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Review of implementation of the 2014–2015 workplan: communication and outreach

Report on outreach activities*

Submitted by the Bureau

Summary

This document was prepared by the Bureau of the Executive Body for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution in cooperation with the secretariat as part of the Convention's workplan for 2014–2015 and its component on communication and outreach (ECE/EB.AIR/122/Add.2, item 5.4.1). It contains a brief review of existing and possible future cooperation opportunities between a number of subregional, regional and global networks and mechanisms on air pollution abatement and the Convention and its bodies.

* The present document is being submitted without formal editing.



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I. Introduction

1. This document was prepared by the Bureau of the Executive Body for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention) in cooperation with the secretariat as part of the Convention's workplan for 2014-2015 and its component on communication and outreach (ECE/EB.AIR/122/Add.2, item 5.4.1).
2. The document contains a brief overview of selected subregional, regional and global networks and mechanisms on air pollution abatement and outlines some examples of existing and possible future cooperation between them and the Air Convention and its bodies. The list is by no means exhaustive as a number of other cooperation mechanisms exist in various regions of the world.
3. The document builds on earlier reviews that were brought to the attention of the Executive Body, such as the report on strengthening cooperation with regional air pollution networks and initiatives outside the Air Convention which was submitted to the twenty-ninth session of the Executive Body (Geneva, 12–16 December 2011) as an informal document.¹ Other sources of information used for this review include similar studies conducted by other entities,² websites of the reviewed networks and mechanisms and of the Air Convention's subsidiary bodies and centres. The Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RRC.AP) also provided its inputs.
4. The document includes some recommendations and proposed measures to improve outreach activities in areas outside the ECE region.

II. Review of selected cooperation opportunities

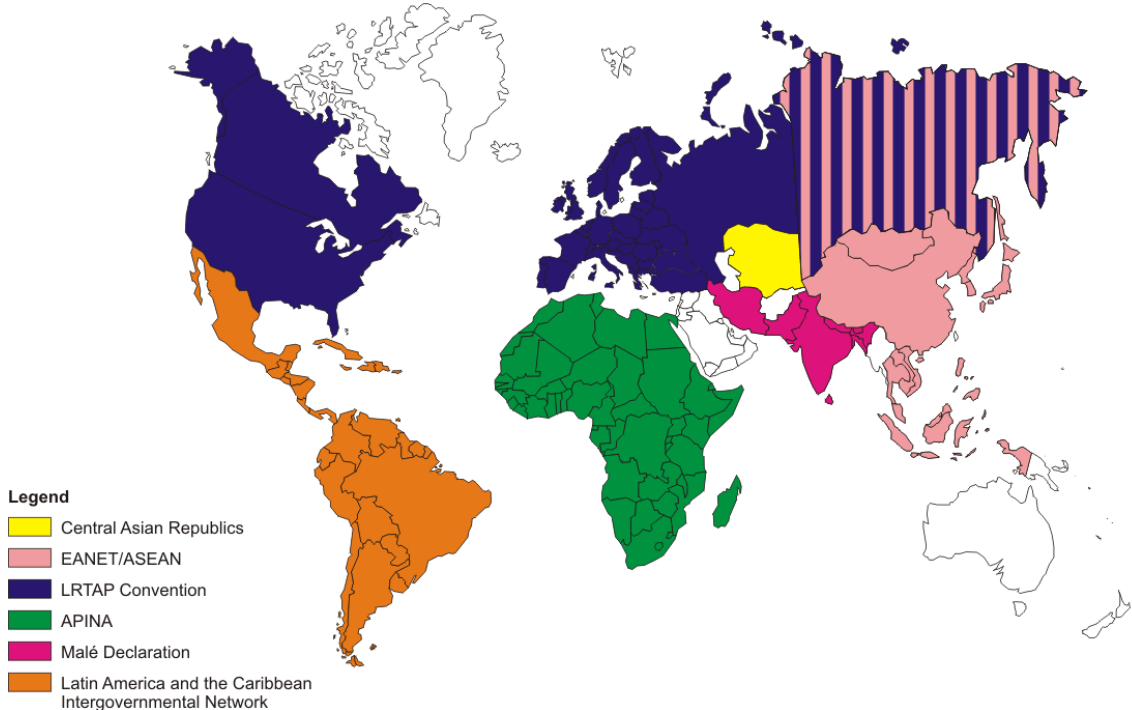
5. Substantial scientific and technical capacities in various aspects of transboundary air pollution monitoring and assessment exist in regions not covered by the geographical scope of the Air Convention. Some of these regions, like the Asia-Pacific serve now as global development engines with booming economies but also rising concerns about environmental sustainability.
6. In order to respond to health and environmental challenges related to air pollution UN Member States around the world as well as other groups of stakeholders, have established a number of cooperation networks and mechanisms, some of which are reviewed below. It should be noted that for many of them the institutional and scientific structure of the Air Convention has served as a source of inspiration and there already exist different levels of cooperation between such networks and mechanisms and the subsidiary bodies and centres operating under the Air Convention. The summary of the reviewed networks and mechanisms as well as their geographical representation are provided in figure 1 and table 1.
7. The review also covers linkages between regional instruments of the Air Convention and the global conventions that cover the same pollutant categories, e.g. the Stockholm

