

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Ninety-third Meeting
Geneva, 26 September 2017

EXCOM/CONCLU/93

CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS

FORMAL SEGMENT

Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda

1. The provisional draft agenda for the 93rd meeting was adopted.

Item 2 – Chair’s conclusions from the last meeting

2. The conclusions from the 92nd meeting of EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/92) were adopted.

INFORMAL SEGMENT

Item 3 - Framework for the engagement with private sector entities.

3. Further to a request from EXCOM, the Executive Secretary introduced a framework for the engagement of UNECE with private sector entities for consideration by the Committee. She noted that the framework sets out guidelines which will ensure the integrity, independence and impartiality in UNECE’s engagement with the private sector in accordance with UN Rules and Regulations. She hoped EXCOM could adopt the document. For information, she also presented the due diligence review process she intended to establish. For cooperation or partnership agreements without financial contributions, this would consist of private sector partners completing a self-assessment based on the principles of the UN Global Compact. For agreements with financial contributions, a prospective partner would undergo, in addition to the above-mentioned self-assessment, a mandatory check by a reputable outside entity. The Executive Secretary will review the outcomes of these assessments and submit project proposals to EXCOM only if they compliant with the framework and the due diligence review.

4. The representative of Belarus supported the secretariat’s approach. He asked when the documents would enter into force and proposed that the implementation of the framework be reviewed in a year’s time.

5. The representative of the Russian Federation supported the adoption of the framework and took note of the due diligence process. He believed these processes would allow the secretariat to be more efficient in attracting partners from the business community in order to mobilize resources and progress towards the SDGs, and said that the implementation of the framework should be in keeping with the UN Global Compact and promote the principles of corporate social responsibility to ensure a timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

6. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated that the framework addressed multiple facets of UNECE’s engagement with the private sector, such as representatives serving on the bureaux of intergovernmental bodies to the use of the UNECE name and logo. He emphasized that the overriding principle should be advancement of UNECE’s mandate. He also noted the relevance of the document vis-à-vis possible funding from businesses for specific projects, final approval of which rests on EXCOM.

7. The representative of Switzerland said the topic of partnerships was very important for Switzerland, who had facilitated prior General Assembly resolutions on global partnerships. He found the documents prepared by the secretariat to be clear and positive. He highlighted that partnerships with the private sector should be considered not solely as a means of securing financial resources, but also as strategic alliances for exchange of knowledge and good practices. Noting that there have been calls globally for cooperation on cross-cutting issues between UN agencies, programmes, funds and Regional Commissions, he found it important for UNECE to avoid working in isolation on such partnerships with

the private sector. Given that this topic would be addressed in upcoming reports by the Secretary-General and the Joint Inspection Unit, he inquired as to the urgency of adopting the framework and suggested reviewing the implementation of the framework in a year to ensure its alignment with global processes. He also said that these two documents should be made publically available.

8. In response to questions raised, the Executive Secretary said that the documents would be effective immediately and agreed to reviewing the implementation of the framework in a year. She recalled that the document had been prepared upon EXCOM's request. She also mentioned that UNECE was not working in isolation from the rest of the secretariat on this topic and had shared the framework with the other Regional Commissions.

9. The Chair concluded that EXCOM adopts the UNECE framework on engagement of the business sector, as contained in informal document 2017/40, and takes note of the proposed due diligence review of private sector entities engaging with UNECE that the secretariat intends to establish. EXCOM decides to review the implementation of the framework by the end of 2018.

Item 4 – Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (A/RES/71/280).

10. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that, at an informal consultation on 18 September 2018 on the preparations for the regional consultation on migration, consensus had been reached on the format of the agenda item. Given that UNECE's mandate on migration was mostly limited to statistics, and given the importance of statistics in informed policy-making, the regional consultation would focus on this dimension of UNECE's work. The discussions would also be informed by two upcoming UNECE events on migration statistics, namely a joint Work Session with EUROSTAT on Migration Statistics (30 - 31 October 2017) and, in cooperation with CISSTAT, a workshop on migration statistics for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (1-2 November 2017). Together with the informal documents on the issue, the Chair's summary of the consultation would become the regional input into the preparatory meeting of the global compact. The Executive Secretary encouraged delegations to liaise with their capitals so that the regional consultation would be an informative exchange of national experiences, challenges and best practices in the area of migration statistics, and provide a substantive regional input into the global process.

11. The representative of the European Union and its member States agreed in principle with the three topics proposed by the Secretariat to constitute the basis for the exchanges on 06 November. He emphasized the importance of keeping the discussion within the limits of UNECE's mandate and underlined that, as EXCOM is not a body specialized in migration or statistics, the session should be seen as an opportunity for member States to share experiences in a concrete and practical way.

12. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on the preparations for the upcoming regional consultation on migration.

Item 5 – Regional Forum on Sustainable Development: assessment and preparations for 2018.

