Experts on Gas: Sustainable management of natural gas was the principal theme of the session. Presented during the session were best practice guidance on reducing gas leaks along the gas value chain, the role of natural gas in increasing the uptake of renewables, liquefied natural gas and removing barriers to the use of natural gas as a transportation fuel.
- 22 January, Geneva, meeting with the International Standards Organization (ISO). UNECE and ISO will be meeting to explore different business models concerning the use and dissemination of UN/CEFACT standards by ISO and vice versa.
- 25-26 January, official visit to Albania: Mr. Bach was the keynote speaker at the National Conference “Albanian National Strategy for Development and Integration 2014-2020: Trade and Agricultural Development”. Albania is a key beneficiary of UNECE’s trade facilitation work. In this framework, UNECE and UNCTAD together support Albania’s efforts to improve regulatory frameworks, trade facilitation and investment promotion, and UNECE will shortly undertake a study of the regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the country. Mr. Bach also held bilaterals with the Albanian Ministers of Economy, Environment, and Agriculture to discuss strengthening cooperation on these issues.
- 9 February, Geneva, meeting with Executive Secretary of UNFCCC: Mr. Bach met Ms. Figueres regarding Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and the importance of the UNECE recommendations on CCS as part of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) which are to be submitted soon. Ms. Figueres praised the first-ever Recommendations on Climate Change-Related Statistics which ECE elaborated with significant contributions from UNFCCC. She also emphasized the importance of the UN Framework Classification for Energy and Mineral Resources, which is being expanded to cover renewable energy and CCS. Also discussed were ECE’s work on standards for energy efficiency and renewable energy, especially energy efficiency standards for buildings; and its close relationship with the work of the Air Convention on black carbon and methane.
- TIR Convention: Mr. Bach informed EXCOM that the ITC Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport had taken place the previous week. He pointed out that the implementation of the TIR System has been experiencing serious challenges in the Russian Federation since July 2013 and in Ukraine since October 2014. The TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) as well as the Administrative Committee of the TIR Convention (AC.2) have found breaches in the implementation of the Convention in both countries. Both bodies have indicated that the specific measures introduced by the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation, as well as the measures introduced by the Customs Service of Ukraine in reaction to the measures of the Russian FCS, are in contradiction to the TIR Convention. Their removal is entirely the responsibility of these two countries and their competent authorities. Despite active engagement of the Contracting Parties, the relevant bodies of the Convention (TIRExB and AC.2), and the TIR secretariat, the resolution of the persistent situation, does not appear to be imminent and the negative effect on other Contracting Parties is substantial. This protracted "crisis-situation" may discourage further geographical expansion of the TIR Convention to countries which are about to accede or seriously considering accession to the Convention. Furthermore, it has begun to have a negative impact on the efficiency of the intergovernmental fora, namely, W.P.30, and AC.2, as the TIR Administrative Committee that took place in the previous week could not complete all the items on its agenda. Mr. Bach stated that he brought this matter to EXCOM’s attention as it was in the joint interest of all to overcome the current

situation and see to it that the use of the TIR Carnet as a border-crossing facilitation tool is restored across the whole region, to speed up the work on amendments aimed at further improving the functioning of the Convention, including the use of e-TIR, and to enable a growing number of countries to benefit from this facilitation tool. He also pointed out that, in the past one and a half year of tension due to the non-acceptance of the TIR Carnet, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation had been very helpful and he counted on their continued support in solving this issue.

- Gas Centre: Mr. Bach informed EXCOM about the meeting of the Executive Board of the Gas Centre in January. The Gas Centre was launched in 1994. A number of its tasks have already been achieved. Now, with the energy activities having been reconfigured by member States, the Gas Centre needs to be reinvented as a modern public-private partnership engagement for a multi-stakeholder dialogue forum in line with the global agenda where such dialogues are being emphasized as a means of implementing the global agenda on sustainable energy. He emphasized that the Gas Centre is an extrabudgetary project, as also stipulated by Commission decision A(65), and that efforts are being made to bring together the gas industry in support of the work, bearing in mind that natural gas is a vital ingredient in the future energy mix. He reported that there would be no additions to the Gas Centre in terms of funding in 2015. He further informed EXCOM that the meeting of the Executive Board of the Gas Centre had a very good attendance. The remaining activities for 2015 were agreed upon and, based on the decisions of the Gas Centre representatives, every effort will be made to strengthen and reinvent the UNECE Gas Centre. Once the Gas Centre's role in the future is clear, the secretariat would submit to EXCOM in early 2016 an extrabudgetary project proposal to seek EXCOM's approval and guidance on how the Gas Centre should move forward.