¹ Available at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2011/eb/eb/n_12.pdf.

² For information on EANET, MICS-Asia and LTP a study by the NEASPEC Secretariat was used as a reference. See Review of the Main Activities on Transboundary Air Pollution in North-East Asia, available at http://www.neaspec.org/sites/default/files/SOM17_TAP_Annex%20II.pdf.

Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. In addition, the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution under the Air Convention is reviewed as an example of a body that already operates outside the geographical scope of the Air Convention.

Figure 1
Geographical coverage of the main existing regional air pollution networks



Source: modified figure 1 and table 1 from “Atmospheric Pollution: Developing a Global Approach”, a discussion paper by Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum for the twenty-eighth session of the Convention’s Executive Body (Inf. doc. no. 11; http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2010/eb/eb/Informal%20documents/Info.doc.11_GAPforum_discussionpaper_dev_global_approach.pdf)

Table
Selected subregional and regional air pollution networks and mechanisms

<i>Regional Network/Mechanism</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Strategy Generation and Policy Assessment</i>	<i>Secretariat, coordination</i>	<i>Technical activities</i>
EANET http://www.eanet.cc/	East Asia	Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Thailand, Viet Nam	Provide useful inputs for decision making at various levels with the aim of preventing or reducing the adverse impacts on the environment, and promote cooperation among countries	Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RRC.AP) is secretariat and Asia Centre for Air Pollution Research (ACAP) is the Network Centre	Deposition monitoring
Malé Declaration http://www.rrcap.aiaa.org/male/	South Asia	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	Strengthening the regional policy framework for air pollution reduction	Network Coordination by RRC.AP together with the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)	Emissions inventories; atmospheric transport modelling; deposition monitoring; impact assessment; integrated assessment modelling; mitigation assessment
NEASPEC http://www.neaspec.org/	North-East Asia	China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation	Assessment of existing capacities and needs; recommendations to increase capacities and to establish a policy level platform for exchange of information on transboundary air pollution; to draw from experiences of the ECE Air	Secretariat at ESCAP's Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia (SRO-ENEAA)	Atmospheric modelling, air pollution depositions and adverse impacts, transboundary exchange of pollutants, emission inventories

<i>Regional Network/Mechanism</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Strategy Generation and Policy Assessment</i>	<i>Secretariat, coordination</i>	<i>Technical activities</i>
			Convention		
Arctic Council	Arctic	Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States of America	Mainly through the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) through a mandate determined by the Arctic Council Ministers and Senior Arctic Officials, the AMAP Strategic Framework and AMAP workplan	AMAP is responsible for air pollution issues	Technical activities are conducted in cooperation with EMEP and other scientific bodies and focus on the assessment of black carbon, POPs, heavy metals, etc. in the Arctic region

A. Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia

Background

8. The Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) was established to respond to the need for a regional monitoring network with standardized monitoring methods and analytical techniques regarding the state of acid deposition in the region. The first session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG) of EANET was held in March 1998 in Japan and the preparatory phase for EANET activities was held from 1998 to 2000. EANET launched its regular activities in 2001 in accordance with the Joint Announcement on the Implementation of EANET. The secretariat role is carried out by RRC.AP, collaborating with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), located in Bangkok, Thailand. The EANET Network Center is located in Japan in the premises of the Asia Centre for Air Pollution Research (ACAP). There are 13 participating countries (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Thailand and Vietnam). The institutional framework for EANET is shown in figure 2.

