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Report of the Bureau on its activities since the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Activities of the Bureau since the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties*

Report by the Bureau Chair and Vice-Chairs

Summary

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, at its eighth meeting (Geneva, 3–5 December 2014), requested the Bureau to report to it at its ninth meeting on the Bureau's activities in the intervening period (ECE/CP.TEIA/30, para. 9).

The main responsibilities of the Bureau are (a) to implement tasks entrusted to it by the Conference of the Parties; (b) to take the lead in, and take initiatives to strengthen, the implementation of the Convention; and (c) to monitor the implementation of the workplan and take appropriate decisions in that respect between the meetings of the Conference of the Parties. The present report details activities in these areas undertaken by the Bureau in the intersessional period, in particular, with regard to the Long-term Strategy for the Convention, the workplan for 2015–2016, the subsidiary bodies and expert groups under the Convention and the preparation of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing due to resource constraints.



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Introduction

1. The present report summarizes the work of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) in the biennium 2015–2016 with regard to the tasks entrusted to it by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting (Geneva, 3–5 December 2014) (see ECE/CP.TEIA/30).

2. The report includes the outcomes of a joint meeting of the Bureau with the Working Group on Implementation (Geneva, 28–29 January 2015), as well as the three solo Bureau meetings (Geneva, 8–9 July 2015 and 3–4 December 2015, and Slovenia, 29–30 June 2016).

3. The following Bureau members attended all four meetings: Jasmina Karba (Slovenia) Chair; Svetlana Stirbu (Republic of Moldova), Vice-Chair; Pavel Forint (Czech Republic); Chris Dijkens (Netherlands); Torill Tandberg (Norway); and Aléxandros Kiriazis (European Union). Yashar Karimov (Azerbaijan) joined the Bureau at the first solo meeting in the intersessional period, when designated by Azerbaijan to replace Ismayil Nasirov, who had been elected by the Conference of the Parties, and attended the remaining meetings. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (Germany) attended all meetings besides the one held jointly with the Working Group. Paweł Dadasiewicz (Poland), Vice-Chair, attended all meetings besides the first solo one. Eero Kytömaa (Finland) attended the first two meetings and was then replaced by Wivi-Ann Wagello-Sjölund at the final meeting. The Chair of the Working Group on Implementation (Sandra Ashcroft, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) was also present in all the meetings upon invitation by the Chair of the Bureau. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat to the Convention serviced all four meetings.

I. Bureau activities to implement the Long-term Strategy for the Convention

4. At their joint meeting, the Bureau and the Working Group on Implementation, as well as the secretariat, discussed how to implement the Long-term Strategy for the Convention (ECE/CP.TEIA/22, annex I), adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting (The Hague, 8–10 November 2010). The Bureau's subsequent work under the five priority areas of the Long-term Strategy, and to carry out the strategically linked tasks under the workplan for 2015–2016 (see ECE/CP.TEIA/30, annex II), is described in the following sections. The Bureau also began a reflection on a possible review of the long-term strategy, with a view to proposing its revision in the workplan for 2017–2018, as reported in the final section of this chapter.

A. Involvement of Parties and other stakeholders

1. Long-term Strategy for the Convention

Objective I: to achieve comprehensive involvement of all Parties and other stakeholders

5. The active involvement of Parties and other stakeholders is essential to maintain and further improve the level of implementation of the Convention. Some Parties, through their competent authorities, have been actively involved in the work of the Convention. There are also some examples of involvement of other stakeholders. Nevertheless, the number of active Parties and other stakeholders has been rather low and should be increased.

2. Activities undertaken by the Bureau

6. The Bureau encouraged the continued use of communication materials (online training, cartoons and film on the Convention), as proposed by the secretariat, as an excellent way to raise awareness and improve the understanding of the provisions of the Convention in the ECE region.

