

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Action plan for the implementation of the Long-term Strategy

Informal Submission by the Bureau of the Executive Body

Summary

In its decision 2010/18 the Executive Body adopted the Long-term Strategy for the Convention and requested the Bureau of the Executive Body to develop an action plan for its implementation, and to submit it for approval to the twenty-ninth session of the Executive Body in 2011. This document contains the action plan developed by the Bureau. It is organized around the strategic priorities outlined in section V of the long-term strategy (ECE/EB.AIR/106, Add. 1, Decision 2010/8, annex)

I. Improve ratification and compliance

1. *Increased ratification of the Protocol on Heavy Metals, the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Gothenburg Protocol by countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe to improve air quality and provide other environmental benefits also in these regions*

(a) Complete current revisions of, or amendments to, the three Protocols to provide appropriate flexibility to facilitate increased ratifications in the countries noted above;

(b) Review and update the 2004 needs assessment of UNECE member states that have not ratified the Convention and its Protocols to evaluate further actions required to increase ratifications. Action: Secretariatⁱ [Ad-hoc Group of Experts]

2. *Improving the compliance mechanism*

(a) Identify and evaluate systemic and other barriers to achieving compliance and identify options for improvements. Action: Implementation Committee, for approval by the Executive Body

II. Prioritize work and increase efficiency of operation of the Convention

3. *Give priority to the core strengths and expertise of the Convention, namely, dealing with the atmospheric pollutants affecting human health, acidification, eutrophication, cultural heritage and other environmental effects which lead to adverse impacts on environmental service with a focus on particulate matter (PM), tropospheric ozone, eutrophying pollution and, where still needed, on acidifying pollution, and possibly other pollutants.*

(a) As part of the Executive Body's biannual workplanning, review the mandate and activities under the Convention's subsidiary bodies, task forces and ICPs, and ensure that their work is focused on prioritized issues. This review will be informed by the workplan items submitted to the Executive Body by the EMEP Steering Body, the Working Group on Effects and the Working Group on Strategies and Review. Ensure appropriate scrutiny of the workplan before its approval. Action: Executive Body.

4. *In addressing issues related to its core air quality expertise, regularly review the priorities for work and action in the light of new priorities and progress already achieved and wider policy developments on the regional and global scale. Assess the current structure, and the number and frequency of meetings of the Convention's subsidiary bodies, groups and task forces, with a view to realigning the use of time and resources in the Parties and the secretariat, consistent with the overall priorities of the Convention.*

(a) Conduct an evaluation of the Convention subsidiary bodies, task forces and other groups to streamline and rationalize operations, increase transparency, reduce the number of official documents, decrease the number of meetings, and prioritize activities. The evaluation will look at increasing the operational efficiency of subsidiary body meetings as well as more effective use of Executive Body resources. The evaluation should also review the options to reduce the frequency of WGSR, WGE, EMEP Steering Body and

possibly Executive Body meetings and to streamline activities and find efficiencies. Such an evaluation could be carried out by external reviewer(s) in close co-operation with the relevant bodies in CLRTAP, particularly the Bureaux of the Subsidiary Bodies and take into account any ongoing internal reviews undertaken by the Subsidiary Bodies.

(b) As stipulated by the relevant Protocols, conduct Sufficiency and Effectiveness Reviews, including the need for amendments to update the Protocols, at a minimum every 5 years. Action: EB Bureau and Bureaux of Subsidiary Bodies (see also 5(a) below)

(c) Following the amendments to the Heavy Metals Protocol, review the need for possible further revisions, amendment or updates of the POPs and Heavy Metals Protocols in light of the Stockholm Convention on POPs and the pending UNEP global agreement on mercury. Included will be an evaluation of overlaps between the Protocols and the global instruments. Action: Ad-hoc group¹ selected by the Executive Body Bureau and approved by the Executive Body.

5. *Strengthen and maintain the science and policy linkages with the aim of evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of the Convention's policies and Protocols.*

(a) Further develop effect indicators and cost-benefit assessments (qualitative and quantitative). Action: WGE/ TFIAM;

(b) Encourage the widest possible participation of the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South- Eastern Europe in the science programme for the Convention, as already specified in the Action Plan for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, with a view to obtaining reliable emission data and to developing monitoring and modelling networks throughout the region. Action: WGE and EMEP Bureaux, EECCA Coordinating Group

(c) Intensify scientific cooperation beyond the UNECE region. Action: all Working Groups.

III. Future direction of Protocols

6. *Regularly assess the Gothenburg Protocol in terms of its correspondence with the updated scientific effects assessment and the degree to which it has achieved its long-term effects-oriented goals.*

(a) The regular assessment should include an evaluation of the effectiveness of new measures approved in the revised Protocol (including on particulate matter); it should also seek to identify sources of pollutants that have not yet been addressed in the Protocol's control measures. It should take into consideration new emerging technologies and non-technical measures to assess the potential for further cost effective reductions. It could also seek to identify sources whose cumulative emissions are small and for which control measures may no longer be required. Action: EGTEI, TFRN and others.