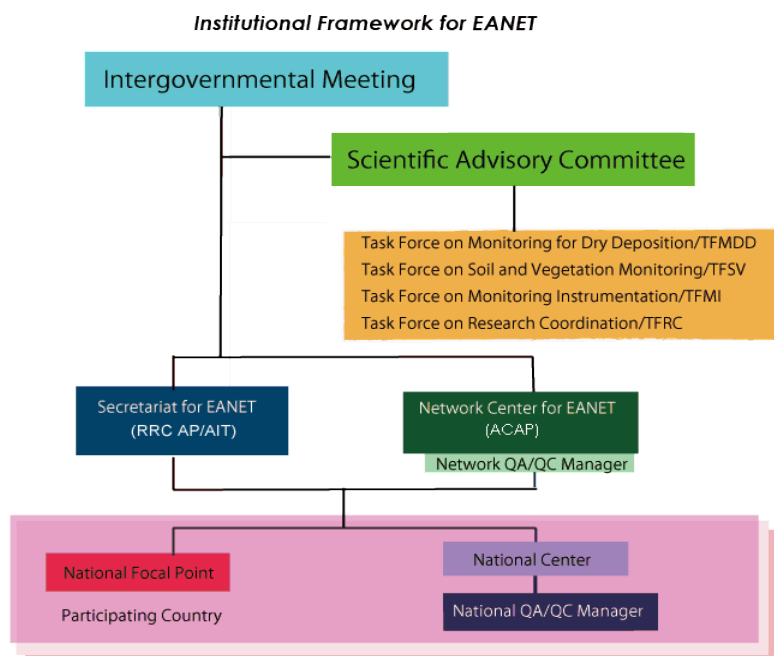
9. The objectives of EANET are: to create a common understanding of the state of acid deposition problems in East Asia; to provide useful inputs for decision-making at local, national and regional levels aimed at preventing or reducing adverse impacts on the environment caused by acid deposition; and to contribute to cooperation on the issues related to acid deposition among the participating countries.

10. As of 2014, there were 56 wet deposition monitoring sites in the East Asian region located in 13 participating countries. In terms of knowledge sharing and dissemination,

guidelines and technical manuals related to acid deposition have been developed, along with technical missions and group/individual training courses and seminars for the participating countries to strengthen technical capacity.

Figure 2

Institutional Framework for EANET



Source: <http://www.eanet.asia/eanet/org.html>

Summary of activities

11. The core activities include monitoring and associated activities such as those on quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) and capacity building. However, as was confirmed during the negotiation of the Instrument (for strengthening the EANET functions) and as is reflected in the Strategy on EANET Development (2006-2010) and the Medium Term Plan for EANET (2011-2015), the development of emission inventory and the improvement of and calculation with simulation models are included among the EANET's research and capacity building activities. For monitoring, the participating countries made efforts to ensure the data quality, through the development of technical manuals and guidelines to be commonly used by the participating countries and the QA/QC activities including inter-laboratory comparison projects. Based on the accumulated EANET data from 2000 to 2009 and other scientific findings, the First and the Second Periodic Reports on the State of Acid Deposition in East Asia were published in 2007 and 2012, respectively.

12. The targeted substances of monitoring activities under EANET include not only acidifying substances but also related chemical species such as ozone and particulate matter (PM). As of 2012, Japan, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Thailand reported on ozone while China, Japan, Republic of Korea and Thailand reported on PM, respectively to the Network Center, while monitoring data of other acidifying substances have been reported by all participating countries.

13. Financial basis of the EANET activities is supported by voluntary contributions of the participating countries. The Instrument, which has been operational since 1 January 2012, provides a stronger basis for predictable financial contributions.

