

Economic Commission for Europe

Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range
Transboundary Air Pollution

Bureau

Meeting

Geneva, 22 May 2018

Report of the meeting

I. Attendance

Bureau members: Ms. Anna Engleryd (Sweden, Chair), Mr. Sergey Vasiliev (Russian Federation), Mr. Richard Ballaman (Switzerland), Ms. Katherine Weber (United States of America), Ms. Jennifer Kerr (Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review), Ms. Laurence Rouil (Chair of the EMEP Steering Body), and Ms. Isaura Rabago (Chair of the Working Group on Effects).

Observers: Mr. Roald Wolters (European Union).

Not present: Mr. Manfred Ritter (Chair of the Implementation Committee).

II. Preparations for the fifty-sixth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review

The Chair of the Working Group indicated that there would be a couple of changes to the agenda to allow for a presentation by the Chair of the Executive Body on the recommendations of the Satsjobaden-VI workshop and a presentation by the Chair of the Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling.

The Bureau discussed the main issues on the agenda of the Working Group.

Draft long-term strategy

The Chair of the Working Group informed that she intended to have a round of general comments followed by a discussion on each section. She had invited delegations to come prepared to speak in detail to the draft long-term strategy and advance it as much as possible.

Thematic session on PM and BC from solid fuel residential heating

The Bureau noted the interesting and full agenda for the thematic session and the participation of experts from the CCAC domestic heating initiative run by the ICCI.

Policy discussion to inform any future review of the Gothenburg Protocol (workplan item 2.1.3)

It was proposed to have this discussion at the 57th session of Working Group in 2019. A major question was whether there was any need for more scientific and technical information from WGE and EMEP to support such a discussion.

The Bureau invited the Chair of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects to initiate a discussion by the two bodies during their joint session in September on the input they could provide to the policy groups for consideration in a future review, and inform about the outcomes of the discussion at the thirty-eighth session of the Executive Body in December. The emerging issues identified in the draft long-term strategy could be a starting point for the discussion and lead to identifying some potential issues for the review. The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body pointed out that this was a very good timing in view of the revision of the EMEP and WGE strategies which have to be proposed in September 2019.

Workshop on policy cooperation with non-ECE countries (workplan item 2.2.1)

The workshop could be held back-to-back with the 57th session of Working Group in 2019 and could be combined with the workshop on SLCPs under communication and outreach (workplan item 5.3.5).

A major question was what outcome was expected from the workshops and in view of this whether they should include government representatives or technical experts. It was proposed that the workshops could also run in parallel to the WGSR session and report to it. Another proposal was to call it an “informal segment” rather than a workshop as this might facilitate participation. The issue of funding non-ECE participants in the workshop was also raised.

The Bureau agreed that the two workshops could be held back to back with the WGSR or with WGE/EMEP next year, if it was possible for the secretariat to provide a room. The question whether to merge them or not was still to be discussed.

Draft revised mandates for task forces

The Chair of the WGE expressed the view that the TFRN mandate should highlight the ammonia issue and agriculture to a greater extent. She also questioned whether the four panels should be mentioned in the mandate. The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body mentioned the need to ensure linkage with the scientific groups which develop a lot of tools such as emission inventories, effects and deposition monitoring which need to be shared.

Some Bureau members mentioned that a mandate was not an exhaustive list of tasks, but was meant to be a broader framework, listing key areas of activities, as well as regular tasks which should not be repeated in the workplan.

The Swiss member of the Bureau stressed the need for the mandates to define the roles of the lead countries and the roles of the chairs.

The Russian member of the Bureau noted the difference between a mandate and terms of reference, and supported the view that the term “mandate” was more appropriate for the Convention while the task forces should have “terms of reference”, detailing how

they should perform the work. He was also of the view that a major task of the task forces should be to support Parties in the fulfillment of their obligations, for example those arising from annex IX to the Gothenburg Protocol, in the case of TFRN.