7. In order to strengthen the involvement of Parties and other stakeholders in the work under the Convention, the Bureau discussed and agreed upon working visits such as:

(a) Meetings with the Inter-State Council on Industrial Safety of the Commonwealth of Independent States by the secretariat;

(b) A series of meetings with different directorate-generals of the European Commission in January 2016, by the chair of the Bureau and the secretariat, to raise awareness of the Convention and its linkages with relevant European Union policies.

8. Members of the Bureau participated in a number of major events on industrial safety in the biennium to raise awareness of and promote the Convention, such as the following:

(a) The Environmental Emergencies Forum organized by the Joint United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Environment (OCHA) Environment Unit (Oslo, 1–3 June 2015);

(b) A response exercise “HarbourEx15” (Oslo, 27–29 April 2015);

(c) A seminar on Lessons Learned from Industrial Accidents of the European Union Network for Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) (Lille, France, 2–3 June 2015);

(d) The thirteenth and fourteenth meetings of the International Forum on Industrial Safety (St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 2–5 June 2015 and 24–27 May 2016);

(e) The Global Summit for Chemical Safety and Security (Kielce, Poland, 18–20 April 2016).

9. To enhance the visibility of the Convention in other international communities, the Bureau decided to liaise with colleagues participating in the United Nations Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai, Japan, 14–18 March 2015) and the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016), in order to promote the work of the Convention.

3. Conclusions regarding progress made and remaining challenges

10. In the biennium 2015–2016, the Bureau continued with activities focused on the (re)engagement of Parties and stakeholders through working visits and active participation in relevant forums. This participation contributed to an enhanced visibility and awareness of the Convention. The challenge remained to ensure that the overall number of Parties that actively participate in the activities under the Convention is further increased. This challenge should be addressed in a revised Long-term Strategy.

B. Exchange of information

1. Long-term Strategy for the Convention

Objective II: to consolidate and enhance the exchange of information

11. Exchange of information is crucial to further strengthen the implementation of the Convention across the ECE region. In the past, activities have been organized under the

Convention to exchange knowledge, good practices and experience. However, the number and scope of such activities should be extended.

2. Activities undertaken by the Bureau

12. The Bureau expected to follow the development of guidance on the implementation of the Convention, with regard to the amended annex I on hazardous substances for the purpose of identifying hazardous activities, which was foreseen in the workplan of the Convention for the biennium 2015–2016. However, the development could not be begun because of insufficient funds.

13. The Bureau also followed the planning of an activity, to be led and financed by Germany, on raising knowledge on industrial safety at universities. The activity was to have a specific focus on tailings safety and was to be realised as a follow-up to a summer school held in Perm, the Russian Federation. The Bureau highlighted the need to involve industry in such activities and the importance of ensuring the sustainability of the results. It also suggested that future activities should be implemented considering possible synergies with other international organizations and initiatives.

14. The Bureau decided that the exchange of experience and good practices among Parties and the promotion of the continuous organization of bilateral exercises for preparedness — an activity foreseen in the workplan — could be addressed through:

(a) The organization jointly with partners of a one-day seminar on enhancing industrial safety in the ECE region at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

(b) The carrying out of table-top and field exercises within the framework of the Danube Delta project involving the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine, which was carried out in 2015.

15. The Bureau suggested that the seminar on enhancing industrial safety provide for an exchange of experiences and good practices across the ECE region, membership of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and beyond. Subsequently, the Bureau was informed that the Bureau of the OECD Working Group on Chemical Accidents had welcomed and supported the initiative of holding a joint seminar. For the organization of the seminar, the Bureau decided to create a small steering group comprising Ms. Ashcroft, Mr. Dadasiewicz, Mr. Dijkens, Ms. Karba, Ms. Stirbu and Ms. Tandberg.