Model Inter-comparison Study in Asia

14. The main objective of the Model Inter-comparison Study in Asia (MICS-Asia), supported by EANET as part of its additional research activity, is to reach a common understanding of model performances and uncertainties in Asia. MICS-Asia has been implementing its activities in three phases – starting in 1998, 2001 and 2010, respectively. In Phase III, ACAP in Japan and the Institute of Atmospheric Physics, Chinese Academy of Science, China act as the implementing agencies. The list of participating members included experts on voluntary basis from countries of Asia (Japan, China, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, etc.), Europe, as well as from Canada and the United States. The objectives of Phase III include: evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of current multiscale air quality models; providing techniques for reducing uncertainties; developing reliable anthropogenic emission inventories in Asia; understanding uncertainties of bottom-up emission inventories in Asia; and providing multi-model estimates of radiative forcing and other inputs.

15. From 2010, the “International Workshop on Atmospheric Modelling Research in East Asia” has been held annually in China to solicit experts on modelling in East Asia and to discuss activities in the MICS-Asia Phase III. In February 2011, the Joint International Centre on Air Quality Modelling Studies (JICAM) was launched. JICAM will implement research activities to integrate EANET observations, field campaigns, and remote sensing products with air quality modelling studies among others on ozone, fine particles, dust, and acid deposition. The outcome of MICS-Asia can provide important information for policy analysis that aims at devising long-term strategies for air pollution control at the local, national and regional levels in East Asia.

Possible cooperation with the Air Convention

16. The expansion of the scope of activities under EANET will be discussed during the 16th session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (Jakarta, 25–26 November 2014). The expansion can provide new opportunities for cooperation, especially on the issues covered by the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP) and the Working Group of Effects under the Air Convention. The exchange of information and experience has already been in place between EANET and different bodies under the Air Convention and its secretariat. At the 38th session of the EMEP Steering Body (Geneva, 15–17 September 2014), a representative of RRC.AP confirmed the interest of this regional centre to cooperate with the Air Convention bodies and its secretariat on issues related to EANET and the Malé Declaration (see section 2.3 below).

B. Joint Research Project on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollutants in North-East Asia

Background

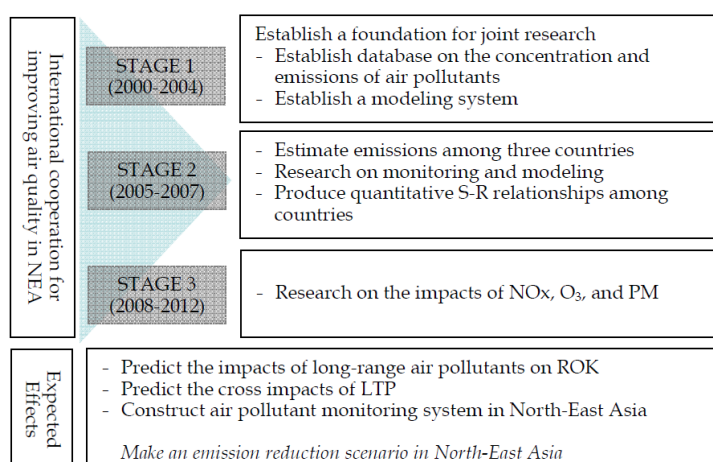
17. Joint Research Project on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollutants in North-East Asia (LTP) is a joint research project of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, which has been conducting research on transboundary air pollution since 2000. As is depicted in Figure 3, research on monitoring and modeling of air pollutants, in particular, sulphur, had been conducted during the first and second stages. The targeted pollutants had been

expanded to other acid compounds during the third stage. The LTP project has served as an international cooperative tool for environmental protection in North-East Asia aimed at providing scientific information for developing emission reduction scenarios.

18. The terms of reference of joint research included the establishment and operation of the working group, sub-working groups, and the secretariat. The working group coordinates collaboration on LTP related research and provides scientific support and suggestion for the reduction of transboundary pollution. The sub-working groups have been established to discuss specific joint research proposals. The secretariat prepares and facilitates the meetings of the working group.

Figure 3

Stages of the LTP project research plan



Source: Review of the Main Activities on Transboundary Air Pollution in North-East Asia (NEASPEC, 2012)

Summary of activities

19. A Joint Research Proposal, which outlines the scope of activities, is the highest level document of LTP project. Any pollutant that can be transported on long-range, for example heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants (POPs), can be designated as targets for research. The initial 6-year research plan was expanded to a 14-year plan. The plan was divided into 3-stages of basic environmental information exchange, emission evaluation and monitoring, and finally the preparation of the pollution reduction scenario.