The Bureau agreed that the mandates of the different groups under the Convention should be consistent and contain defined roles and responsibilities for the chairs and lead countries. It stressed that agriculture and ammonia were flagged in the Scientific Assessment Report, the PRG report and the LTS as important issues and needed to be appropriately reflected in the mandate of TFRN. It requested that this is taken into account in the further work on the mandates before their submission, together with the mandates developed under EMEP and WGE, to the Executive Body session in December 2019 for adoption.

III. Issues related to the activities of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects

(a) Future focus of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution

Following up on the discussions at the last Bureau meeting about the leadership of the Task Force, the EU observer informed that there was willingness on behalf of the EU to continue to lead the Task Force and internal discussions were held between JRC and DG Environment to find a solution for the co-Chair. The US member of the Bureau informed that the situation was similar in the US – Mr. Keating was willing to continue as co-Chair but he had moved to a new unit and currently there were discussions how to organize this. There would be more clarity for the September meeting of the EMEP and WGE.

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body outlined two options for the future of TFHTAP: (i) to keep the TFHTAP with a very clear mandate, with scientific tasks, but in support of policy; and (ii) not to keep the TFHTAP and work on the subject through the outreach activities of other Task Forces. She expressed satisfaction that the EU and the US were willing to continue to lead the Task Force and the first option could be pursued.

She stressed the need for the co-Chairs of the Task Force to provide a synthesis of the results of the HTAP-2 experiment, useful for policy discussion, in time for the discussion on the strategy review. With reference to the Saltsjöbaden -VI workshop recommendations for the development of a global scientific network, she highlighted the need for TFHTAP to coordinate with other organizations and global actors.

The Bureau agreed that the Convention needs to take a leadership role in this and move fast. It was proposed to have follow-up discussions between the US, the EU and the Chair of the EMEP Steering Body to come up with a proposal on how to keep the TFHTAP as a scientific group supporting policy-makers for the next meeting of the Bureau, based on the synthesis report from the Task Force co-Chairs.

It was recalled that recommendations from the Saltsjöbaden -VI workshop could become recommendations for the Task Forces only a decision by the Executive Body.

There was no further information on the FASST tool, information will be provided at the next meeting of the Bureau.

(b) *Methodological aspects of the work of the Task Force on Health*

The Chair of WGE informed about discussions held at the recent Task Force meeting on the coherence between the different tools for health impact assessment. The AirQ+ tool developed by the Task Force is easy to use and is recommended by the WHO to use at the global level. However, when used for the UNECE region, it gives results that were different from those given by the GAINS model (the impacts are less). The reason is that the HRAPIE methodology, agreed at the Task Force in 2013, with a detailed approach and suitable for the UNECE region, is not used as the default option by the AirQ+. Some experts in WHO EURO agree with using HRAPIE methodology for the UNECE region and using other options, within the AirQ+, globally or in those cases where there are not enough input data available. It was also suggested to include a disclaimer from the AirQ+ tool that the HRAPIE is the default approach but if there is not enough data to run the model it can be selected other approaches within the AirQ+. She informed that an expert group is being set up to discuss how to resolve this incoherence between the tools and it was important to have experts from the Convention to take part in it.

The Bureau agreed on the need to strengthen the communication with WHO. Some of the health experts did not know anything about the tools under the Convention. It was noted that the Task Force sends out invitations through the WHO contact database and as a result a very limited number of experts working under the Convention are involved in the Task Force. There is also an increased interest of WHO Headquarters in the Task Force.

The Swiss member of the Bureau requested that the invitations to the Task Force meetings are distributed to the EB HOD and WGE contact points. The Chair of WGE agreed to transmit this request to WHO.

The Bureau agreed that the possibility of having a co-Chair of the Task Force from the Convention should be explored. It reiterated the need to work with WHO at various levels – the Task Force on Health, WHO EURO and WHO headquarters. It requested the secretariat and the Chair of WGE to continue their contacts and discussions in this direction.