16. The Bureau, and the Working Group on Implementation, discussed the possibility to use funds of other assistance and development programmes to finance bi- or multilateral exercises for preparedness, in addition to the exercises in the framework of the Danube Delta project. The Bureau was later informed of the development by Belarus, Lithuania and Poland, with the support of the secretariat, of a project on a transboundary exercise among the three countries, for which funds were sought under a call for proposals by the European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection.

3. Conclusions regarding progress made and remaining challenges

17. In the biennium 2015–2016, the Bureau continued to support the exchange of information and the promotion of project results by building on previous activities and bringing them to other regions. The promotion and use of (tailored) good practices had been shown to be an effective and (cost-) efficient way to improve the level of implementation of the Convention.

18. The exchange of information should continue to be focused on the needs and interests of Parties, but also on emerging issues related to protection against industrial accidents. The Bureau was also to support actively the exchange of experience and good

practices and the development of innovative approaches to support the Parties in the achievement of internationally agreed goals for protection against disasters, such as in the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, and for sustainable development.

C. Assistance Programme

1. Long-term Strategy for the Convention

Objective III: to facilitate the implementation and ratification of the Convention by the beneficiary countries of the Assistance Programme

19. The Assistance Programme is necessary to support the efforts of the countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in implementing the Convention. There is a need to continue that work and further provide efficient assistance on a needs-driven basis.

2. Activities undertaken by the Bureau

20. One of the tasks of the Bureau is to monitor the implementation of the programme of work and to take appropriate decisions, if needed, to strengthen it. To this end, the Bureau provided advice and support on matters related to the Assistance Programme, for which the Bureau is mandated to take decisions on approving activities vis-à-vis the available funds.

21. The Bureau was disappointed that beneficiary countries did not optimize their use of the Convention's tools to progress in enhancing industrial safety and that their interest in assistance projects appeared to be limited. The Bureau agreed that the promotion and subsequent use of the user-friendly version of the Benchmarks document,¹ including the Russian version, could enable beneficiary countries to use more effectively the tools under the Programme's strategic approach and to submit project proposals. In addition, the Bureau underlined the need to increase ownership of the beneficiary countries, which could be enhanced through their own financial and in-kind contributions to carry out the Assistance Programme activities. Furthermore, the Bureau stressed that efforts should be made to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme.

22. The Bureau identified actions that could provide direction for the future development of the Assistance Programme to be presented to the Conference of the Parties (ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/15).

23. The Bureau monitored the further implementation of the Danube Delta project, the largest activity ever undertaken within the Assistance Programme.² The Bureau complimented the Danube Delta project national coordinators for their commitment to the project and highlighted the need to ensure sustainability of the project results, which could be achieved through cooperation with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River. The Bureau thanked the beneficiary and the donor countries for their efforts in the implementation of the project and stressed the need to learn from the experience of this project.

3. Conclusions regarding progress made and remaining challenges

24. In the biennium 2015–2016 the Bureau continued its monitoring of the Convention's Assistance Programme. It recognized the increased commitment of beneficiary countries,

¹ Available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=40233>.

² Information on the Danube Delta is available at <http://www.unece.org/env/teia/ap/ddp.html>.

actively engaged in the implementation of projects under the Assistance Programme. It also recognized challenges relating to the development of this programme.

25. The Bureau was to engage to ensure further progress with the Assistance Programme by improving its design and appeal, enlarging the donor base and seeking synergies with awareness raising and capacity-building activities of strategic partners. The Bureau was also to seek opportunities to increase the beneficiaries' commitment through awareness-raising activities and the promotion of application of the tools of Programme's strategic approach.

D. Strategic partnerships

1. Long-term Strategy for the Convention

Objective IV: to enhance the Convention's relevance through strategic partnerships

26. Strategic partnerships are necessary to improve effectiveness and efficiency and to avoid duplication of work in maintaining and enhancing industrial safety. In a number of situations the Conference of the Parties has been working jointly with other organizations, Conventions and programmes to this end. However, this approach should be continued and enhanced.