20. Two main methods of research consist of monitoring and modelling. The aim of monitoring is to operate joint monitoring stations in North-East Asia as well as to process and analyze the collected data. The research fields are the joint monitoring of air pollutants in the North-East Asia and the estimation of the flux for long-range transboundary air pollutants. The observation data from ground monitoring and aircraft measurements during intensive periods is utilized to estimate the flux. Each participating country has set up two monitoring sites and produced monitoring data for comparison and analysis as specified in the Terms of Reference for Joint Research on LTP.

21. The objective in modelling is the impact assessment of air pollutants in the North-East Asia and is performed by analysing the emission scenarios for air quality improvement. The main tool was developed by the three countries via their own numerical models. Source-receptor (S-R) relationships are also analysed by 5 divided target areas: Northern, Central and Southern China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Three models

created by each of the three countries are used to calculate S-R relationship for sulphur and nitrogen.

Possible cooperation with the Air Convention

22. Possible cooperation may include the exchange of information with EMEP on the monitoring and modelling activities. Though LTP comprises only three countries, it has accumulated a lot of experience on the modelling of air pollution in North-East Asia, which could be linked to activities on the hemispheric level.

C. The Malé Declaration

Background

23. The Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia is an intergovernmental agreement to tackle regional air pollution problems, established in 1998 by eight South Asian countries at a meeting of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) Governing Council. It is currently the only ministerial level environmental agreement between South Asian countries and has a membership of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

24. The main objective of the Malé Declaration is to foster regional cooperation to address the rapidly increasing problem of regional air pollution with focus on South Asia. The activities have been developed under different phases. Until 2012, funding had been provided by UNEP and the Swedish Government (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) as part of the Regional Air Pollution in Developing Countries programme. Since then the mechanism has been supported by the participating countries. While Phases I to III tackled “agreement and awareness”, “capacity building”, and “tackling air pollution problems”, Phase IV was focused on a sustainable financing mechanism and the selection of regional centres on air quality and impact assessment studies (eight centers have been subsequently selected). This phase also continued work on the impact assessment on crops, health and corrosion and regular monitoring. The phase V (2014-2016) focuses on continuous implementation, including activities on short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs).

Summary of activities

25. The secretariat of the Malé Declaration is provided by at RRC.AP. Technical work to date has included emission inventory compilation, monitoring and modelling (including some integrated assessment modelling), assessment of crop damage due to tropospheric ozone and human health impacts of PM on school children. A handbook on control and prevention of air pollution was developed in Phase III and has been disseminated to practitioners and policy makers. An Intergovernmental Meeting (IG) is held annually as the main governing body and further reports progress to the SACEP Council of Ministers. During the implementation of Phase IV, the IG established a Task Force on Future Development to consider aspects of the network expansion.

Possible cooperation with the Air Convention

26. There has already been cooperation with the Malé Declaration at the technical level. The IG of the Malé Declaration wrote to the Executive Body in 2007 inviting collaboration and joint activities with subsidiary bodies of the Air Convention, especially with regard to impacts of ozone on crops (see ECE/EB.AIR/91). The Executive Body responded positively and requested its Bureau and secretariat to reply to the request and inform the

necessary subsidiary bodies. The International Cooperative Programme (ICP) on Effects of Air Pollution on Natural Vegetation and Crops has subsequently collaborated with scientists involved in the work under the Malé Declaration (see ECE/EB.AIR/WG.1/2011/8). The new area of activities related to SLCPs may provide opportunities for cooperation in the context of the amended 1999 Gothenburg Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol).

D. North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation

Background

27. The North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) is a comprehensive intergovernmental cooperation framework addressing environmental challenges in North-East Asia. It was established in 1993 as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and with the goal of promoting environmental cooperation in the subregion by six member States - China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. The subregional office for East and North-East Asia of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) located in Incheon, Republic of Korea, serves as the secretariat of NEASPEC. The Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC serves as its main governing body and meets annually to take major decisions on the directions of its programme.

