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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Committee on Environmental Policy

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Item 8 (c) of the provisional agenda

**Programme of work of the Environment subprogramme:  
performance assessment of the Environment subprogramme  
in 2014–2015 and performance plan for 2016–2017**

## **Biennial performance report of the Environment subprogramme for 2014–2015**

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

#### *Summary*

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environment and Development (CED) agreed at its last session in October 2014 to continue with the biennial performance assessment of the Environment subprogramme for another cycle, at least, and approved the biennial performance plan of the Environment subprogramme for 2014–2015 (ECE/CEP/2014/4).

The present document provides the biennial performance report of the Environment subprogramme for 2014–2015. It is structured in accordance with the clusters grouping the Environment subprogramme's activities.

CEP will be invited to consider the document at its twenty-first session for approval.

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\* This document was not formally edited.



## Introduction

1. The Environment subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has four overarching expected accomplishments in the strategic framework for 2014–2015 (A/67/6 (Prog. 17)). It will report on their implementation to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

2. The activities in the Environment subprogramme for the biennium 2014–2015 are grouped into clusters of activities with their own expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement, on which the subprogramme reports to the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP), as set out below. The “actual 2014–2015” performance measures are generally presented as at 31 July 2015, given that this document was prepared before the end of the biennium under reporting.

## Cluster 1

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

#### *Expected accomplishment*

Improved response to environmental challenges in the ECE region by ECE constituencies

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

3. Further progress was made in ensuring effective response to environmental challenges in the ECE region. The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) was opened for accession to any United Nations Member State, through the entry into force of its first amendment. This opening fills a gap in international law and further advances environmental impact assessment as an important tool for sustainable development. The Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) adopted a revised list of chemical substances, adding 13 categories of hazardous substances and 32 chemicals with pertinent health and environmental effects.

4. In addition, CEP adopted the targets and performance indicators for measuring progress in developing the Shared Environmental Information system (SEIS) across the pan-European region. Demand-driven advisory services were provided: to Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on the sustainable use of transboundary natural resources; and to Turkmenistan on promoting its accession to the Industrial Accidents Convention and Protocol on Water and Health.

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

5. Availability of political will and active engagement of countries in the ratification of the amendments to the Espoo Convention and the Industrial Accidents Convention constitute major challenges for achieving the above-mentioned results. Further efforts should be undertaken by countries to improve the capacity for implementation of the adopted revised list of chemical substances and of SEIS targets and performance indicators.

#### *Indicator of achievement*

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

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<sup>1</sup> This cluster includes outputs/activities from all other clusters, as appropriate. They may relate to the follow up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference).

*Performance measures*

2010–2011: N/A

2012–2013: 2 measures

Target 2014–2015: 4 measures

Actual 2014–2015 (as of 31 July 2015): 3 measures

*Indicator of achievement*

Number of ECE constituencies to which technical assistance and/or advisory services were provided

*Performance measures:*

2010–2011: N/A

2012–2013: 2 constituencies

Target 2014–2015: 4 constituencies

Actual 2014–2015 (as of 31 July 2015): 3 constituencies

## **Cluster 2**

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

*Expected accomplishment*

Successful implementation of the reform of the Environment for Europe (EfE) process

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

6. Pursuant to the provisions of the reform plan of the EfE process, during the period 2014–2015 CEP, as the body responsible for the preparatory process of the EfE ministerial conferences, focused its work on organizing the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference to be held in Batumi, Georgia from 8 to 10 June 2016.

7. CEP decided on the two themes for the Batumi Ministerial Conference: greening the economy in the pan-European region; and improving air quality for a better environment and human health. In accordance with the CEP mandate the CEP Bureau, with support from secretariat and in consultation with relevant partners, worked on advancing the preparation for the Conference, including preparing the drafts of the two thematic documents, the draft elements for the pan-European strategic framework for greening the economy, the draft elements for the ministerial declaration, the draft agenda for the Conference and the Conference communication plan. CEP will be continuing the preparatory work for the Conference at its twenty-first session in October 2015.

*Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

8. Lessons learned from the organization of the EfE mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes were included in the document ECE/CEP/2014/10 prepared for the twentieth session of CEP. The document was welcomed by CEP, which agreed to take into account the lessons learned and challenges identified during the organization of the next mid-term review, i.e., of the Batumi Ministerial Conference main outcomes. Lessons learned from the organization of the Batumi Ministerial Conference will be assessed after the Conference, e.g. by the twenty-second session of CEP in December 2016.

*Indicator of achievement*

Consensus reached by member States on the activities under the EfE process

*Performance measures*

2010–2011: Consensus was reached on the organization and outcomes of the Seventh EfE Ministerial Conference (Astana, September 2011)

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

Target 2014–2015: Consensus to be reached on the follow-up to the mid-term review and preparing the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference

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

### **Cluster 3**

## **Education for sustainable development**

*Expected accomplishment*

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

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

9. The ECE Strategy for ESD is the regional implementation pillar of the United Nations Decade of ESD (DESD). While ECE member States stressed their dedication to continue working on implementing all aspects of the Strategy, they adopted three priority action areas for its phase III of implementation (2011–2015): (a) to promote an ESD school plan in every school by 2015; (b) to reorient technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and green economies; and (c) to incorporate ESD into teacher education. In 2013, an ongoing electronic working group on the priority action areas was established by the Steering Committee to support implementation.

10. The Steering Committee on ESD has been working on assessing the progress made in the implementation of the Strategy at the national/State level during implementation phase III based on the national implementation reports submitted by 38 countries. The assessment of phase III is of particular importance, since it marks the end of the 10-year implementation process for the Strategy. The third progress report under preparation during 2015 — The Final Monitoring and Evaluation Report — will provide an opportunity to review and compare progress made since the previous two reports, from 2007 and 2010, and is vital for setting future priorities in the implementation of ESD. The results will be submitted to the High-Level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministers to be held in June 2016 in the framework of the Batumi Ministerial Conference. The publication “10 years of the ECE Strategy for ESD” is also planned to be prepared.

11. Capacity-building activities included a national workshop held in Kyrgyzstan (30 March–1 April 2015), organized in partnership with the Government of Kyrgyzstan, the Regional Centres of Expertise for ESD in Kyrgyzstan and in Lithuania and the United Nations University in Japan, with the financial support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation.

12. ECE participated in the World Conference on ESD in Japan (10–12 November 2014) prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) by organizing a workshop on monitoring and evaluation during DESD and a side event “Driving ESD through regional policy frameworks”. ECE also participated in the first consultation meeting between the UNESCO secretariat and ESD Partners to discuss

the future activities of the Partner Networks of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, which was launched at the World Conference on Education (Paris, 26–27 May 2015).

*Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

13. The following key challenges in implementing ESD in the ECE region were identified: the need for sustained leadership and political will among key decision-makers; securing structural reform of education systems, including embedding ESD in mainstream budgets; preparing educators; strengthening mechanisms for cooperation and engagement across a broader cross-section of stakeholders; and addressing the need for more ESD research, monitoring and evaluation.

14. These various obstacles suggest that an overarching challenge, although diminishing, continues to be securing recognition that ESD lies at the heart of the purpose of education: to prepare the learner with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand, respond and prosper in the face of the economic, social and environmental challenges of today's world.

15. The lack of dedicated resources (financial, staffing, etc.) remained an obstacle to ESD implementation at the national level but also at the level of the Steering Committee, where there are inadequate resources for the expected secretariat services.

16. The post-2015 implementation framework for the ECE Strategy for ESD will be finalized for the eleventh meeting of the Steering Committee, scheduled for 15–16 February 2016.

*Indicator of achievement*

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

*Performance measures*

2010–2011: 36 countries

2012–2013: 42 countries

Target 2014–2015: 40 countries

Actual 2014–2015 (as of 31 July 2015): 38 countries<sup>2</sup>

## **Cluster 4 Transport, health and environment**

*Expected accomplishment*

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

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

17. In 2014, the Fourth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment, adopted the Paris Declaration, “City in Motion: People First!”, which carried forward the four priority goals from the 2009 Amsterdam Declaration and added a fifth “to integrate

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<sup>2</sup> The number reflects only the formal national implementation reports submitted by the member States in the framework of the third national implementation reporting cycle. In addition, 20 countries submitted their reports for the ninth meeting of the Steering Committee on ESD in April 2014.

transport, health and environmental objectives into urban and spatial planning policies”. The participants in the meeting decided to initiate the development of a pan-European Master Plan for Cycling Promotion and launch the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) Academy, a new implementation mechanism linking science, policy and practice and building on experience already gained. Four new publications were launched at the meeting: “Developing National, Transport, Health and Environment Action Plans”; “From Amsterdam to Paris and Beyond”; “Jobs in Green and Healthy Transport” and “Signs and Signals for Cyclists and Pedestrians”.