2. Activities undertaken by the Bureau

27. The Bureau, and the Working Group on Implementation, discussed the implementation of activities under this area of the workplan 2015–2016 and how to accord priority, with a view to their financing.

28. The Bureau agreed to work towards creating and reinforcing synergies with ECE and other multilateral environmental agreements, including the global chemical conventions, at the international and national levels. Synergies with other international organizations and programmes dealing with issues similar to those addressed by the Convention should be strengthened continuously. Regarding strategic partnerships with other organizations, the Bureau discussed the importance of specifically targeting, as a priority, those organizations with which strategic synergies could be built.

29. The Bureau took note of the outcomes of the third and fourth Inter-agency Coordination Meetings on Industrial Accidents, hosted by OECD (Paris, 7 May 2015) and the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (Geneva, 15 April 2016), including the preparation of a joint brochure by the organizations involved on their chemical accident prevention, preparedness and response work, as well as the organization of a joint side event during the Fourth International Conference on Chemicals Management (Geneva, 28 September–2 October 2015).

30. The Bureau supported strengthened partnerships with industry associations that could act as multipliers of information and products developed under the Convention.

31. The Bureau recommended taking part in capacity-building activities organized under programmes of other organizations (such as: a European Union-funded project, implemented by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, on strengthening chemical accident prevention and preparedness in European Union neighbourhood countries; UNEP; OCHA; and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)), provided that such activities would contribute and were relevant to the Convention's workplan. The importance of coordination in beneficiary countries of capacity-building activities by different organizations was noted.

32. The involvement of the Bureau in the carrying out of the workplan activity on sharing of good practices on safety and land-use planning, the implementation of which was based on a number of partnerships, is addressed below in conjunction with the development of guidance on the topic (section II.C.2).

33. The Bureau was informed of a one-day workshop addressing the risk of complacency (Chisinau, 27 March 2015), financed by Finland as part of the Danube Delta project, through which it addressed the workplan item “Activities to raise awareness of the risk of complacency, to ensure prevention and maintain a high level of safety, with partners”.

34. The Bureau welcomed the planned publication of the checklist for harmonized contingency planning for accidents with potential impacts on transboundary waters, following the testing of its application in the framework of the Danube Delta project (March 2015) and its review by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) at its seventh session (Budapest, 17–20 November 2015). Sweden provided in-kind financing and support for this activity.

3. Conclusions regarding progress made and remaining challenges

35. In the biennium 2015–2016, the Bureau had maintained and strengthened cooperation with the identified strategic partners and broadened cooperation with new partners. Future efforts were to remain focused on searching for synergies to increase the (cost-) efficiency of actions to protect against industrial accidents in the region and beyond. The Bureau was to continue to play an active role in this process.

E. Financing

1. Long-term Strategy for the Convention

Objective V: to ensure sustainable financing

36. Robust financing is necessary to ensure that the increasing demands for assistance activities from Parties and other countries are met and that other workplan activities are implemented. In the past, financing for activities under the Convention has come from only a few of the Parties and on an ad hoc basis. There is a need for a higher number of Parties and for other stakeholders to provide regular financial and/or in-kind support to the Convention’s activities. Also, human resources in the secretariat need to be increased which would allow, among others, for the implementation of the tasks mentioned in the Long-term Strategy and addressing the increasing demands for activities.

2. Activities undertaken by the Bureau

37. The Conference of the Parties, at its eighth meeting, mandated the Bureau to make every effort to ensure the availability of financial and in-kind resources for the implementation of the workplan and, in particular, the Assistance Programme (ECE/CP.TEIA/30, paras. 14(g) and 87(d), and ECE/CP.TEIA/30/Add.1, decision 2014/1).

38. The Bureau noted the importance of maintaining the small group on financing and agreed that it would comprise the following members: Ms. Ashcroft, Mr. Dijkens, Ms. Karba, Mr. Kytömaa, Ms. Stirbu and Ms. Tandberg. The Bureau decided that the small group should consider project financing including through international, national and private development cooperation agencies and organizations (including the relevant European Union bodies and programmes) and determine actions to ensure sustainable and predictable financing.

