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**To: Heads of Delegation of the Working Group on Strategies and Review**

Dear Colleagues,

I have the pleasure to invite you to participate in the fifty-fifth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review that will take place from Wednesday May 31 to Friday, June 2, 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. The session will begin at 10 a.m. on Wednesday and is scheduled to conclude on Friday at 6 p.m. Official documents are available on the following website:

<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43511#/>.

As is customary, I am writing to provide information as to how the session will unfold and to highlight a number of key issues on the provisional agenda for discussion and decision at this session for which you should be well prepared. The Working Group is expected to provide recommendations to the EB related to the work of the ad hoc policy review (PRG) group of experts, discuss and forward to the EB elements of its 2018-2019 workplan, and share information on the implementation of the Convention, including in a special session on agriculture and air pollution. As an observation, I foresee that discussions related to the recommendations of the PRG will be central to the work of the Convention over the next number of years.

**Item 4: Policy response to the 2016 scientific assessment report of the Convention**

As per its mandate contained in Decision 2016/1, the PRG will present the group's findings, conclusions and recommendations to the 55<sup>th</sup> session of the Working Group, which is then to submit its recommendations related to the report and its findings to the thirty-seventh session of the Executive Body in December 2017.

As a reminder, the mandate of the PRG also calls for it to review the priorities for work and action in the Long-Term Strategy (LTS) for the Implementation of the Convention and to propose updates and revisions to the LTS based on its findings and taking account of the report of the PRG. The mandate does not specify the timeframe for the completion of this task. At the WGSR/EB meetings in December, the group was asked to provide highlights of the areas for consideration as part of its revision of the LTS.

The PRG has finalized its report which is contained in document ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2017/3. The report contains a number of short- and longer-term recommendations as to how the Convention should respond to the scientific assessment report, and where possible indicates which Convention body should undertake the particular recommendation, or whether the recommendation is for action by Parties directly. Some recommendations have been identified as short-term, which should be considered for inclusion in the 2018-19 Workplan for the Implementation of the Convention and others identified as medium- or longer-term should be considered as part of the task to propose updates and revisions to the LTS. Some longer-term recommendations may need to be initiated in the short-term, and should also be considered in the context of the 2018-2019 workplan.

A table (informal document 2) containing the list of recommendations, extracted from the PRG report for ease of reference, has also been prepared to facilitate your preparations for this discussion. It is attached to this email, and it is also available on the website. An additional informal document will also be available about two weeks before the meeting that includes background information to supplement the PRG's report.

Under this agenda item, the Chair of the PRG will provide a report on the group's findings, conclusions and recommendations. The Working Group will then discuss the policy relevant recommendations and deliberate on the key policy response issues to be forwarded to the EB for its December session. It will be invited to focus in particular on the recommendations related to its own work and to the work of its Task Forces on Reactive Nitrogen (TFRN) and Techno-economic Issues (TFTEI). Work related to EMEP/WGE will be discussed by those groups as they prepare their inputs to the 2018-2019 workplan and consider the longer-term direction in response to the PRG recommendations. The report itself is final in the sense that it will not be open for negotiation – it is a record of the work of the PRG.

The WGSR will need to provide its recommendations to the Executive Body, including those recommendations that:

1. refer to the parts of the draft 2018-19 workplan related to the Working Group and its task forces, TFRN and TFTEI; and
2. are longer-term and should be forwarded to the EB for discussion and agreement on the policy response to the 2016 Scientific Assessment. These longer-term recommendations should then naturally also be considered as the basis for the PRG's further reflections on the priorities for work and action in, and proposed updates and revisions to, the LTS and the related considerations by the EB.

Discussion of recommendations under #1 above will also take place under Agenda Item 5 related to the draft 2018-2019 workplan. In relation to #2, the Working Group may wish to forward its recommendations to the EB. It may also decide to recommend a timeframe for the PRG to complete and report on this work.

Recognizing that the amended Gothenburg Protocol is not yet in force, a number of recommendations of the PRG may be appropriate for consideration in detail during the next review of the Gothenburg Protocol. The Working Group may also wish to reflect and make recommendations to the EB when to undertake that review, and begin its deliberations on topics for consideration.<sup>1</sup>

There are also several recommendations in relation to the cooperation of the Convention with other international organizations and other regions. While the recommendations in part D. of the PRG report do not need to be discussed in detail, the broad direction should be considered by WGSR. Some specific recommendations included in the report, e.g., the organization of a workshop with other regions, should also be discussed.