18. The Steering Committee of THE PEP held its twelfth session in November 2014. The thirteenth session is scheduled to take place in November 2015. THE PEP 2014 Symposium on the new Goal 5 to integrate transport, health and environmental objectives into urban and spatial planning policies was held back to back with the Steering Committee session.

19. THE PEP continued to share experiences in sustainable urban transport in the ECE region through its relay race series. The baton of the relay race was handed over from Almaty (Kazakhstan) to Kaunas (Lithuania) for the workshop on “Improvement of Sustainable Urban Mobility for Better Health and Environment: Move to Improve”, which was held in September 2014. The workshop was attended by 196 participants from the Lithuanian environmental, health and transport sectors at the national and local levels. Representatives from three sectors of the Municipality of Kaunas adopted a number of commitments, containing specific measures to help achieve sustainable and healthy mobility and transport by 2023. Also at the workshop, a 5.5 kilometre long cycling path was launched. The city will extend its cycling paths from 65 to 130 kilometres. The next relay race workshop will be held in Irkutsk, Russian Federation in September 2015.

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

20. Sufficient extrabudgetary funds are not available to maximize the capabilities of THE PEP Clearing House, a portal for intersectoral information research, and to allow it to play a pivotal role in making the process visible. In fact, no resources could be made available for a Clearing House content manager and the web portal faces significant technical problems. Particular efforts are required so that more countries and organizations shoulder the extrabudgetary assistance for THE PEP activities, and thus ensure the migration of the Clearing House from an existing search platform to a modern content management systems.

#### *Indicator of achievement*

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

#### *Performance measures*

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

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

Target 2014–2015: Participation of 60 countries and 20 IGOs and NGOs in 6 substantive meetings, including 4 capacity-building workshops and 2 sessions of THE PEP Steering Committee

Actual 2014–2015(as of 31 July 2015):<sup>3</sup> Participation of 58 countries and 23 IGOs and NGOs in 3 substantive meetings, including 1 capacity-building workshop, 1 high-level meeting and 1 session of THE PEP Steering Committee

## **Cluster 5**

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

#### *Expected accomplishment*

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

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

21. In 2014–2015 the secretariat of the Air Convention started the implementation of an assistance programme aimed at building capacity and raising awareness among the countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. It organized workshops on air pollutant emission inventories and data reporting in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan. In addition, it organized the analysis of the national air quality assessment and management policies and legislation in Uzbekistan, identifying gaps with respect to the Convention's requirements and providing recommendations on further steps towards ratification of the Convention and its key protocols.

22. The secretariat continued supporting the participation of the target countries in the activities under the Convention and raising awareness among decision-makers in Central Asia of negative effects of air pollution. The interim results of the implementation of this programme include the accession by Armenia to the Protocol on Long-term Financing of the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP), improved exchange of information and participation of countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and improved reporting under the Convention by a number of Parties.

23. The work under the Convention continued to focus on updating, revising and elaborating relevant guidance documents. For instance, the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen has completed the revision of the ECE Framework Code for Good Agricultural Practice for Reducing Ammonia Emissions (ECE/EB.AIR/129) to assist Parties in meeting their obligations under the amended Gothenburg Protocol by taking practical measures to reduce ammonia emissions at the farm level. To tackle nitrogen pollution on a wider scale, cooperation is being strengthened with relevant networks and organizations operating globally. As such, ECE will be contributing with its work in the air and water areas to the Global Environment Facility project on "Targeted Research for improving understanding of the Global Nitrogen Cycle towards the establishment of an International Nitrogen Management System".

