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Seventh session

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment in
a Transboundary Context serving as the
Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on
Strategic Environmental Assessment

Third session

Minsk, 13–16 June 2017
Items 3 (a) and 10 (a) of the provisional agenda

Outstanding issues: draft joint decisions

Adoption of decisions: decisions to be taken jointly

Draft joint decisions by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol

Proposal by the Bureau

Summary

The draft decisions contained in the present document were prepared by the Bureau under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, with the support of the Convention secretariat, taking into account the comments made by the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment at its sixth meeting (Geneva, 7–10 November 2016).

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, meeting in joint session, are expected to review the text of the draft decisions contained in the present document and agree on their adoption.



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Decision VII/3–III/3

Adoption of the workplan

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol), meeting in joint session,

Recalling article 11, paragraph 2 (f), of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, stipulating that the Meeting of the Parties will consider and undertake any additional action that may be required to achieve the purposes of the Convention,

Recalling also article 14, paragraph 4 (f), of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, stipulating that the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol will consider and undertake any additional action, including action to be carried out jointly under the Protocol and the Convention, that may be required to achieve the purposes of the Protocol,

Recognizing that it is essential for Parties to the Convention and the Protocol to meet fully their legal obligations arising under these treaties,

Recognizing also that Parties to the Convention and the Protocol should take action to maximize the effectiveness of their application of the Convention and the Protocol, respectively, so that the best possible practical results are achieved,

Acknowledging that the Convention and, in particular, its Protocol, provide a framework for the integration of environmental, including health, concerns into development activities and sectoral plans and programmes and, where appropriate, into policies and legislation, and that, consequently, their effective application contributes to supporting countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recognizing with appreciation the valuable work carried out under the workplan adopted at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (decision VI/3–II/3), particularly:

- (a) The steps taken by Parties and non-Parties to ensure that their environmental impact assessment systems are consistent with the provisions of the Convention and the Protocol, and to report accordingly;
- (b) The workshops and pilot projects for subregional cooperation and capacity-building on environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment organized by the Governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Morocco, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine;
- (c) The seminars for the exchange of good practices organized by the secretariat on behalf of the Governments of Belarus and Ukraine and by the European Investment Bank;
- (d) The preparation of guidance material and recommendations for improving the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol, notably regarding:
 - (i) The application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related matters;
 - (ii) Land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects;
 - (iii) Reforming legal and institutional structures with regard to application of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment;

(e) The preparation by the secretariat of promotional material, including a video and a brochure on the Protocol and its benefits,

Noting with satisfaction that the activities in the workplan adopted by the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol, at their sixth and second sessions, respectively, excluding those that were cancelled, have been approximately 77 per cent completed, with 100 per cent of priority 1 activities completed, and 100 per cent of priority 2 activities and approximately 75 per cent of priority 3 activities completed,¹

Also noting with satisfaction that the implementation of all of the remaining workplan activities are ongoing or are planned and are expected to be completed in the next intersessional period,

Recognizing with regret that attempts to accelerate the formal opening of the Convention to countries outside the Economic Commission for Europe region (ECE) have been forestalled by legal impediments,

Wishing to establish a realistic intersessional workplan under the Convention and the Protocol by ensuring in advance the funding of the workplan activities,

Noting with concern, however, the limited funding available to support the implementation of the workplan activities,

1. *Decide* that activities for which no funding is identified should remain on a waiting list, as set out in annex II to the present decision, until appropriate funding is made available, and invite Parties to the Convention and the Protocol, and other stakeholders to actively seek opportunities for ensuring their financing and implementation;

2. *Adopt* the workplan and the waiting list of activities for the period 2017–2020, as set out in annexes I and II to the present decision;

3. *Call on* the Parties, and also invite non-Parties, to arrange, host and participate actively in seminars, workshops and meetings to facilitate implementation of and compliance with the Convention and the Protocol;

4. *Invite* Parties to upgrade the sustainable availability of financing for the activities in the workplan, including those on the waiting list, and also invite interested Parties, organizations and other stakeholders to support the mobilization of means and resources for those activities;

5. *Invite* relevant bodies or agencies, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental and, possibly, researchers, and consultants for agreed activities to participate actively in the activities included in the workplan, where appropriate;

6. *Invite* the ECE Executive Secretary to continue supporting the work under the Convention and the Protocol by promoting the activities planned in the workplan and providing formal documentation for and ensuring publication of the outcomes of these activities in the three official languages of ECE, as appropriate. Publications subject to global outreach should be processed and translated by the United Nations Conference Services and made available in the six United Nations languages;

7. *Decide* that during the intersessional period that extends until the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol, scheduled for 2020, the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic

¹ Activities included in the budget adopted by the Convention and the Protocol for the period up to the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol contained in annex I to decision VI/4–II/4 were assigned priorities 1 and 2. Other workplan activities that were financed to the extent possible through earmarked contributions by Parties or through project funding are referred to as priority 3 activities.