39. The small group met in Geneva twice, with the second meeting in the form of a brainstorming workshop on communication and marketing techniques. The Bureau welcomed and supported the efforts by the small group to reach out to Parties with the potential to contribute increasingly, in line with economic strength, and national development cooperation agencies and to develop a communication strategy for the Convention.

Financial situation

40. The Bureau at each of its meetings was informed by the secretariat about the contributions to and planned expenditures from the Convention's trust fund, so as to monitor the financial situation, provide appropriate advice and approve the implementation of Assistance Programme activities. The secretariat also presented information on specific financial and in-kind contributions for dedicated workplan activities in the biennium. It highlighted that insufficient funds were available to implement all workplan activities in 2015–2016. The secretariat also reported on the gap between income and expenditures, which increased in 2015 compared with 2014 and, at a slower rate, in 2016 compared with 2015, and the decreasing trust fund balance.

41. The Bureau noted with concern the trust fund situation. In due course, the Bureau recognized that the financial situation did not allow for the implementation of the workplan as adopted. The Bureau welcomed the engagement of the secretariat to look for options that the workplan be implemented with other funds, outside the trust fund.

42. Initially, in view of the workplan and the heavy secretariat workload, the Bureau agreed with maintaining a third professional extrabudgetary position for the biennium 2015–2016. However, at its December 2015 meeting, in the light of the worsening financial situation, the Bureau agreed with the proposal by the secretariat not to hire a replacement for the position of the Assistance Programme manager, which was to become vacant in February 2016.

Sustainable Financial Mechanism

43. The Bureau decided, in line with Sustainable Financial Mechanism, to actively encourage Parties to provide support at least at a level reflecting their economic strength. Bureau members were to engage in efforts to mobilize additional financing sources within national government structures, including development cooperation bodies.

44. The Bureau suggested that the letters, which were to be sent by the secretariat in accordance with the Sustainable Financial Mechanism, should invite Parties to consider national financing sources beyond the government authorities addressed. The letters should also encourage Parties to enhance coordination with focal points for the other ECE multilateral environmental agreements with regard to sustainable financing.

45. The Bureau took note of the informal note "Secretariats to ECE MEAs – the way forward," elaborated by the management of ECE and shared for comments with the Bureaux of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). An important element in the paper was the suggested identification of core and non-core activities required to service the agreements, together with advocacy for predictable sustainable financing by Parties for the core activities. This approach could ensure the continuous functioning of the secretariats including the servicing of subsidiary bodies established by the governing bodies. Additional non-core or assistance activities could then be financed through additional voluntary contributions.

46. The Bureau welcomed the secretariat's paper as it included many interesting options for a possible way forward and improving efficiency, while suggesting that the note should contain reference to effective measures already taken and planned to increase further the

efficiency of the use of resources. The Bureau discussed the suggested differentiation between core and non-core services of the secretariat and agreed with the differentiation to be applied for the preparation of the 2017–2018 workplan (ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/17).

3. Conclusions regarding progress made and remaining challenges

47. Sustainable financing is key to ensure robust and longer-term planning for the implementation of assistance activities. While the overall amount of financial support was reduced in the biennium, the number of Parties contributing to the trust fund increased.

48. Increased efforts were still needed to ensure robust and sustainable financing of the Convention's activities. In line with the Sustainable Financial Mechanism, the Bureau was to focus on further enhancing the financial and in-kind contributions by Parties to the trust fund (in terms of the total amount contributed as well as the number of Parties providing financial contributions) and was to engage actively with other potential donors to the trust fund. A targeted communication strategy was to be developed to facilitate these activities.