<sup>3</sup> The figures include the Fourth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment in April 2014, the twelfth meeting of THE PEP Steering Committee in November 2014 and the Kaunas (Lithuania) workshop in September 2014. The figure for the participating countries is lower than the target for 2014–2015 because the thirteenth meeting of THE PEP Steering Committee has yet to take place (scheduled for November 2015). Also, more participants are expected to register for the Irkutsk (Russian Federation) workshop.

24. The Long-term Strategy for the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/106/Add.1, decision 2010/18, annex), adopted in 2010, calls for strengthened outreach activities with a number of relevant conventions and other international bodies dealing with air pollution issues. In 2014–2015, cooperation with the Arctic Council was initiated on the technical level, including on monitoring, modelling and data management, specifically regarding black carbon. Cooperation on short-lived climate pollutants more generally has been initiated with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. Ongoing cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) has been further intensified, through the Air Convention-WHO Joint Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution, and organizing a United Nations system side-event on health at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Further technical cooperation on persistent organic pollutants has been fostered with the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

*Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

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

(a) Parties continue to critically assess the current structure of the Convention's subsidiary bodies, groups and task forces, and the number and frequency of meetings, to streamline and rationalize operations and to make them more transparent. The aim will be to prioritize the work by the bodies, to find ways for more effective use of resources by the Executive Body, the subsidiary bodies and technical bodies/expert groups, to reduce the bulk of official documents and to increase the operational efficiency of the main subsidiary body meetings. As of 2015, the two scientific bodies of the Convention, the Steering Body to EMEP<sup>4</sup> and the Working Group on Effects, will hold joint sessions to ensure further integration of their work and to provide integrated input to the policy level;

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

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

*Indicators of achievement*

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

- (a) Number of reports on emission reduction commitments;
- (b) Intensity of capacity development in non-Parties to the Air Convention (average participant-days per non-Party);

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<sup>4</sup> The Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe.



(c) Number of ratifications of the three most recent Protocols to the Convention;

(d) Number of training sessions targeting implementation of the Convention and its protocols in the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia

*Performance measures*

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

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

Target 2014–2015: (a) 45; (b) 28; (c) 93; (d) 6

Actual 2014–2015 (as of 31 July 2015): (a) 45; (b) 28; (c) 92; (d) 6

## **Cluster 6**

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

*Expected accomplishment*

Increased ratification and strengthened implementation of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs)

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

26. Parties to the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs meeting in the Netherlands in 2014 adopted the Maastricht Declaration, calling for the protection of environmental activists and whistle-blowers, adequate product information and the use of social media in communicating environmental information.

27. The Convention's Compliance Committee provided a number of targeted recommendations to Parties, including on how to prevent prohibitive costs in environmental cases, and Parties adopted 14 new decisions on non-compliance by Parties.

28. A meeting gathering public authorities, international financial institutions, policymakers and NGOs helped to implement policy and practical measures to facilitate public participation in environmental decision-making across the region and beyond. The Maastricht Recommendations on Promoting Effective Public Participation in Decision-making in Environmental Matters were developed to assist officials to engage the public in complex decision-making in areas such as nuclear activities or climate-change policies, and will facilitate the participation of vulnerable groups, rural communities and the foreign public.

29. The Aarhus secretariat provided advisory support to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on its draft guidelines on ensuring public access to environmental information for private operators providing public services, such as waste management.

30. Two meetings gathering public authorities, judges, legislators, policymakers and NGOs helped countries promote national multi-stakeholder dialogues on access to justice. A case-law database was developed to share good practices and analytical material.

31. Parties to the Convention, NGOs, Aarhus Centres, regional environmental centres, businesses from across the region and international organizations also met to discuss

challenges and successful examples of accessing environmental information in the Digital Age.

32. The Convention continued to attract the attention of countries outside the ECE region. To that end, the secretariat provided advisory support to the development of a regional instrument on Principle 10 for Latin America and the Caribbean. Furthermore, the Convention's principles were promoted in such forums as the World Trade Organization, UNFCCC and the United Nations Environment Programme, so as to increase transparency and inclusiveness of international decision-making on environmental matters.

33. Parties to the Protocol submitted their first national implementation reports, providing insights into numerous common challenges, including integrating emission data from agriculture activities, transport and products — such as plastic bottles — into pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs). The work focused on enhancing cooperation among countries and relevant organizations in order to strengthen countries' capacities for developing PRTRs.