#### **Item 5: Draft 2018-2019 workplan**

As you know, the Executive Body at its next session must adopt the 2018-2019 workplan for the Convention. The Executive Body Bureau is tasked with elaborating a draft workplan for this purpose, in collaboration with the subsidiary bodies and supported by the secretariat.

As your Chair, I will be responsible for providing the policy elements, in cooperation with the Chairs of the Task Force on Techno-Economic Issues and the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen. In order that the Working Group has an opportunity to provide guidance on proposed policy elements of the workplan, I have asked the chairs of these task forces to provide proposals for activities for inclusion in the 2018-2019 workplan, which they will do under Item 3 of the provisional agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> The provisions for reviews by the Parties at the EB session are included in Art. 10 of the amended Gothenburg Protocol. Art. 10 para 2 (c) sets out that the first review – the procedures, methods and timing of which shall be specified by Parties at the EB sessions – shall commence no later than one year after the entry into force of the amended Gothenburg Protocol.

The task force chairs have also reviewed the recommendations of the PRG and will include these tasks in their draft work proposals, as appropriate. As always, the availability of resources will be a consideration, meaning that the Working Group may wish to provide guidance in terms of prioritizing some tasks over others. In addition, Parties are encouraged to consider whether they may be able to support specific work items.

#### **Item 6: Information sharing by Parties on the implementation of the Convention**

As per Decision 2013/2, the sessions of the Working Group remain the format for reporting on strategies, policies and measures. As per Decision 2016/3 the Working Group is to review the structure and usefulness of the template used for the submission of examples and good practices of strategies, policies and measures at this session, and to revise it if appropriate. The Working Group is also encouraged to organize dedicated thematic (or sub-regional) sessions related to policies and measures to abate air pollution.

Accordingly, the agenda item is organized into three sub-items. Under (a), the Working Group should provide comments as appropriate and may suggest whether to amend the template that has been used since 2014. The draft template for reporting is available as an informal document for this session, and will be discussed on May 31.

June 1<sup>st</sup> is devoted entirely to (b), which is the special session on agriculture and air pollution, which I will turn over to the Co-Chairs of the TFRN to facilitate. This looks to be an informative and exciting day that includes presentations from Parties as well as stakeholders from academia and relevant international organizations.

A separate programme has been prepared, but to help ensure a rich discussion under Session 4, I encourage you to review the following questions:

- *Which national policies and measures do countries implement to reduce emissions from agricultural sources, agricultural sources as well as impacts of air pollution on agriculture, considering the linkages between various agricultural emission sources and impacts?*
- *Which national examples could be considered good practices, and how can countries best take these into account when considering application to their national circumstances?*
- *Which educational measures can be envisaged, to raise awareness of the broader population with regard to the nitrogen cycle and the wider linkages with climate and health concerns?*
- *Which possibilities present themselves for further integration across the policy areas nitrogen, air quality, water and climate?*

Finally, under (c), we will have presentations from Parties. In particular Parties who submitted templates prior to the 53<sup>rd</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Working Group that have not yet presented will be invited to do so; several confirmations have already been received by the secretariat. The format of this session will allow for short presentations followed by short Q&A sessions for each report. The presentations will be followed by a general discussion. I would encourage participation by all Parties in this discussion, and ask that you consider the questions below to inform that participation:

- *What are the driving forces and successful enabling conditions for the development and implementation of air-pollution related policies, strategies and measures?*
- *What are most pertinent challenges in the implementation of such policies, strategies and measures?*

- *How can economic incentives and disincentives be designed most effectively to bring about behavioural changes conducive to air pollution abatement? What are the challenges related to the implementation of such measures?*
- *Which sources of funding can be tapped into for the development and implementation of measures?*

**NB:** Before the beginning of this session, I intend to come back to the PRG conclusions in order to inform the preparation of final conclusions for the session that we will discuss in the afternoon, and possibly in light of the special session on agriculture and air pollution.

### **Other Issues**

#### *Batumi Action for Cleaner Air*

After discussion in the EB Bureau, it is proposed to add a regular agenda item to check in with countries on BACA commitments, including progress in their implementation for Parties who have submitted them, as well as progress made toward submitting new commitments.

#### *UNEA-3*

Also, as you are aware, pollution is the main theme for the upcoming session of UNEA-3 in December 2017. Although there is no formal action required for the Working Group, Parties may wish to informally discuss their preparations and exchange views related to desirable outcomes of UNEA-3 related to air pollution and any specific input from the Convention community. This could of course be done on the margins of the meeting, but views expressed during the session are most welcome.

I look forward to this first meeting as your Chair and to fruitful and engaging discussions during the session. I hope this letter helps in your preparations for the upcoming session.

Yours truly,



Jennifer Kerr