(c) *Further developments on the issue of condensables*

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body informed the bureau of an issue regarding reporting emissions of the condensable for residential heating. While some countries can measure it and report it, others are concerned that if they include the condensable for residential heating in the reporting, this would result in huge differences with the current levels reported and lead to a lot of adjustments.

Therefore, the two options are the following: (i) the condensables are reported, but this may lead to a large amount of adjustments; and (ii) the condensables are not reported; a correction factor provided by the countries themselves is applied for modelling purposes.

This being a policy decision and not a scientific one, the Executive Body should decide. A solution may be to report the condensables as a memo item which will not be taken into account for assessing compliance with emission reduction obligations. For countries that did not have the information, the modellers can use the correction factor.

The change in reporting will require changes in the EMEP Guidebook to ensure a standardized approach towards measuring the condensable and the Emission Reporting Guidelines and their annexes.

It was noted that the inclusion of condensables should not matter in case of percentage reduction obligations, provided that the reporting is consistent. It was suggested to raise this issue with the Implementation Committee, and to consult the IC on whether option (ii) is consistent with Parties' reporting obligations.

The Bureau requested the Chair of the EMEP Steering Body to have a further discussion with the TFEIP in September, and provide further information to the Executive Body session in December.

(d) Questionnaire on the use of data by Parties

The Chairs of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects informed the Bureau that the questionnaire was ready to be sent. The Chair of the Working Group on Effects proposed to postpone the questionnaire, at least the part concerning the effects data, until 2019. Unlike the data reported under EMEP, the reporting of data on effects is voluntary and not all countries report and the data sets are not complete; if the questionnaire is sent out now, it is likely to find out that the countries are not using the data because they are not complete. In view of the reporting under the NEC Directive scheduled for July 2019, there has been an increased interest in the data collected under the ICPs from various monitoring groups. For this reason, it would be justified to wait for one year and then ask which data could be useful, which data they are reporting and which data they plan to report. Work on the WGE portal was also under way and it could be advertised through the questionnaire as well.

It was also possible to send out the questionnaire in two parts: part one on EMEP now and part two on the WGE data next year.

The Bureau acknowledged the reasons for postponing the questionnaire on the effects part and recommended to send out one questionnaire next year.

The Bureau noted the improved leaflet on the WGE activities, which was sent out together with the requests for voluntary recommended contributions and was made available on the Convention's website.

IV. Results from the “Saltsjöbaden” VI workshop

The Chair presented the main recommendations of the Saltsjöbaden -VI workshop and noted that there were three ways of taking them into consideration: a place holder in the long-term strategy, a placeholder in the workplan for the task forces, and recommendations for the consideration of the Executive Body.

She also informed on the follow up with UNEP regarding the letter sent by the Bureau to UNEP and the implementation of the UNEA-3 resolution. A conference call was held between members of the Bureau and representatives of UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi and the UNEP Regional Office for Europe to exchange information on the implementation of the UNEA resolution, including on the plans for the establishment of a global platform on air pollution.

The UNEP representatives focused mainly on their work with developing countries in different regions. They also informed about some activities in the European region, including a workshop in Paris on the implementation of the UNEA 3 resolution and a capacity-building workshop in Sarajevo. The Convention representatives invited them to coordinate such activities with UNECE and the Convention.

The UNEP representatives expressed interest in some of the scientific tools developed under the Convention and mentioned in the letter. A new expert on air quality will join the team in Nairobi soon and will be in contact with the Chair of the EMEP Steering Body to learn more about the science and the tools developed under the Convention over the past 40 years.

With regard to the policy discussion, the Bureau agreed that it would invite UNEP to the informal segment during the Executive Body session in December, together with other organizations and countries, including the UNEP regional office in Bangkok, as well as Latin America. It also agreed that the focus should be broader than the resolution only. It was important to clearly communicate that the aim is for the Convention to work with partners outside the UNECE region and to share its experience, and not to make the Convention global. In line with recommendations from the Saltsjöbaden workshop it was also suggested to consider setting up a group under to Convention to further reflect on the place of the Convention in the global context.