F. Review of the Long-term Strategy for the Convention

49. The Bureau touched upon the need to discuss the long-term goals under the Convention. Among the elements for discussion was the need to encourage Parties to increase their ownership of the workplan, so that its implementation could be fully supported in-kind and financially through an enlarged base of donors. In consideration of the fact that the trust fund did not hold enough resources to implement the workplan adopted at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the need to discuss further the implementation of the Sustainable Financing Mechanism was considered to be a priority. Further, the Bureau took note of the recent internationally-agreed commitments relating to the protection against disasters (the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030) and sustainable development (the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) and discussed their impact on the future activities under the Convention.

50. The Bureau also discussed several priority needs, to be reflected in the next workplan 2017–2018 and agreed to develop further a revised long-term strategy until 2030, aligned with the relevant international developments, enriched with new elements, such as gender balance, and linked with a strategy for the Convention's opening, if accorded such a mandate by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting.

II. Further activities of the Bureau to implement the workplan for 2015–2016

A. Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

1. Mandate

51. At its eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties took note of the checklist for harmonized contingency planning for accidents with potential impacts on transboundary watercourses, produced by the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group) to the Water and Industrial Accidents Conventions. It requested the secretariat to publish the checklist following the testing of its application in the framework of the Danube Delta project and its review by the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention at its seventh session.

52. The Conference of the Parties took note of the workplan of the Joint Expert Group and decided to include the Group's activities into the Convention's workplan for the biennium 2015–2016.

2. Activities undertaken by the Bureau

53. At the first meeting of the Bureau in the intersessional period (January 2015), the secretariat informed the Bureau that it had received a nomination from Germany for Mr. Winkelmann-Oei to act as co-Chair of the Joint Expert Group for the Industrial Accidents Convention. Peter Kovacs (Hungary) would continue as co-Chair of the Joint Expert Group for the Water Convention. The Bureau welcomed the nomination and appointed Mr. Winkelmann-Oei as co-Chair for the biennium 2015–2016, in accordance with the Joint Expert Group's Strategy (2010). The Bureau also expressed its appreciation to Francisc Senzaconi (Romania) for his leadership and support to the Joint Expert Group as its co-Chair in preceding years.

54. The Bureau was kept abreast of the activities of the Joint Expert Group, in particular regarding the testing of the application of the contingency planning checklist within the Danube Delta project, the subsequent finalization of the checklist and its presentation to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention. A meeting of the Joint Expert Group had been held back-to-back with the final project workshop on improving the safety of tailings management facilities in Ukraine in May 2015 and a side event on accidental water pollution was organized in the margins of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention. The Bureau welcomed the implemented and planned activities.

55. The Bureau agreed on a draft workplan of the Joint Expert Group for 2017–2018 with possible activities to be organized by the Joint Expert Group to assist beneficiary countries, including a response exercise in Hungary and an activity between Poland and Germany on the Oder River in May 2017, to be followed by an international seminar focused on tools and equipment to fight oil contamination.

B. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Industrial Accident Notification System

1. Mandate

56. The Conference of the Parties, at its eighth meeting, took note of the upgrade of the ECE Industrial Accidents Notification System and requested the Points of Contact to perform tests and exercises, to discuss the results at their next consultation (either electronically or in person) and to report to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting (ECE/CP.TEIA/30, para. 70).

2. Activities undertaken by the Bureau

57. In the current budgetary situation of the trust fund, and in the absence of dedicated financial contributions for the travel of participants, a face-to-face meeting of the points of contact could not be carried. The Bureau therefore decided that an online consultation of the points of contacts be organized in 2016, with Polish leadership, and to revert to the possibility to hold a face-to-face meeting, depending on resource availability, in the next biennium.

C. Working Group on the Development of the Convention

1. Mandate

58. At its eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Working Group on the Development of the Convention (Working Group on Development) to prepare a draft amendment for adoption at its ninth meeting. Furthermore, it mandated the Working Group to prepare draft text to open the Convention for accession by United Nations Member States beyond the ECE region as part of that amendment (ECE/CP.TEIA/30, para. 41).