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

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

#### *Indicators of achievement*

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

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

#### *Performance measures*

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

2012–2013: (a) 4; (b) 3; (c) 46; (d) 33; (e) N/A<sup>5</sup>; (f) N/A

Target 2014–2015: (a) 4; (b) 3; (c) 47; (d) 34; (e) 46; (f) 32

Actual 2014–2015(as of 31 July 2015): (a) 6<sup>6</sup> (b) 2<sup>7</sup>; (c) 47; (d) 33; (e) 46; (f) 32

## **Cluster 7**

### **Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context**

#### *Expected accomplishment*

Increased ratification and strengthened implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA)

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

35. As at 31 July 2015, the Espoo Convention had 45 Parties and the Protocol on SEA 26. Since June 2014, the Protocol on SEA has been open to accession by Member States of the United Nations outside the ECE region without the prior approval of the Parties. August 2014 marked the entry into force of the amendment to the Espoo Convention opening also the Convention for countries from outside the region. Further ratifications were still needed for the amendment to have effect.

36. In June 2014, Parties to the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA, meeting in a joint session, discussed the implementation of two treaties, in particular in the energy sector, and considered the role of international financial institutions in promoting the application of the treaties beyond the ECE region. Parties adopted the first review on implementation of the Protocol and the fourth review of implementation of the Convention, covering the period 2010–2012. The latter demonstrated a continuous increase in the application of the Convention and, to a lesser extent, in the development of bilateral and multilateral agreements to support its implementation. The review on the Protocol indicated that a majority of Parties undertook SEAs for their plans and programmes. Parties mandated the preparation of four guidance documents and a learning video to further strengthen practical implementation of the treaties, including their application to nuclear energy-related activities. In addition, Parties clarified that certain upgrades to nuclear-related activities should also be subject to the provisions of the Convention.

37. In the biennium, extensive technical assistance and a number of capacity-building activities were carried out in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine with funding from the European Union (EU). These efforts, which focused mainly on enhancing the national legislation on SEA and its implementation, were expected to bring about further ratifications of the Protocol in the near future. In addition, legislative assistance was provided to Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation.

38. The Implementation Committee under the Convention and its Protocol followed up on decisions by the Meeting of the Parties further to Party-to-Party submissions and

<sup>5</sup> In 2012–2013 no national implementation reports were due. The next reporting cycle was in 2014 both for the Convention and the Protocol.

<sup>6</sup> Major capacity-building activities include the work of the task forces under the Convention. Many capacity-building activities are implemented by partners in the region.

<sup>7</sup> The number is lower than target because the major capacity building event, the Global Round Table on PRTRs, is to take place in November 2015. It is expected that participants from non-Parties will also attend this meeting.

Committee initiatives, started two new Committee initiatives and considered information from a number of NGOs (information gathering). The majority of the cases concerned the planned construction or extension of nuclear or other power plants.

*Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

39. The Protocol on SEA helps to lay the groundwork for sustainable development and to further green economy goals by ensuring that Parties integrate environmental, and health, considerations and public concerns into their plans and programmes and, to the extent possible, also into policies and legislation, at the earliest stages and highest levels of decision-making. Yet, at present, the capacity and the experience in implementing SEA is still limited in many countries of the ECE region, in particular in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The capacity-building efforts carried out thus far would benefit from follow-up activities to further enhance and sustain their positive impacts. The first reporting round under the Protocol also demonstrated a continuing need to improve awareness and capacity in the implementation of the Protocol by its current Parties, including to clarify the responsibilities of the authorities involved, for example, with respect to consultations and public participation. However, the capacity of the secretariat to respond to this important need for assistance is limited.

