

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Sixtieth session, 22-25 February 2005
(Provisional agenda item 7)

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON THE PROGRAMME OF WORK (GEPW) ON THE PROGRAMME PLANNING PROCESSES

Adopted on 12 January 2005 by the GEPW

It is to be recalled that the Commission at its 2004 annual session requested the secretariat and the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work to work together to produce a new version of the proposal on the work programme planning process that provides more information on the timing of each stage of the process and takes into account the new developments introduced by the General Assembly, in particular the replacement of the Medium-term Plan by the Biennial Programme Plan covering the same period as the Programme Budget.

Against this background, the following two sets of sequences are proposed for the Biennial Programme Plan and the Budget Narratives.

Process for the Biennial Programme Plan

- (i) The **secretariat** prepares a draft biennial programme plan for the forthcoming biennium
- (ii) The **Principal Subsidiary Bodies (PSBs)** (or their bureaux, depending on the timing of their annual sessions) review the draft biennial programme plan and provide their comments
- (iii) The draft is revised as necessary and is submitted to the **GEPW** for review and comments
- (iv) The **Executive Secretary** submits the draft to United Nations Headquarters, taking into account the views of UNECE member States
- (v) The **Commission** reviews and comments on the Biennial Programme Plan, and provides overall direction to the programme of work

Process for Budget Narratives

- (i) Taking into account the directions given by the Commission on the Biennial Programme Plan (see (v) above), the **Principal Subsidiary Bodies (PSBs)** review their biennial work programme and make recommendations on:
 - a. Their directions and priority areas;
 - b. Proposals on what activities to continue, terminate or introduce, with each proposed increase in activity offset by a reduction in another area; and
 - c. Proposals for streamlining their meetings, documents and publications.These decisions would need to be taken at the appropriate PSB session in order to be fed into the budgeting process.
- (ii) At its annual session in the budget submission year, the **Commission**, under a specific agenda item, provides guidance on the overall direction of the work of UNECE for the forthcoming biennium.
- (iii) The **secretariat** prepares the draft programme narratives, taking into account the input provided by the above two groups of actors. It should also make available to the GEPW information on the allocation of staff and extrabudgetary resources for the current biennium.
- (iv) The **Group of Experts on the Programme of Work** reviews the draft programme narratives and provides recommendations for endorsement by the Commission at an Ad Hoc Informal Meeting.
- (v) The **Executive Secretary** takes these recommendations into account in the finalization of the programme narratives prior to their submission to United Nations Headquarters. Any possible further recommendations not included in the Executive Secretary's submission will be transmitted to United Nations Headquarters.

To facilitate an overview of the processes of programme planning, the attached chart has been developed by the secretariat. It lays down the sequence of steps in the preparation of both the biennial programme plan and the programme budget, reflecting the role and actions to be taken by UNECE member States and the secretariat. It is designed to be a visual aid to understanding the different stages and the expected timing of each stage. The chart is submitted for consideration and endorsement by the GEPW.

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The GEPW also noted that, if adopted by the Commission, this process will apply from 2005 i.e. for the Biennial Programme Plan 2008-2009 and the Programme Budget 2008-2009. Notwithstanding this adopted procedure, modifications may need to be made as necessary to the 2006-2007 programme of work in order to take into account the outcome of the forthcoming UNECE comprehensive review. At the latest, these changes would be regularized in the biennial programme plan and programme budget 2008-2009.

Flow chart for the preparation of the ECE Biennial Programme Plan and Budget Narratives