- Conning Asset Management: Mr. Bach informed EXCOM of a situation that he had inherited when he entered office regarding Conning Asset Management and which needed to be brought to EXCOM's attention due to a potential financial exposure. Conning was hired under the FEEI project to design and oversee the launch of an investment fund. Unfortunately all activity under FEEI has been in abeyance since the donors suspended disbursements in 2010. There has been no success in convincing EBRD or a potential replacement to be the co-implimenting agency ensuring that the fund design meets best international practice. There is a risk that Conning will pursue legal action to resolve the impasse. The amount in question is \$500 000. Mr. Bach further reported that he has approached UNEP and the Global Environment Facility to persuade them to resume disbursements in order to be able to conclude work under this contract. He has also taken steps to clarify all legal and contractual issues and expects this to be done before June. He stressed that the idea of an investment fund was important, that such innovative funding mechanisms are needed to successfully tackle climate change and that the 12 countries benefitting from the activities until now have greatly appreciated them and that an evaluation concluded that the overall approach was successful.

- ECE budget for 2016-2017: Mr. Bach informed EXCOM that the General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to further reduce the budget. This will affect the entire secretariat. ECE will have to reduce its budget by an additional US \$317,600. Mr. Bach has decided to achieve this reduction through the abolishment of a general service level post in the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES), which will become vacant due to retirement. This will ensure minimal impact on staff as well as the work of subprogrammes. To ensure that OES can still perform its tasks, it will review and re-organize its work over the coming months. Mr. Bach also intends to engage more in fundraising.

- In relation to the issue of limited resources and efficiency, Mr. Bach made two requests to member States. The first is to ease the workload of the secretariat servicing the EXCOM. He proposed that the format of the chairman's conclusions from the meetings of EXCOM be simplified as the current format required too much drafting time and too many details that led to

lengthy contestations. The second is a request that the permanent missions of member States keep the secretariat updated on changes in their government so that the secretariat can avoid sending letters to incorrect addresses.

- **Regional Consultation on Financing for Development:** Mr. Bach informed EXCOM that this one-day consultation is now scheduled to take place on 23 March 2015, in the Palais des Nations. The meeting will be chaired by Ambassador Michael Gerber, the Swiss Special Envoy for the post-2015 development agenda, who is also involved in the financing for development negotiations. An informal exchange of views with member States on the substance and format of the meeting took place on 3 February, and their comments and suggestions were taken into account in the draft outline of the agenda. The meeting will be jointly organized by UNECE and the Regional undg Team for Europe and Central Asia, following the successful model of the Regional Consultation on Monitoring and Accountability in September 2014. UNDP is providing some financial support for this meeting and the relevant EXCOM template has been prepared and can be viewed on the Project Management Tool. Invitation letters with a draft outline of the agenda will be sent out to member States via the Geneva Missions very shortly. Possible speakers were being contacted. Mr. Bach asked EXCOM to follow up in the capitals to ensure expert participation.

36. The Executive Secretary, in response to a question by the delegate of the Russian Federation, affirmed that the budget cuts applied uniformly across the secretariat, including all the Regional Commissions.

37. The representative of Spain said that, given the budget cuts, it would be interesting to look at practices in other agencies bringing efficiencies and savings and offered his help in sharing such best practices with ECE.

38. Responding to the statement of the Spanish delegate, the Executive Secretary said that many different methods for increasing efficiency were being considered. He specified that some of the budget cuts were due to expected savings from the implementation of UMOJA which will be deployed in ECE in December 2015.

39. Regarding the Gas Centre, the representative of the United States said that his delegation supports the multi-stakeholder approach and its application across all of ECE's work. He said that whether or not the Gas Centre takes a new direction, its activities should be integrated with the other work of the Energy Division.