*Indicators of achievement*

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

- (a) Number of countries contributing to subregional cooperation under the Convention;
- (b) Number of Parties reporting on their implementation of the Convention;
- (c) Intensity of capacity development in non-Parties to the Espoo Convention (average participant-days per non-Party);
- (d) Intensity of capacity development in non-Parties to the Convention's Protocol on SEA (average participant-days per non-Party);
- (e) Number of ratifications of the Protocol on SEA
- (f) Number of ratifications, approvals or acceptances of the Espoo Convention
- (g) Number of ratifications, approvals or acceptances of the two amendments to the Espoo Convention

*Performance measures*

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

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

Target 2014–2015: (a) 30; (b) 44; (c) 33; (d) 12; (e) 29; (f) 46; (g) first amendment 26, second amendment 26

Actual 2014–2015(as of 31 July 2015): (a) 30; (b) 41; (c) 37; (d) 71; (e) 26; (f) 45; (g) first amendment 26, second amendment 26

## Cluster 8

### Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

#### *Expected accomplishment*

Increased ratification and strengthened implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and the Protocol on Water and Health

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

40. The biennium has seen a globalization of activities under the Water Convention. More than 100 countries have been involved in the Convention's activities, including 60 countries from outside the ECE region as well as its 41 Parties in the region. Several countries from outside the region have expressed their interest in acceding to the Convention and have started national processes to that end. The Convention's globalization has already borne fruit in terms of enhanced exchanges and stimulation of good practices.

41. Work under the Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health (26 Parties) has been characterized by an increase of activities that promote integration of policies and holistic approaches beyond the water sector: from the work on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, water and climate change, the benefits of cooperation and the National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), to the work on equitable access to water and sanitation. These activities, and the efforts towards integration that they promote, are very much in line with the spirit and vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

42. A methodology to assess the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins was developed. The methodology aims to provide a picture of the interdependencies across water, ecosystems, energy, food and other areas — such as climate change and biodiversity — in terms of uses, needs, economic and social benefits and potential synergies, as well as conflicts and trade-offs, and to identify possible policy responses that could alleviate conflicts related to the multiple uses of common resources. The methodology has already been applied in the Alazani/Ganikh, Sava and Syr Darya River Basins. Preliminary work has started in the Isonzo/Soča Basin and further basins, including outside the ECE region, will be assessed in the framework of the Water Convention's programme of work for 2016–2018.

43. Transboundary adaptation strategies were developed under pilot climate change projects implemented by ECE under the Environment and Security Initiative in the Neman and Dniester River Basins. These basins are sharing their experience in a global network of 14 basins working on climate change adaptation supported by ECE and the International Network of Basin Organizations. The collective experience of the global network was synthesized in the publication *Water and Climate Change Adaptation in Transboundary Basins: Lessons Learned and Good Practices* which was launched at the Seventh World Water Forum in April 2015.

44. A policy guidance note on the benefits of transboundary water cooperation has been developed through a series of workshops. The guidance note aims to help countries realize the economic, social and environmental benefits of cooperation as well as the benefits linked to peace and security. The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission has already started using the guidance note and several countries and basin organizations have expressed interest in applying the methodology.

45. The NPDs on IWRM and Water Supply and Sanitation under the EU Water Initiative have made an important contribution to the development of water sector reforms and the achievement of the water-related Millennium Development Goals in nearly all

countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The NPDs are successfully building on multiple ECE activities, not only activities under the Water Convention, but also activities under other ECE conventions, the ECE Environmental Performance Reviews programme and ECE projects and activities on the ground implemented by the Regional Adviser on the Environment.

46. Even if reporting was not originally foreseen in the Convention's text, the need for regular reviews of implementation has emerged in the current intersessional period and it is expected that the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session in November 2015 will adopt a decision introducing a reporting mechanism, starting with a pilot reporting exercise. Such reporting mechanism, coupled with the work of the Implementation Committee, established at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2012, will further strengthen the Convention's implementation.

47. Under the Protocol on Water and Health, use of the *Equitable Access Score-card* to assess whether everyone has the same ability to access water and sanitation, has raised awareness of this issue and prompted new initiatives. The Republic of Moldova conducted an equitable access self-assessment in 2014. Self-assessments are ongoing in Hungary and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

48. To respond to the difficulties faced by a number of Parties in implementing the Protocol, the Protocol's Compliance Committee decided to enhance its facilitation and assistance functions and agreed to enter into consultations with a number of Parties. The overall objective of the consultations is to facilitate and support implementation and not to ascertain or declare whether a Party is in non-compliance. A first round of consultations with Albania and Azerbaijan, with Bosnia and Herzegovina as an observer, has started in 2015.