59. The Conference of the Parties decided that guidance should be developed by its subsidiary bodies for its consideration at its ninth or alternatively, tenth meeting. The Conference of the Parties considered that the development of the amendment should have precedence over the development of the guidance, should there be a need to prioritize work (ibid, para. 42). The Conference of the Parties asked the Working Group to review a guidance document on land-use planning, on the basis of a draft drawn up with external expertise (ibid, para. 45). Furthermore, the Conference of the Parties asked the Working Group on Development, in cooperation with the Working Group on Implementation, to consider the introduction of a compliance mechanism and to prepare a possible draft decision on the matter for review and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting (ibid, para. 47).

60. Besides the above, the Conference of the Parties requested the Bureau to review the terms of reference of the Convention's subsidiary bodies in the light of current practice and roles, and to prepare revised terms of reference for review and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting (ibid, para. 48). The Bureau also followed the work of the Working Group on Development, given its standing task of monitoring the implementation of the programme of work and taking appropriate decisions in this respect between the meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

2. Activities undertaken by the Bureau

Identification of a Chair of the Working Group on Development

61. The Bureau, in accordance with the terms of reference of the Working Group on Development, took note of and welcomed the availability of Mr. Dijkens to continue serving as Chair of the Working Group on Development. At the sixth meeting of the Working Group (Geneva, 30 November–2 December 2015), Mr. Dijkens chaired the first part and Ms. Karba chaired the second part in his absence, as proposed by the Bureau.

Preparation of and follow-up to meetings of the Working Group on Development

62. The Bureau took note of the information presented by the Chair of the Working Group on Development concerning the Group's planned organization of work to develop amendments and guidance. It recognized the high workload for the secretariat to prepare for and service the meetings and processes to develop amendments and guidance and the need to support this work by the Parties. It stressed that meeting the objectives and timeline required the efforts of all Parties.

63. To support the Working Group's activities, two small groups were established, one of legal experts, the other of experts on land-use planning. The Bureau noted with concern that in the small group of experts on land-use planning, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia were underrepresented. The Bureau also noted that several non-governmental organizations and international organizations were represented, especially in the small group of legal experts, and highlighted that their role as observers should be respected.

64. The Chair of the Working Group subsequently briefed the Bureau on progress made by the Working Group, which had completed its work by consensus, within the time allowed and in a positive negotiating atmosphere. Finally, the Bureau — at its last meeting — welcomed the official proposal of the amendment by a large number of Parties (ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/7).

65. The Bureau was informed about the development of guidance on safety and land-use planning, in cooperation with ECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment and the ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management. The activity was financed in-kind by the European Investment Bank. The approach taken to the development of the guidance included the distribution of a survey and the organization of a joint workshop on 13 April 2016, within the framework of the seventh meeting of the Working Group on Development (Geneva, 12–14 April 2016). At its June 2016 meeting, the Bureau agreed that two parts of the guidance — legal and policy guidance and technical guidance (ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2016/7–ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/8 and ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/9, respectively) — would be presented to the Conference of the Parties as official documents. The Conference of the Parties could then decide on possible further steps to be taken leading to the publication of the guidance.

Accession by Member States from outside the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

66. The Bureau contributed by e-mail to a document prepared by the secretariat, based on the request by the Working Group on Development, on possible approaches to addressing the budgetary implications of a possible opening of the Convention (ECE/CP.TEIA/WG.1/2015/9).

67. The Bureau agreed that the secretariat seize opportunities for reaching out beyond the region with the least burden possible in terms of time and resources. It also stressed that not only the secretariat but also Bureau members should identify and seize such opportunities and represent the Convention outside the ECE region.