13. The Executive Secretary presented the results of the assessment of the 2017 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development conducted by the secretariat, noting that the overall rating of the event had been very positive with 30 per cent of respondents considering it excellent and 46 per cent good. She said respondents had also pointed out some areas for improvement, to which the secretariat would give due consideration during the preparations for the 2018 Forum. The Executive Secretary then touched on the 2018 Regional Forum, which will focus on the areas that will be reviewed at the 2018 High-level Political Forum. The secretariat would hold informal consultations to develop the format and content of the event with member States. To facilitate planning, the Executive Secretary presented the following parameters for the 2018 Forum, for the consideration of member States:

- i. The 2018 Regional Forum would be chaired by Switzerland's Special Envoy for Global Sustainable Development, Ambassador Michael Gerber.

- ii. The duration of the event would be extended to 1.5 or preferably 2 days in line with the feedback from the assessment of the 2017 event, to allow for more speakers to engage and put an even stronger focus on peer learning in small groups.
- iii. The event would be held on 1-2 March 2018, taking into account room constraints, and the schedule of other events etc.

14. The representative of Belarus supported further discussion in informal consultations and said that, a possibility for the future would be to hold the Regional Forum outside of Geneva. He informed EXCOM that Belarus would host a regional conference for national coordinators on Sustainable Development Goals in Minsk at the beginning of 2018, which would include an exchange of experience on national achievements and challenges on progress towards the Goals. He said this event could supplement the Regional Forum, first by creating a system of cooperation of national coordination mechanisms for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and second, due to its parliamentary format. Belarus intended to submit the outcomes of the event as a contribution to the 2018 Regional Forum. Details on the event would be provided as they become available, as well as a proposal to formally link this event with the Regional Forum in order to enhance synergies.

15. The representative of Switzerland noted that the contributions of the 2017 Regional Forum to the 2017 High-level Political Forum had been greatly appreciated at the HLPF meeting. Touching on the assessment of the 2017 Regional Forum, he highlighted the expressed wish to put further emphasis on the exchange of experiences and dialogue between participants. He said that holding the event in Geneva would be the most economical option and suggested that using meeting facilities outside the Palais des Nations, such as the Centre International de Conférences Genève (CICG) where the meeting rooms can be arranged in ways more conducive to dialogue, could be an option. He noted that the Swiss chairmanship would be committed to ensuring the high quality of the event. Further, he informed EXCOM that Switzerland was considering to make financial contributions to the 2018 and 2019 editions of the Regional Forum and encouraged other member States to do the same. He supported extending the duration of the event to two days provided the format enables substantive exchange and dialogue, and adds value to the participating countries.

16. The representative of the Russian Federation supported the proposed modalities and the organization of the Regional Forum in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals selected for review at the High-level Political Forum. He welcomed the proposed chairmanship of Switzerland, expressed agreement with the proposed dates, and supported extending the event to 2 days given sufficient thematic content. He said he would engage in informal consultations to determine further details. He expressed interest in the initiative mentioned by Belarus and looked forward to discussing the organization and content of that event and its possible linkages with the Regional Forum.

17. The representative of the European Union and its member States expressed appreciation for the alignment of the thematic focus with the areas under review at the High-level Political Forum and the emphasis on peer learning and roundtables. He welcomed the proposed Swiss chairmanship. He preferred limiting the 2018 Regional Forum to one day to alleviate funding constraints and did not object to the proposed dates. He said he would also be ready to attend further informal consultations on the preparations.

18. The representative of Kazakhstan supported the proposed dates and the Swiss chairmanship. She expressed interest in the initiative mentioned by the representative of Belarus and said Kazakhstan could participate.

19. The representative of France recalled that France had presided over the 2017 Regional Forum and wished to share an assessment of that event. He said the Forum was a powerful tool that mobilized all relevant stakeholder of the pan-European region, broke down partitions between different approaches and helped identify urgent regional challenges. France had been pleased to observe the strong engagement by civil society and the business world and appreciated this focus on partnerships. France also appreciated the emphasis on intersectoral collaboration towards achieving the Sustainable

Development Goals, and the fact that many countries had used the Regional Forum to update and consolidate their political framework for interministerial consultation. The representative mentioned that data and statistics had been identified as an urgent challenge in the region. He supported the proposed Swiss chairmanship and suggested the following possible improvements for the 2018 Regional Forum:

- i. The event should focus on its comparative advantage, in other words exchange of best practices, knowledge and specific case studies on tangible and practical issues.
- ii. The event could make very positive contributions to the decision-making process of policy-makers.
- iii. The event could become even more open to civil society, including parliamentarians, local officials and academia.
- iv. Some logistical and organizational aspects required improvement.

20. The representative of Romania said that her country would be doing a Voluntary National Review at the 2018 High-level Political Forum and fully supported the 2018 Regional Forum in this context.

21. The Chair concluded that EXCOM takes note of the assessment of the 2017 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and decides to hold the 2018 Regional Forum on 1 and/or 2 March 2018. EXCOM accepts, with appreciation, Switzerland's proposal to chair the 2018 Regional Forum. EXCOM requests the secretariat to convene informal consultations as soon as possible to determine the modalities and programme of the 2018 Forum, in accordance with the decision of the Commission at its 67th session (E/2017/37-E/ECE/1480, decision B(67)) and taking into account lessons learnt from the 2017 Forum.