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

49. For the achievement of the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States will need to rely as much as possible on existing mechanisms. It is expected that the Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health will strongly support countries in achieving not only the SDG on water and sanitation but also the many water-related targets in other SDGs. The future work under the two instruments will be considerably shaped by the new Agenda.

50. The application and implementation of the Water Convention at the global level is a priority to promote transboundary cooperation worldwide. The opening of the Convention beyond the ECE region will bring new opportunities as well as new challenges and resource and partnership requirements. Awareness-raising, capacity-building and activities on the ground in other regions will be needed and have already started. To best respond to this new situation, the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session will adopt a decision on establishing a framework for the implementation of the Convention at the global level.

#### *Indicators of achievement*

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

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

(b) Intensity of capacity development in non-Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health (average participant-days per non-Party);

- (c) Number of ratifications of the Protocol on Water and Health;
- (d) Number of accessions to the Water Convention by non-ECE States<sup>8</sup>

*Performance measures*

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

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

Target 2014–2015: (a) 55; (b) 25; (c) 27; (d) 2

Actual 2014–2015 (as of 31 July 2015): (a) 55; (b) 44; (c) 26 (d) 0<sup>9</sup>

## **Cluster 9**

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

*Expected accomplishment*

Strengthened implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention)

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved*

51. In December 2014, on the occasion of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the 41 Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention amended the treaty to align it with the United Nations Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). The amendment expands the categories and lists of hazardous substances covered by the Convention. Parties also agreed to negotiate further amendments, including on strengthening public participation, and to develop guidance, among others on land-use planning and the siting of hazardous activities.

52. Parties to the Convention have also been further considering the Convention's opening for accession by Member States beyond the ECE region. At the same time, by adopting the Sendai framework on disaster risk reduction 2015–2030, United Nations Member States agreed to pursue the goal of reducing existing disaster risk through the implementation of technological and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience.

53. The Convention's Assistance Programme, which turned 10 years old in 2004, carried out projects in Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, helping these countries to develop indicators and criteria to measure their progress in industrial safety. An activity on the preparation and evaluation of safety reports was carried out in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Turkmenistan benefited from a joint capacity-building effort with the Water Convention. A subregional workshop for Central Asia was held in Kazakhstan in order to build capacity for the Convention's amended Annex I and to address accidental water pollution. A key focus during the biennium has been on enhancing hazard and crisis management in the Danube Delta in order to

<sup>8</sup> The amendments to the Water Convention opening it to accession by all United Nations Member States came into force in February 2013 and are expected to become effective operationally at the end of 2015, once all Parties that were Parties to the Convention when the amendments were adopted have ratified the amendments.

<sup>9</sup> Pending ratification by Ukraine of the amendments to articles 25 and 26 of the Convention for the opening to be operational.

strengthen cooperation between the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine on preparedness and response to potential oil spills.

54. Numerous publications and guidance materials were developed and issued to support ECE member States in the Convention's application: (a) Safety guidelines and good practices for tailings management facilities; (b) Benchmarks for the implementation of the Convention (user-friendly version) (jointly with Zoï Environment Network); (c) Safety guidelines and good industry practices on oil terminals; (d) Checklist for contingency planning for accidents affecting transboundary waters; and (e) An overview of methodologies for hazard rating of industrial sites (jointly with the EU Joint Research Centre). Furthermore, a book of cartoons on the Convention was issued in order to raise awareness of the Convention and its application.

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

55. Despite the capacity-building activities carried out, beneficiary countries still face problems in the Convention's implementation in an inter-sectoral approach and the application of its tools, notably those related to the Strategic Approach of the Convention's Assistance Programme.

56. Working in partnership with other international organizations has provided for synergies, which were identified, among others, through annual inter-agency cooperation meetings on industrial accidents. For example, a joint publication was issued with the EU Joint Research Centre. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons became a partner in the conduct of an initial Annex I capacity-building activity. Partnerships with other ECE MEAs and programmes have also been pursued actively, including: (a) the United Nations Sub-committee of experts on the GHS, in support of Annex I capacity building; (b) the Aarhus Convention, in the development of amendments to strengthen public participation; and (c) the Protocol on SEA and the ECE Committee on Housing and Land-Management, on safety and land-use planning. Cooperation with the Water Convention continued through the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents and activities in the framework of the NPDs on IWRM.