(b) The regular assessment should also take into consideration new scientific developments to assess the potential need for additional measures under the Protocol. Action: EMEP/WGE/HTAP to regularly assess scientific developments and to inform the Executive Body of any need to revise the Gothenburg Protocol.

¹ Note: this document suggests the formation of an ad-hoc group of experts to accomplish a number of tasks. This group will have a lifetime limited to the task it is carrying out and will have no locus in the organisational chart of the Convention.

7. *Scale-down policy work directed at a new or revised POPs Protocol and shift focus to unintentionally released POPs and to areas and substances where the implementation of stricter measures in the UNECE region is still recommended. In addition there will be renewed emphasis on increasing the number of countries ratifying and implementing the existing Protocol, and efforts to strengthen linkages with the Stockholm Convention.*

(a) Develop and implement a work plan revising BAT guidance for unintentionally released POPs with consideration for the barriers to ratification for EECCA and SEA countries.

(b) Periodically report on developments under the Stockholm Convention, in particular, the work on new substances, BAT and BEP, capacity building, and information exchange. Action: [Task Force on POPs].

8. *Complete the amendments and revisions to the Heavy Metals Protocol and subsequently give priority to increasing the number of countries ratifying and implementing the revised Protocol.*

(a) As directed by the Executive Body, aim to complete the amendments to the Heavy Metals Protocol by 2012, with a focus on increasing the number of countries ratifying and implementing the amended Protocol. Action: WGSR.

9. *Make efforts to seek a solution to the issue of multiple protocols, which address the same pollutant(s) with different targets and different requirements, and which create a series of over burdensome obligations for Parties, remaining all simultaneously in force.*

(a) Encourage all parties to earlier Protocols to join the revised Gothenburg, POPs, and Heavy Metals Protocols; set priorities for work in a way that ensure that Parties' efforts are geared towards full implementation and compliance with these revised Protocols. Action: Executive Body.

IV. Links with climate change and delivery of co-benefits

10. *Characterize linkages between air pollution and climate change, identify co-benefits of addressing air pollution and climate change simultaneously, and strengthen scientific cooperation on these issues.*

(a) Initial focus on short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs).

(b) Assess the feasibility of incorporating SLCFs into instruments such as the revised Gothenburg Protocol. Initial efforts should focus on measures targeting black carbon as a component of particulate matter and on the development of guidelines for black carbon inventories. Later efforts could potentially assess measures targeting methane and carbon monoxide as precursors of ozone, taking into account the work of HTAP pursuant to Decision 2010/1. Action: EMEP, EMEP Taskforce on Inventories and Projections, WGSR

(c) Continue scientific cooperation between UNEP and the technical centres under the Convention. Action: EMEP, EB Bureau.

(d) Strengthen linkages with the UNFCCC and UNEP in order to establish longer-term cooperation on a more strategic level. Action: EB Bureau

(e) Regularly assess whether scientific developments or new control technologies or measures present new opportunities to target air pollutants that are also SLCFs. Action: EMEP, EGTEI

11. *Identify co-benefits in combating air pollution and other environmental issues like biodiversity loss and reactive nitrogen in the environment.*

(a) Continue to improve knowledge on such links and co-benefits, communicate and implement them into policy advising instruments like integrated assessment models. Action: WGE, TFRN, EMEP; TFIAM.

(b) Strengthen linkages with the CBD and its IPBES as well as with international instruments relevant to the nitrogen cascade (e.g. UNEP) in order to establish longer-term cooperation on a more strategic level. Action: EB Bureau assisted by WGE, TFRN and others.

V. Outreach, communication and resources

12. *Enhance strategic scientific and policy outreach activities and cooperation with other regions and the global community on intercontinental air pollution issues, including a communication strategy and system that highlights the work and benefits of the Convention.*

(a) Explore ways to further foster cooperation between regional agreements around the world and to link regional and global action at scientific as well as strategic/policy levels. Action: HTAP, ad-hoc group of experts, EB Bureau.

(b) Revise and update the draft Communication Strategy from 2003 (London) to help increase the visibility of the Convention and raise political awareness of air pollution issues in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe. For example, this could include developing and implementing a plan to translate promotional and guidance documents into Russian for the EECCA region. The strategy should also highlight work under the Convention on air pollution and climate change co-benefits. Action: [EB Bureau] [Ad hoc group].

13. *Make efforts to ensure more active involvement of a greater number of Parties in the work of the Executive Body and the subsidiary bodies, including in the work of their bureaux, as well as in the technical and scientific groups.*

(a) Explore ways to increase participation of delegations of countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South- Eastern Europe in the bureaux. Action: EB and Subsidiary Body Bureaux.

(b) Explore options for establishing a robust mechanism for supporting core activities not covered by the EMEP budget. Action: EB Bureau.

14. Mindful of the secretariat's limited resources and the need for sufficient and stable funding, ensure that the functions assigned to the secretariat in accordance with article 11 of the Convention reflect the Convention's priorities, as described in the Convention's Long-Term Strategy. Action: EB Bureau (in close consultation with the Secretariat).

ⁱ Contingent on the establishment of an extrabudgetary position within the Secretariat focused on outreach to EECCA countries.