Summary of activities

28. Air pollution abatement, including its transboundary aspects, has been traditionally one of the main areas of work under NEASPEC. With the completion of the project on mitigation of transboundary air pollution from coal-fired power plants, the subregional member States embarked on a new project, proposed by the Russian Federation to review the current status and identify priorities for comprehensive cooperation on transboundary air pollution in North-East Asia. Based on the results of the conducted review, the SOM at its 18th session (Ulaanbaatar, 5–6 November 2013) approved a new project proposed and funded by the Russian Federation on the development of technical and policy frameworks for transboundary air pollution assessment and abatement in North-East Asia. The intermediate results of the project were recently presented at the 19th session of the SOM (Moscow, 22–23 September 2014).³

Possible cooperation with the Air Convention

29. The recent NEASPEC projects related to air pollution take inspiration from the institutional and technical frameworks of the Air Convention and aim at establishing similar comprehensive umbrella mechanisms in North-East Asia building on the existing structures like EANET and LTP. For this reason, at the outset of the project ESCAP invited ECE to partner in the implementation of the project by providing relevant technical and policy advice through the Air Convention secretariat. The cooperation has proven to be successful and also acknowledged by the NEASPEC member States. The fact that the Russian Federation is a member State of both ESCAP and ECE, and is a Party to Air Convention, can provide a link between the pan-European and the Asia-Pacific regions. The Russian Federation also participates in EANET with the Asian part of its territory, not covered by EMEP.

³ For details see http://www.neaspec.org/sites/default/files/1.%20SOM19_TAP.pdf.

E. Arctic Council

Background

30. Established under the 1996 Ottawa Declaration, the Arctic Council is a high-level intergovernmental forum providing a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States. Member States are Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States. The interests of the Arctic Council are broad, but for many years there has been an interest in air pollution.

Summary of activities

31. Five working groups have been established under the Arctic Council: the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, Emergency, Prevention, Preparedness and Response, Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment and Sustainable Development. AMAP has a particular interest in air pollution and collaborates closely with the Air Convention subsidiary bodies in preparing its reports. EMEP has worked closely with AMAP and several ICPs provided their inputs to its work.

Possible cooperation with the Air Convention

32. There already exists a strong cooperation between the Air Convention and the Arctic Council. The Council has provided reports to the Executive Body (usually through a delegation of a Party to the Convention that is also a member of the Arctic Council). In addition, AMAP has attended Executive Body sessions in past years. Since all member States of the Arctic Council are Parties to the Air Convention, full cooperation with the Council is straightforward. Future cooperation could specifically focus on the issue of black carbon abatement in the Arctic in the light of the Convention's recently amended Gothenburg Protocol. A new Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane under the Arctic Council, established in 2013 and co-chaired by Canada and Sweden, can provide additional avenues for cooperation.

F. Climate and Clean Air Coalition⁴

Background

33. Since 2012, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) brings together nations, institutions, organisations and companies to reduce short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) with the aim to address near-term climate change and air pollution, and to improve public health, food security, and energy efficiency. The coalition, which now counts 96 partners, focuses on such main SLCPs as methane, black carbon and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Its governance structure includes the following:

- (a) A Working Group, with representatives from the partners, oversees the cooperative actions of the Coalition;
- (b) A High-Level Assembly of the Coalition partners convenes to set policy, take stock of progress and initiate future efforts;
- (c) A Scientific Advisory Panel is responsible for keeping the Coalition abreast of new science development on SLCPs and inform policy discussions;
- (d) A Secretariat is hosted by UNEP in Paris.

⁴ Based on information available at <http://www.ccacoalition.org/>.

34. The Coalition's objectives are to address SLCPs by:
- (a) Raising awareness of SLCPs impacts and mitigation strategies;
 - (b) Enhancing and developing new national and regional actions, including by identifying and overcoming barriers, enhancing capacity, and mobilizing support;
 - (c) Promoting best practices and showcasing successful efforts;
 - (d) Improving scientific understanding of SLCPs impacts and mitigation strategies
35. The Coalition serves as a forum for assessing progress in addressing the challenge of SLCPs and for mobilizing resources to accelerate action. It works to catalyse new actions as well as to highlight and bolster existing efforts on near-term climate change and related public health, food and energy security, and environmental issues.

