

29 May 2000

Matters arising from the Annual Session of the Economic Commission for Europe, May 2000

The UN/ECE confirmed the strategic directions set down by the reform of 1997, and emphasised that the Committees (in our case the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development/CTIED) are the main decision-making and policy bodies.

Five specific points came out of the meeting which are likely to be of direct interest to the CTIED:

1. UN/ECE must ensure that it makes effective regional inputs to global issues. In this context, when the General Assembly or ECOSOC decides to hold a global meeting or to launch a global initiative, then UN/ECE will be requested to make a stronger input reflecting the specificity of the region than has been the case in recent years;
2. The Committees are encouraged to promote more cross-sectoral activities, such as actions to support trade and transport or trade and environment cooperation in the region, and to support work regarding such general issues as sustainable development, the mainstreaming of gender (and the active involvement of women in trade, etc), and links to the business community;
3. The Committees are requested to give higher priority to what is called "sub-regional cooperation", especially to assist the transition countries to strengthen their economies, and to undertake more active cooperation programmes with other regional economic commissions. In particular, for UN/ECE, it is anticipated that we will work closely with UN/ECA (Economic Commission for Africa) and the UN/ESCWA (Economic Commission for West Asia) regarding the Mediterranean and with UN/ESCAP (Economic Commission for Asia & the Pacific) regarding cooperation for the benefit of our countries in the Euro-Asian region;
4. Member States are requested to include UN/ECE on their lists of eligible institutions for the receipt of funding;
5. The Secretariat is encouraged to strengthen efforts to attract funds from public and private sources.

The Annual Session of UN/ECE directed all the Committees and their Subsidiary Bodies to take note of these issues in deciding their work programmes and their resources.

In the case of the CTIED, no special problems are envisaged in implementing these requests because much of the work already fits well with them. UN/CEFACT and the working parties will be expected to bear these points in mind when considering their programmes.