



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ECE/1398
20 December 2002

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Fifty-eighth session
4-6 March 2003
(Provisional agenda item 3)

**PROPOSED FOLLOW-UP FOR THE ECE REGION
OF THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Note by the secretariat

1. The decision on the UNECE regional follow-up should build upon UNECE's already well developed activities in the field of sustainable development and the tasks explicitly assigned to the regions, in particular the regional commissions, in the WSSD Plan of Implementation (under Institutional framework for sustainable development, paras. 142 and 143):

- intra-regional coordination and cooperation on sustainable development should be improved among the regional commissions, United Nations Funds, programmes and agencies, regional development banks, and other regional and sub-regional institutions and bodies. This should include, as appropriate, support for development, enhancement and implementation of agreed regional sustainable development strategies and action plans, reflecting national and regional priorities;
- in particular and taking into account relevant provisions of Agenda 21, the regional commissions, in collaboration with other regional and sub-regional bodies, should:
 - (a) promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into their work in a balanced way, including through implementation of Agenda 21. To this end, the regional commissions should enhance their capacity through internal action and be provided, as appropriate, with external support;

- (b) facilitate and promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development into the work of regional, sub-regional and other bodies, for example by facilitating and strengthening the exchange of experiences, including national experience, best practices, case studies and partnership experience related to the implementation of Agenda 21;
- (c) assist in the mobilization of technical and financial assistance, and facilitate the provision of adequate financing for the implementation of regionally and sub-regionally agreed sustainable development programmes and projects, including addressing the objective of poverty eradication;
- (d) continue to promote multi-stakeholder participation and encourage partnerships to support the implementation of Agenda 21 at the regional and sub-regional levels.

2. In its first meeting on the follow-up to the Johannesburg Summit, the General Affairs Council of the European Union on 30 September 2002 envisaged an UNECE regional follow-up to the Summit. The Council agreed “to seek a strengthening of the role of UN economic commissions and other regional and sub-regional bodies in furthering sustainable development, and invited the UNECE to take further action to develop objectives that could include specific goals and targets to confront negative environmental, economic and social impacts of present developments inside and outside the UNECE region, and to work at the forthcoming UNECE conference in Kiev in 2003 to promote implementation of the outcome of Johannesburg in the UNECE region.”

3. According to preliminary ideas in mid-December 2002 for post-WSSD methods of work of the Commission for Sustainable Development as presented by the CSD secretariat, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation gives a new focus and direction to the CSD and specifically points to a number of new features and objectives that are essential for its future work.

New objectives and features of CSD resulting from the WSSD

- Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced way;
- Focus on reviewing and monitoring progress in the implementation through broad exchange of views and experiences
- Fostering coherence of implementation, initiatives and partnerships
- Need to focus on a limited number of issues
- Opportunity to look at new challenges and opportunities in the context of implementation, as well as best practice and lessons learnt
- Broader participation of all stakeholders, particularly UN agencies/international financial institutions and the Major Groups
- Greater involvement at the regional level
- Holding negotiations once every two years

4. In order to strengthen regional contribution to the CSD process, a series of regional forums might be held once in two years, particularly in the non-negotiating years of the CSD. In that regard and for the purpose of review and monitoring of progress made at the regional level, the United Nations regional commissions in cooperation with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations, as well as regionally active UN agencies, will be expected to play an active role not

only in organizing regional forums but also in undertaking assessments and analytical work based on national reporting for CSD and other sources of information, as well as in tracking developments of partnership initiatives. They may also participate in the selection of regional experts on specific themes/issues for CSD sessions, as needed.

5. "CSD Regional Forums" to be organized in each of the five regions could focus on monitoring, review and exchange of experiences and lessons learned from national and regional implementation and partnership initiatives. Through the regional discussions, priorities, areas of concern, hot spots and new challenges could be identified in each region. The outcome of the regional processes will be reflected in documentations for and in further discussions at the global level in the context of the overall CSD process.

6. Further consultations will be held during 2003 with regional institutions regarding their contribution to the work of the CSD.

7. In order to be effective and cost-efficient the UNECE follow-up work should respond to a number of criteria:

- No substantial additional resources should be required from the outset.
- All UNECE Divisions and the Commission should be involved.
- The expertise and commitment already available in UNECE should be fully utilized.
- A broad cooperation with and substantive contributions by key partners should be encouraged.
- Exchange of information and experience with the other Regional Commissions should be continuous.
- Substantive contributions to the global follow-up should be made possible in a flexible way.
- The fund-raising should not infringe on financing of other UNECE activities.

8. Different preparations for environmental/sustainable development governance in the region have to be kept in mind (proposals for the future of the "Environment for Europe" process under the Kiev preparations, the considerations under the Committee on Environmental policy on Strategic directions for UNECE environment work, proposals for UNECE reform Strengthening the Organization etc.). All of these may have significance for the regional work on the WSSD follow-up, but at least the first two will be mainly concerned with the environmental pillar of sustainable development. The third may have a broader scope, but will probably deal mostly with the internal work of UNECE.