#### *Indicators of achievement*

Increased number of countries indicating progress in implementing the Convention in five key areas:

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

#### *Performance measures*

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

2012–2013: (a) 26; (b) 32; (c) 32<sup>10</sup>; (d) 39<sup>11</sup>; (e) 16<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This is based on data from the national implementation reports for the reporting round 2010–2011



Target 2014–2015: (a) 37; (b) 20; (c) 43; (d) 40; (e) 40

Actual 2014–2015 (as of 31 July 2015): (a) 18; (b) 20; (c) 33<sup>13</sup>; (d) 40<sup>14</sup>; (e) 14<sup>15</sup>

## **Cluster 10**

### **Environmental monitoring and assessment**

#### *Expected accomplishment*

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

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

57. Capacity for environmental observations was further strengthened and progress was made in enhancing environmental assessment in 15 out of 17 target countries. In particular, six countries improved the legal basis for environmental monitoring and assessment. Six countries worked on projects to strengthen cooperation among institutions involved in monitoring and assessment. Ten countries made further improvements in their air monitoring networks, ranging from adding new parameters for monitoring to introducing new network stations.

58. Furthermore, 11 countries strengthened water monitoring capacity either by adding new parameters for monitoring, introducing new type of monitoring or working on projects for specific water monitoring bodies. One country established a programme to implement ECE Guidelines on soil contamination, while other countries were involved in capacity-building projects for soil and biodiversity monitoring. Regarding data processing and sharing, most countries started producing the majority of core indicators, in line with ECE Guidelines on environmental indicators.

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

59. The majority of target countries started a regular process of production and publishing of environmental indicators from the ECE core set of environmental indicators. Their work needs to be expanded to include other indicators, to make the Shared Environment Information System (SEIS) fully operational throughout the pan-European region by 2020. To facilitate an informed decision-making process at the national level, countries need to introduce the practice of preparing indicator-based state-of-the-environment assessments.

#### *Indicator of achievement*

Increased number of countries using the ECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

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submitted in 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Idem.

<sup>12</sup> Training on the implementation of the Industrial Accidents Notification system was implemented through an online consultation.

<sup>13</sup> This is based on data from the national implementation reports for the reporting round 2012–2013 submitted in 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Idem.

<sup>15</sup> Training on the implementation of the Industrial Accidents Notification system was implemented through an online consultation.

*Performance measures*

2010–2011: 11 countries

2012–2013: 14 countries

Target 2014–2015: 17 countries

Actual 2014–2015 (as of 31 July 2015): 15 countries

## **Cluster 4**

### **Environmental performance reviews**

*Expected accomplishment*

Improved environmental performance in countries with economies in transition

*Statement of accomplishments/results achieved<sup>16</sup>*

60. The number of countries showing progress in environmental performance increased from 21 to 23 at the end of 2014. The third reviews of Montenegro and Serbia, including an assessment of progress in implementing the recommendations of their second reviews, confirmed an improved environmental performance in both countries. Montenegro reported on the implementation of 30 recommendations contained in its second review, of which 84 per cent were fully or partially implemented. Serbia implemented fully or partially 78 per cent of recommendations contained in its second review. The implementation was higher for those recommendations that were directly addressed to environmental authorities, compared to those addressed to other decision-makers. Recommendations comprising large areas of expertise or involving many actors usually took longer to implement.

*Lessons learned/areas needing improvement*

61. Full implementation of the recommendations from previous reviews has yet to be reached. The environment has not been a priority for the Governments of Montenegro and Serbia. Lack of capacity and resources, as well as gaps in legislation, institutional development and administrative organization, and frequent changes in the institutional framework and/or in governmental policy have been major obstacles to these countries' efforts to implement the environmental performance reviews' recommendations.

*Indicator of achievement*

Increased number of countries showing progress in environmental performance

*Performance measures*

2010–2011: 15 countries

2012–2013: 18 countries

Target 2014–2015: 21 countries

Actual 2014–2015 (as of 31 July 2015): 23 countries

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<sup>16</sup> The reporting on the statement of accomplishment/results achieved related to EPRs of Georgia and of Belarus will be done at the end of the biennium and included in the Secretariat's Integrated Monitoring and Document Information System.