Summary of activities

36. The CCAC takes action through Initiatives. Initiatives are partner-led and provide strategic guidance for action on SLCPs in a specific sector or area, responding to priority areas identified by the partners. Currently, 11 Initiatives are being implemented on: agriculture, bricks, clean cooking and domestic heating, heavy-duty vehicles and engines, HFCs, oil and gas, waste, finance, regional assessment, supporting national planning for action and urban health.

Possible cooperation with the Air Convention

37. In 2012-2013, the Bureau to the Air Convention Executive Body had considered a note by the secretariat presenting the option of the ECE becoming a partner of CCAC and thus providing a framework for cooperation between the Convention and the Coalition. The Bureau decided not to pursue this option and consequently, the secretariat did not take any further action with a view to the ECE joining the Coalition.

G. UNEP Stockholm and Minamata Conventions

Background

38. The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Minamata Convention on Mercury under UNEP provide ample opportunities for cooperation with regard to abatement of POPs and heavy metals. Having a global coverage, the UNEP Conventions can take stock of the regional success of the Air Convention's Protocols on POPs and Heavy Metals that contributed considerably to the abatement of those harmful pollutants in the pan-European region. At the same time, in relation to the Stockholm Convention, the Parties to the Air Convention recognized that the balance of work within the Convention would change in the future and that options to better complement measures and actions taken at the global level and to secure the added value of the Protocol on POPs would need to be explored. At the upcoming 33rd session of the Executive Body (Geneva, 8–12 December 2014), the Parties to the Air Convention will also consider how the adoption of the Minamata Convention in 2013 will impact the work under the Air Convention on heavy metals.

Possible cooperation with the Air Convention

39. During 2013–2014, the co-Chair of the Global Coordination Group (GCG) of the Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) under the Stockholm Convention and the Chair of the Executive Body Bureau of the Air Convention exchanged letters on further improving

cooperation between different bodies under the two Conventions. Activities on air monitoring, emission inventories and long-range transport modelling of POPs were particularly mentioned.

40. On the scientific level, the cooperation has already been ongoing. Different task forces and centres under EMEP have provided scientific inputs to the UNEP Conventions. At the 38th session of the EMEP Steering Body, the Meteorological and Synthesizing Centre East (MSC-E) and the Chemical Coordinating Centre presented results of a study on the assessment of long-term changes of POPs pollution conducted jointly with different bodies under the Air and Stockholm Conventions and with results on the pan-European and global scales. In that presentation, a representative of MSC-E called for closer cooperation between the two Conventions with respect to compilation of emissions and assessment of pollution. In addition, MSC-E jointly with the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution and other bodies under the Air Convention, provide inputs to global studies on mercury, including the Global Mercury Assessment to support the Minamata Convention.

H. Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution

Background

41. The Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution was established in 2004 under the Air Convention and in 2010 the Executive Body for the Convention renewed and expanded its mandate. As a body tasked with planning and conducting technical work related to the hemispheric transport of air pollution across the northern hemisphere, it has been working on a geographical scale that goes beyond the scope of the Air Convention. The participation in the Task Force is open to all interested experts and to date experts from 14 countries outside the ECE region have contributed to its activities.

Summary of activities

42. In 2010, the Task Force published its first comprehensive assessment of the state of science with respect to the intercontinental transport of air pollutants in the northern hemisphere. The document covered such pollutants as ozone, particulate matter, mercury and POPs, and also contained answers to policy relevant science questions. One of the policy relevant conclusions stated that without international cooperation to mitigate intercontinental flows of air pollution, many nations would not be able to meet their own goals and objectives for protecting public health and environmental quality.

43. The Task Force by its design and scope of activities has been engaged in active cooperation with countries outside the ECE region. Such cooperation has undoubtedly contributed greatly to the outreach activities under the Air Convention and has potential to contribute to raising awareness about the Air Convention even further. The report of the Task Force to the 38th session of the EMEP Steering Body (ECE/EB.AIR/GE.1/2014/7) provides examples of recent cooperation of the Task Force with MICS-Asia (covered in section 2.1) and other entities outside the scope of the Convention. The Task Force has also been cooperating with the Arctic Council, specifically on issues of black carbon and supported the work under the Minamata Convention.