9. With a view to implementing the WSSD decisions in UNECE work, a Senior Management Group for Sustainable Development chaired by the Executive Secretary has been established and will convene regular meetings in order to ensure a consistent pattern of activities in the UNECE. The group oversees and facilitates the integration of sustainable development in all main sectors of UNECE activities. The group is also responsible for preparing UNECE secretariat in-puts to the Commission, cooperation with other regional commissions, and supporting other relevant work like the contribution of the Economic Survey to enhancing sustainable development. The group will, in addition, review the contribution of the UNECE sub-programmes to the implementation of the Johannesburg decisions and the decisions of the UNECE Regional Ministerial preparatory meeting for the WSSD in 2001.

10. The UNECE sub-programme on Environment will in its entirety be part of the implementation of the Johannesburg decisions. The other sub-programmes have made first assessments of their contributions as follows.

11. The Economic Analysis sub-programme will focus on (a) economic growth as a means to improve living standards and eradicate poverty, including by organizing an expert seminar on narrowing income disparities and reducing poverty in the UNECE region; (b) mobilization of resources and financing of sustainable development; and (c) high-lighting the social dimension of sustainable development in particular in countries in transition. The Division is planning to produce, in collaboration with other Divisions, a publication focusing on selected issues of sustainable development in the region.

12. The Sustainable Energy sub-programme will contribute through improvement of energy efficiency, mainly in countries in transition, by capacity building, identification of energy efficiency investment projects, improving the networking in the area of energy efficiency, enhancing dissemination of environmentally sound technologies and encouragement of implementation of energy efficiency standards. It also proposes the development and use of natural gas by encouraging in different ways greater use of natural gas and by promoting the creation of transboundary corridors for freight traffic by natural gas fuelled vehicles. The sub-programme, in addition, will promote technical cooperation in applying clean coal technologies and practices throughout the coal-energy chain and encourage energy policies for a more sustainable energy future. In cooperation with the Committee on Environmental Policy, the Committee on Sustainable Energy is elaborating guidelines on energy pricing and removing unsustainable energy subsidies. A programme on new and renewable energy will be introduced.

13. The Human Settlements sub-programme is proposing to use the UNECE Strategy for Sustainable Quality of Life in Human Settlements in the 21st century as a tool for implementing policies related to all three pillars of sustainable development. Country studies on countries in transition on housing policies and land administration are being used as in-depth activities. In addition, the work on social housing, including a series of workshops, and guidelines on condominiums are concrete ways of addressing key problems.

14. The Industry and Enterprise Development sub-programme intends to promote the introduction of cleaner technologies as part of the restructuring of old enterprises in countries in transition. Remediation of chemically polluted industrial waste sites in countries in transition is part of the programme. Under the Public Private Partnership activities more attention will be given to sustainable development elements. The land for development activity will emphasize property rights for poor and low-income groups.

15. The Statistics sub-programme is preparing a proposal for UNECE statistical work in the context of sustainable development for selection and adoption of indicators and methodological standards as well as data collection for these indicators and related statistics from national and international official sources. The aim is to prepare statistical products and assist in producing analytical studies in UNECE.

16. The Timber sub-programme produces market analysis, statistics on production and trade, future supply and demand, all oriented to sustainability issues. Data on forest condition, protected

areas and endangered forest species support the environmental pillar, while social dimensions touch upon on the role of women, participation of stakeholders in forest decisions and occupational health and safety. The sub-programme will, together with its partners, make a presentation on the regional dimension of sustainable forest management at the United Nations Forum on Forests.

17. The Trade Development sub-programme will support the plan of implementation primarily in the areas of certification, conformity assessment and technical harmonisation as well as trade in biomass. Work in environmentally sensitive areas and, particularly, in the area of timber certification will be explored. The work on trade facilitation promotes sustainable economic and sociable development by encouraging a more efficient use of resources, for any given level of trade transactions, primarily in the areas of transport and paper use.

18. The Transport sub-programme will continue its work to develop vehicle standards and regulations that improve the environmental and safety performance of cars. It will also actively contribute to the work under the new tripartite Steering Committee on transport, health and environment. In addition, its activities on transport of dangerous goods, inland water and rail transport support elements of sustainable transport.

19. It is proposed that UNECE, using its convening capacity, establishes a “UNECE wide Forum for Sustainable Development”. The national focal points for sustainable development would be heads of delegations at the forum. The forum should be open to contributions by all relevant partners: IGOs, the private sector, NGOs etc. The Forum would conduct a one-day meeting annually. The meeting could be held, alternatively, back-to-back with the Commission session, the Committee on Environmental Policy annual session or in some other practical context taking also into account the above indicated possible need for adjusting the timing and the substantive work to global activities (see paragraph 3 above). The Environment and Human Settlements Division would provide the permanent secretariat services for the Forum, but from time to time much of the secretariat input could come from other UNECE Divisions or non-UNECE partners depending on the themes for the meetings (UNEP, OECD, UNDP, OSCE, Council of Europe, etc.) using the experience from the Environment for Europe process.

20. The task of the Forum would be the implementation of the responsibilities allotted to the regional commissions by the WSSD (see in particular paragraphs 1 (b) and (d) above). The Forum should, in addition, choose relevant items from the Plan of Implementation for review and action. Chapter 3 (changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production) and Chapter 4 (protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development) – pages 4-21 in the WSSD document – may be of key relevance in this context. The Forum should also consider how to review the impact of the Johannesburg partnerships in the region. In particular, it should take responsibility for the follow-up to the region specific items in the Regional Ministerial Statement of September 2001. The Forum’s activities should be closely coordinated with the intra-UNECE work through the secretariat.