40. The Executive Secretary affirmed that the purpose of reinventing the Gas Centre was to develop a model for a multi-stakeholder dialogue forum that could be applied in other areas of work in ECE. The proposed partnership facility which had been sketched out in ECE's first draft of the outcome of the Commission session was an attempt to strengthen this multi-stakeholder dialogue in a more coherent and comprehensive manner.

Item 8 - Preparations for the Commission session

41. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that all the pre-session documents for the Commission session, with the exception of the draft outcome document which is being worked on by member States, are completed and available on ECE's website.

42. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that over 30 submissions had already been received for the 'Ideas for change' competition from countries such as Armenia, Belarus, Croatia, Denmark, France, Georgia, Israel, Italy, Norway, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, and Uzbekistan. The jury has also been established and will be led by the Executive Secretary. The CVs of the entire jury are available on ECE's website.

43. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that confirmations are gradually being received from invited panellists, and replacements being found for those invitees that are unable to attend.

44. The representative of the Netherlands briefed EXCOM about the EXCOM informal consultation that had taken place on 30 January regarding the draft outcome document for the Commission session. The consultation discussed the nature and structure of the document, its intended audience and who will take the lead in drafting. The delegates reached the following understanding:

a. All agreed to work on a political statement as the first document. This document will be negotiated by the member States. It should be short and punchy and should serve as input for: 1) the post-2015 process, 2) the ECOSOC annual ministerial review and 3) the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

b. The delegates of the Russian Federation, the United States and the European Union and its member States volunteered to produce a first draft that would be discussed at the next informal consultation. These delegations have met meanwhile and the result of their first discussions will serve as input for the next open-ended informal which will take place on 13 February in the Palais.

c. The second document, the so-called programmatic one, a sort of roadmap, could be either future-oriented and forward-looking or showcasing results achieved. Member States wished to first discuss the political statement before deciding whether this second document will be needed, what it should look like and who will take the lead in drafting it.

d. A Commission decision A(66) was a possible third document, depending on the political statement and the possible second document and whether there is a need to obtain a mandate for any new work that is not covered by Commission decision A(65). The secretariat informed that there was room for only one pre-session document for this matter and therefore it should contain the draft political statement and the possible programmatic document and draft decision A(66) as applicable. The summaries of the discussions will be part of the meeting report and EXCOM did not need to deal with these at this time.

Item 9 - Extrabudgetary projects

45. The Chair presented EXCOM with an extrabudgetary project (informal document 2015/4) on improving the capacity of governmental trade control agencies in Albania to implement Single Window, for approval.

46. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the above-mentioned extrabudgetary project as contained in informal document 2015/4.

47. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about three extrabudgetary projects that do not require EXCOM approval as they will be undertaken as part of the already approved programmes of work of the ECE subprogrammes. He invited member States to consult the Project Monitoring Tool for the project templates. The three projects are as follows:

a. Environmental Performance Review Programme: This project is part of the approved 2014-2015 programme of work of the Environment subprogramme. The objective of the project is to assess the efforts of four interested countries to reduce their overall pollution burden and to manage their natural resources in environmentally friendly way. The project is based on

requests from interested countries, in particular Belarus, and will require estimated extrabudgetary resources of \$600,000 that will be contributed by Austria, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.

b. Strengthening the implementation of the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia: This project aims to raise awareness about the negative effects of air pollution, build national capacity to implement agreements, provide policy advice on legislation adjustment and improve access to relevant information in this region in order to strengthen the implementation and ratification of the Air Convention. The project is part of the Convention's work plan and will require estimated extrabudgetary resources of EUR 900,000 that will be provided by the European Union.

c. SPECA Transport and Border Crossing Project Working Group: The objective of the Working Group is to promote the development of effective transit transport systems in the SPECA region and to implement the Almaty and Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries. The activities of the Working Group are an integral part of the SPECA cooperation work programme and will require estimated extrabudgetary resources of \$20,000 that will be provided by Kazakhstan.

48. The Executive Secretary also informed EXCOM that UNDP would provide some funding for the Regional Consultation on Financing for Development and that the relevant template would be available for viewing on the Project Management Tool.

49. The Chair thanked the Executive Secretary for the information on the new funds received in relation to three other existing extrabudgetary projects.

50. The Chair closed the meeting.