III. Formal links

44. Having the promotion of sustainable development in the pan-European region as an important part of its mandate, ECE has been cooperating with a great number of regional and global entities covering different environmental issues. In some cases, such cooperation was formalized in a form of memoranda of understanding. Some of such cooperation

agreements could be potentially utilized for the outreach activities on issues related to air pollution abatement and to promote the Air Convention's tools and approaches. For instance, a Memorandum of Understanding between ECE and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity,⁵ signed in October 2010, could be used to share the work under the Air Convention on studying the damage of air pollution to vegetation, though the primary goal of the memorandum is the cooperation on forestry and timber issues. Another example is a cooperation agreement between ECE and the European Environment Agency related to the work on the Shared Environmental Information System and environmental indicators (including those on air pollution).

IV. Conclusions

45. Projects similar to the one implemented under NEASPEC provide a good opportunity to promote and showcase the achievements of the Air Convention and the feasibility of its scientific and policy framework not only for countries of North-East Asia but also elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region. The air pollution agenda, both its local (urban) and transboundary aspects, have been drawing an increasing interest from the general public and policy makers in Asia. The Air Convention is being pinpointed by many experts as a model for possible comprehensive framework for cooperation in this most dynamically growing region of the world.

46. The previous technical cooperation of a number of technical bodies under the Convention and individual scientific institutes from Europe with other scientific bodies or regional cooperation mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region could also potentially contribute to the outreach of the Convention. Scientific work of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in the region, and specifically in China, has been contributing to the integrated assessment modelling efforts under different initiatives through the application of the Greenhouse Gas and Air Pollution Interactions and Synergies (GAINS) model.⁶ EANET has been building its structure for monitoring of air pollution on the Convention's experience and has been cooperating actively with different Convention bodies and the secretariat, as well as with individual national experts from the ECE member States. MICS-Asia activities have also benefited from such useful inputs from the pan-European region in strengthening modelling of transboundary air pollution in Asia. As such, the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution and IIASA experts have been involved in the implementation of phase III of MICS-Asia.

47. It has been noted in the context of the EMEP that the results of its work were being used widely by different organizations and mechanisms worldwide, in some cases without proper references or acknowledgment. Therefore, there is a need to promote the results and achievements of the EMEP work in the wider context of the Air Convention's success demonstrated by three decades of successful air pollution abatement in the pan-European region.

48. It should be underlined that different bodies and centres under the Air Convention and individual experts from the pan-European region engage regularly in cooperation with their counterparts in other regions. In the light the decision taken at the Executive Body's twenty-fifth session in 2007, subsidiary bodies and centres have been encouraged to share their experience and information with other regions. However, regular succinct reporting on

⁵ Available at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/oes/MOU/ECE_MoU_CBD.pdf.

⁶ More details are available at <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/researchPrograms/Asia.en.html>.

such activities during the sessions of major subsidiary bodies and the Executive Body cannot cover all activities implemented outside the region.

49. The need for outreach to other regions has also been demonstrated by a number of scientific studies. The recent report on the deposition of air pollutants to vegetation in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central and South-East Asia and their impacts (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.1/2014/13) concluded that there was a lack of monitoring data regarding the deposition to and impacts of air pollutants on vegetation in the reviewed countries. Thus, it was considered desirable to further enlarge coordinated networks to measure air concentrations and depositions of air pollutants, i.e., by extending the EMEP monitoring network in the Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia region and to establish a similar network in South-East Asia, for example by extending EANET by including other regions and more pollutants. It was further suggested that ICPs under the Air Convention consider further stimulating the development of coordinated networks in those regions with the aim of establishing widespread monitoring networks assessing the impacts of air pollutants on ecosystems. Finally, it was highlighted that the improvement of air quality in those regions will also benefit the whole pan-European region due to a reduction in the long-range transport of air pollutants, particularly those of hemispheric nature such as ozone and mercury.

50. The Executive Body may wish to consider the present report and instruct its Bureau and the secretariat on further steps in the implementation of the programme area on communication and outreach under the 2014–2015 workplan. Specifically, it could consider entrusting the Bureau and the secretariat with contacting regional networks and mechanisms, highlighted in the present report and beyond them, to determine their interest in collaborating with the Air Convention on common goals as was included in the Convention's current workplan under item 5.4.2.