V. Results from the 2018 Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) Joint Forum and the EANET science-policy dialogue

The secretariat informed about its participation in the APCAP Forum, the EANET science-policy dialogue, and the APCAP science panel, where it had three speaking engagements. This participation contributed to raising the visibility of the Convention among Asian countries, many of which had not heard of the Convention. In general, there are many initiatives in the region, but they are fragmented. Bilateral discussions were held with the AQ expert at UNEP Bangkok and the representative from EANET.

The secretariat provided information about the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP), a new partnership that will be launched in October and informed that it would provide the terms of reference for information. It also informed that it was invited by the WHO office in South-East Asia, based in Delhi, to make a webex presentation at the WHO South-East Asia Regional Meeting on Air Quality and Health in Bangkok in June.

The secretariat stressed that there were a lot of different opportunities for interaction and not necessarily in the framework of the UNEA resolution. The workplan for APCAP included an item on capacity building which is very similar to the capacity-building activities under the Convention.

The US member of the Bureau indicated that they were hoping to provide funding to UNEP for work in Asia and would ensure that the Convention is given appropriate attention in this work. Interest has also been expressed by Korea in establishing a regional Convention in Asia that is modeled on LRTAP.

VI. Preparations for the 38th session of the Executive Body

The Bureau confirmed its decision to organize the informal segment on the 12 December (a.m.) and 13 December (a.m.) to discuss the possibilities for global cooperation on air pollution. To facilitate a global response to air pollution, different regions in the world need to have consistent tools and methodologies. The purpose of the segment would be to share information and identify areas where it would be interesting to share experience and the ways to do so.

The Bureau reiterated that it was important to send a clear signal in the letter of invitation that the Convention is not going to become global, to avoid any misunderstanding.

It decided that the UNEP headquarters and its regional office in Bangkok should be invited, along with countries and relevant organizations from Latin America, as well as China and India. In case no representative from UNEP headquarters in Nairobi could come, it was suggested to invite the Head of UNEP Chemicals and Health in Geneva.

The Swiss member of the Bureau informed that Switzerland would host a reception on the evening of 12 December.

The US member of the Bureau suggested, in addition to this one day during the Executive Body session, to consider the possibility of organizing a side event at UNEA 4 in March 2019.

The Bureau agreed that the Chair and the secretariat will compile a tentative invitation list and a draft agenda and circulate them to the Bureau. It also agreed that invitations need to go out early (before the summer break).

VII. Capacity-building and awareness-raising to promote ratification and implementation

The secretariat referred to the EECCA session at the Saltsjöbaden -VI workshop where 13 participants from EECCA countries presented the main barriers to ratification and outlined the main recommendations of the session, including on how to raise awareness at political level, how to support countries in drafting BAT based legislation, and how to support them in emission inventories and modelling. One of the most sensitive issues

were the calls for revising the provisions of the flexibility mechanisms and exploring the possibility for allowing stepwise ratification. The need to raise the political profile of the Convention in the EECCA countries was also highlighted.

The secretariat referred to the roundtable discussions that it organizes in the countries and shared its intention to change the format of these discussions to include an awareness-raising part with high-level participation from ECE, the host country and two country representatives from EU member states, followed by a more technical discussion on the results of analysis and other steps to ratification.

The ECE regional advisor on environment expressed her support to promote the Convention and the protocols and support the countries in the process of ratification. She informed that this approach would be applied to the two forthcoming events in Ukraine (18 September) and Georgia (3 October). The plans were to invite the national authorities in the first part of the meeting to raise awareness, highlighting technical arguments as well as the need for a plan ahead and in that connection, the secretariat will offer support for further capacity development, i.e. another round of capacity-building activities. The awareness raising part would focus on the benefits of joining the protocols, and in the case of Georgia and Ukraine, the linkages with the EU legislation would also be explained. It was important to secure the participation and the chairmanship at the level of Deputy Minister and the participation of Bureau members as well as high level participation from the ECE to strengthen the discussion.