68. The Bureau took note of and welcomed the secretariat's engagement in the development of contacts with partner organizations and reaching out to organizations beyond the ECE region, including through participation in the following events:

(a) The Environmental Emergencies Forum organized by the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (mentioned in section I.A);

(b) A joint side event, organized in the framework of the Inter-agency Coordination Meetings on Industrial Accidents, at the Fourth International Conference for Chemicals Managements (Geneva, 2 October 2015) (mentioned in section I.D);

(c) The International Workshop of the Industrial Safety Regulation Bodies of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa) on “Effective Regulation of Industrial Safety as an Element of Stability of National Economy” (Moscow, 11–12 November 2015).

69. The secretariat also participated by videoconference in the third meeting of the Task Force on Disaster Risk Reduction under the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Sustainable Business Network (Bangkok, 27 October 2015) and the Bangladesh Resilience Dialogue (Dhaka, 8 October 2015). Ms. Ashcroft presented the Convention in a Seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and Chemical Safety and Security Management for Member States of OPCW in the Asia Region (Doha, 23– 26 February 2016).

Update of the terms of reference of the Bureau and the Working Groups on Development and Implementation

70. The Bureau agreed that draft updated terms of reference of the Bureau and the Working Groups on Development and Implementation, with changes previously considered in the period between the seventh and eighth meetings of the Conference of the Parties, would serve as a basis for further updating.

71. In the process of updating the terms of reference, the Bureau, among other issues:

(a) Agreed with the secretariat's proposal to shorten the name of the Working Group on the Development of the Convention formally to "Working Group on Development";

(b) Took into account the its agreement, reached at its twenty-seventh meeting (The Hague, 15–16 June 2014), that it had independent functions as a subsidiary body and was not in a position to change recommendations or decisions reached by other subsidiary bodies. At the same time, the Bureau was in a position to make recommendations, which the Chairs of the other subsidiary bodies could decide to address. The wording in the terms of reference, that both the Working Group on Development and the Working Group on Implementation present their recommendations "through" the Bureau, reflected this aspect adequately;

(c) Agreed that its membership would to be limited to elected representatives of Parties.

72. The Bureau requested the Working Group on Implementation to review and further refine its terms of reference. The Bureau then reviewed the updated draft update at its June 2016 meeting (ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/13). A similar approach was taken with the terms of reference of the Working Group on Development (ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/5). The Bureau also drafted a proposal for an amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties (ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/6).

D. Other assistance activities

73. The Bureau agreed that representatives of Parties providing in-kind project financing for "other assistance activities" should share information with the Working Group on Implementation and the Bureau about the proposals for and implementation of such activities.

74. The Bureau welcomed information about the implementation of the final workshop of the workplan activity on risk management at tailings management facilities (Kyiv, 19–20 May 2015), with Germany as lead Party, and the success of the activity, notably regarding the testing of the checklist on such facilities in Ukraine.

75. The Bureau supported plans by Germany for two follow-up activities which were expected to focus on the management of tailings management facilities in Georgia and on a practical course on the application of the tailings management checklist methodology in Ukraine.

E. Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

76. The Bureau welcomed the offer by the Chair, on behalf of Slovenia, to host the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Slovenia. The Conference would be held covering the period 28–30 November 2016, including the planned joint ECE-OECD seminar (see section I.B).

77. At its eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Bureau to draw up, with the support of the secretariat, a budget for 2017–2018 for adoption at the ninth meeting (ECE/CP.TEIA/30, para. 88(c)). The Bureau, at its June 2016 meeting, agreed with a draft prepared by the secretariat and recommended that it be submitted to the Conference of the Parties upon inclusion of additional comments made at the meeting and depending on information received from potential donors and lead countries and organizations.

78. At its eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties agreed on guiding principles for financial support, which would be tested in the biennium 2015–2016 and reviewed at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2016. The Bureau was entrusted with monitoring the application of the guiding principles (ECE/CP.TEIA/30, para. 86) and subsequently agreed on a proposed revision (ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/18).