Item 6 – Matters relating to the Committee on Housing and Land Management.

22. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that the Committee on Housing and Land Management would celebrate its 70th anniversary at its annual session, which would include a Ministerial segment on 9 November and conclude with the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration. The high-level discussions would center on progress and challenges related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and the Geneva UN Charter for Sustainable Housing. The Ministerial Declaration is expected to confirm member States' commitment to promote the above-mentioned agreements. She noted that the draft Ministerial Declaration had been negotiated at the expert level and was available online. She hoped delegates would facilitate high-level participation from their capitals at the meeting.

23. The representative of the Russian Federation supported the holding of the Ministerial segment. He said the Committee had valuable and unique experience in forming state policy for developing housing infrastructure and found the work on increasing the availability of environmentally-sound and energy-efficient housing useful. The draft Declaration duly reflects the most relevant challenges to sustainable urban development in the region. He noted that the draft Declaration could be further modified at the annual session.

24. The representative of the European Union and its member States wished the Committee a successful session.

25. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on the 70th anniversary annual session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management and its Ministerial segment, and encourages high-level attendance at this event.

Item 8 - Important new developments: briefing by the Executive Secretary

26. Under "Update on road safety", the Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that the secretariat had circulated the consolidated consultation paper for the Road Safety Fund and appreciated the overall supportive comments received from member States, civil society and other UN partners. She said she

and the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Road Safety had forwarded the paper to the Secretary-General for his consideration and awaited his guidance on the next steps. She noted that, in contrast to existing financing mechanisms, a UN fund would have the advantage of benefiting the world's citizens by leveraging the expertise of the UN system to directly address the needs of countries and other stakeholders in all regions in implementing road-safety-related SDGs, and by responding to all five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action. Should the Secretary-General wish to proceed with the fund, she hoped member States would give it their strong support, both during discussions at the General Assembly and financially. She encouraged all delegations to liaise with their counterparts in New York in order to ensure support at Headquarters.

27. The representative of Switzerland inquired as to which member of the Secretary-General's office would deal with this issue and within which time frame. He asked if the secretariat could provide a brief information note that could be shared with New York-based missions for further support and follow-up.

28. The representative of the Russian Federation attached great importance to the UN's work on road safety and hoped the constructive cooperation would continue. He noted that further discussions should occur at Headquarters within established procedures. He supported Switzerland's requests for a brief information note and wished to see the final version of the proposal sent to New York.

29. The representative of Germany also supported the request of Switzerland for an information note.

30. The Chair said that the secretariat was already preparing a brief information note on the issue that would be circulated.

31. Under "cooperation with other organizations", the Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about three upcoming Memoranda of Understanding, with:

- i. European Federation of Geologists (EFG), proposed to contribute to the activities of the Expert Group on Resource Classification. This will promote UNFC as a tool to achieve the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and EU policies and directives.
- ii. An update to an existing MoU from 2015 with the International Road Transport Union (IRU), intended to enable continuation of the joint work on the pilot project related to the computerization of the TIR procedure.
- iii. Organization for International Economic Relations (OiER), intended to create a framework where UNECE and OiER can jointly approach potential donors to contribute to their joint work on smart cities.

32. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following recent meetings:

- i. 10-19 July, New York: High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, including a Ministerial segment, where the results of the 2017 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development were presented
- ii. 5-7 September, Mariánské Lázně, Czech Republic: Mariánské Lázně +70: Celebrating 70 years of UNECE/FAO cooperation on forests
- iii. 6 September, Prague: Concluding meeting of the 25th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
- iv. 11-15 September, Budva, Montenegro: 6th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and 3rd Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers
- v. 19 September, New York: Beginning of High Level Debate as part of 72nd session of the General Assembly
- vi. 20-22 September, Lisbon: UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing

33. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following upcoming events:

- i. 26-28 September, Geneva: 26th Session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy
- ii. 9-13 October, Warsaw: Las2017 - joint session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission

- iii. 13 October European Urban Forum, Prague
- iv. 18-20 October: Meeting of the Regional UN System
- v. 23 October – Second Committee Dialogue with Regional Commissions, UNHQ

Item 9 – Extrabudgetary projects (for approval)

34. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the extrabudgetary projects contained in informal documents 2017/45 through 2017/56.

35. For information, the Executive Secretary also briefed EXCOM about an extrabudgetary project entitled “Enabling Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Extended Drin River Basin”. She noted that it did not require EXCOM’s approval as it was part of the programme of work under the Water Convention that had been adopted previously. UNECE would be an implementing partner in this project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), that would support the further development of cooperation between the Riparian countries in the Drin Basin and the achievement of the objectives of the Drin Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2011. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM that all project details could be found on the UNECE website under the Project Management Tool.

Item 12 – Other business

36. The Chair informed EXCOM that the next meeting would be held on 6 November 2017.