The Bureau expressed its support for this approach and willingness to participate as time allows. It stressed the importance of a follow up to these events, for example a report to the Executive Body by these countries on their further plans and progress.

The Bureau reiterated that the capacity-building activities should be demand driven and respond to the needs expressed by the countries.

In response to a question by a Bureau member, the secretariat explained that the activities focused on emission inventories are mainly covered from the Russian Federation funding while those related to legislation analysis were covered from the EU funds.

The Chief of the Transboundary Cooperation Section in the ECE Environment Division expressed his strong support for this approach. He stressed that the countries which receive support for capacity-building need the green light from the higher levels to translate this capacity-building into action. He shared the experience with an event under the Industrial Accidents Convention in Ukraine, where more than 40 participants representing many agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had a very good discussion on the way forward. As a follow-up, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to come to the next COP and report what has been done. He recommended that this approach is extended to other Convention and that the UNECE Executive Secretary is also involved in the invitation and follow up correspondence.

The Bureau stressed that BACA is a very useful tool and recommended its use in the capacity-building efforts.

VIII. Outreach and communication

The Chair informed the Bureau about her participation in the discussions of the Third Plenary meeting of the INMS, highlighting the conclusion on establishing a cooperation forum where conventions and organizations can come and discuss their interest in nitrogen issues. The Chair will circulate further information to the Bureau members as it becomes available.

The Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review provided a powerpoint presentation on the results of the recent meeting of the Global Methane Forum in Canada. The secretariat will circulate the presentation to the Bureau.

The secretariat informed the Bureau that UNECE was included as a co-organizer of the First Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health from 30 October to 1 November in Geneva. The UNECE Executive Secretary is scheduled to speak in the high-level segment on 1 November. A conference call of the organizing committee was forthcoming. The secretariat would circulate further information after that call.

The Bureau considered the list of ideas for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Convention, prepared by the secretariat.

The Russian member of the Bureau proposed that early next year the Parties are requested to nominate one or two persons with a significant contribution to the Convention. The aim would be to have around 20-25 nominations. The Bureau and secretariat should also be able to nominate. The selected persons are to be awarded with a memorial diploma or certificate of appreciation at a ceremonial side event or at a party.

The Bureau agreed that the celebration event should be in Geneva and to the possible should be attached to another major event taking place at the same time, such as the BRS or Minamata Convention COP. It supported the idea of producing a brochure and a video. It was also supportive of the idea of a simulation exercise with the young generation in the field of air pollution given the positive experience with such a simulation exercise at the Saltsjöbaden workshop. It had diverging views on the need for a high-level segment.

The Bureau agreed to continue its deliberations at its next meeting in view of a decision needed by the Executive Body in December 2018.

The secretariat shared some issues with communications between the secretariat and the Parties for the purposes of official communications. In the absence of formally designated national focal points for the Convention, official communications were addressed to the Heads of Delegation to the Executive Body. This has caused some confusion as the composition in delegations may vary from one session to another and it has been difficult to keep an up-to-date list. The secretariat suggested to the Bureau to consider the establishment of national focal points under the Convention.

The Bureau requested the secretariat to make a more detailed proposal at its next meeting.

IX. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Bureau decided to hold its next two meetings as follows:

- (i) on 10 September 2018 in the morning, prior to the start of the Fourth Joint Session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects, and
- (ii) on 10 December 2018 in the morning, prior to the start of the thirty-eighth session of the Executive Body.

X. Other business

The Chair drew attention to the importance of having pre-session documents available at an early stage to allow effective coordination of positions.

The secretariat informed that it will continue to publish advance copies in English on the website 10 weeks before the sessions.