Environmental Assessment should meet in spring 2018, spring 2019 and autumn 2019, and that the Implementation Committee should hold in total nine sessions, meeting three times a year — in spring, autumn and winter;

8. *Request* the secretariat to prepare the provisional agendas and other formal documentation for and reports on the meetings mentioned in paragraph 7 above and to issue these documents in the three official languages of ECE.

Annex I

Draft workplan for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocol for the period 2017–2020

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
I. Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol					Most items included in Implementation Committee and secretariat costs. Exceptions are identified below.
Enhance the implementation of and compliance with the Convention and the Protocol	I.1. Consideration by the Implementation Committee of compliance submissions and Committee initiatives.	Undertaken by the Implementation Committee, with the support of the secretariat.	Recommendations on compliance submissions and Committee initiatives.	2017–2020, presented to MOP8 and MOP/MOP4	May require funding for translation of submissions (\$10,000).
	I.2. Report on the Committee's activities to MOP8 and MOP/MOP4.	Undertaken by the Implementation Committee, with the support of the secretariat.	Reports of the Committee meetings and a synthesis report to MOP8 and MOP/MOP4.	2017–2020, presented to MOP8 and MOP/MOP4	—
	I.3. If necessary, review of the Committee's structure and functions and operating rules.	Undertaken by the Implementation Committee, with the support of the secretariat.	Possible revision of the Committee's structure and functions and operating rules.	2017–2020, presented to MOP8 and MOP/MOP4	—
	I.4. Examination of the outcome of the Fifth Review of Implementation of the Convention and the Second Review of Implementation of the Protocol.	Undertaken by the Implementation Committee, with the support of the secretariat.	Summary of compliance issues from the Fifth Review of Implementation of the Convention and the Second Review of Implementation of the Protocol.	By the end of 2017	—

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	I.5. Distribution to Parties of the questionnaires for reporting on implementation of the Convention and the Protocol in 2016–2018.	Carried out by the secretariat.	Completed questionnaires returned by the deadline.	Questionnaires issued by end of October 2018 Return of questionnaires by end of March 2019	—
	I.6. Preparation of draft reviews of implementation of the Convention and the Protocol.	Carried out by the secretariat.	Draft sixth review of implementation of the Convention and draft third review of implementation of the Protocol for consideration by the Implementation Committee, the Working Group on EIA and SEA, MOP8 and MOP/MOP4.	Presentation of the draft reviews to the Committee and the Working Group in autumn 2019 and to MOP8 and MOP/MOP4	Requires external consultants and translation of national reports (\$25,000 is required from the core budget). ^a
	I.7. Pre-accession legislative assistance to Kazakhstan, including advice in drafting the necessary legislation, to promote ratification and implementation of the Protocol:	Undertaken by external consultant(s), assisted by a national counterpart, with support of the secretariat.	Recommendations to the country on strengthening capacity, including new draft legislation, amendments to legislation, procedures and institutional arrangements.	2017–2018	Costs: approximately \$25,000 per review, plus in-kind contributions from Parties providing experts and from the target country for interpretation. Funding from the European Union. ^a
	I.8. Collection of findings and opinions from the Committee regarding the Convention and the Protocol, posted on	Carried out by the secretariat.	Online collection of the Committee's findings and opinions.	Annual updates	—

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	website.				
	I.9. Guidance on criteria to be considered when assessing compliance with the Convention of decisions to extend the lifetime of nuclear power plants in situations similar to the one decided by the Meeting of the Parties in decision VI/2 (para. 68)	Undertaken by the Implementation Committee, with the support of the secretariat.	A guidance document.	2017–2020, presented to MOP8 and MOP/MOP4	—
II. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building to strengthen contacts between the Parties and others, including States outside the ECE region			Common understanding of the requirements for implementation of the Convention and the Protocol.		
Improved application of the Convention and its Protocol within the subregions.			Possible development of multilateral agreements.		
Promotion of cooperation in all subregions.			Possible guidance on subregional issues, such as public participation and the role of NGOs.		
Increased professional skills of officials and increased awareness of the public, including NGOs, and officials at all relevant administrative levels in relation to SEA and transboundary EIA and to the application of the					

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
Convention and its Protocol. Increased coordination between environmental treaties in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.	Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and beyond Subregional coordination and experience-sharing events to share successes, challenges, solutions and experiences as well as the results of capacity-building activities on SEA and EIA, followed by the dissemination of seminar results in all countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, including to the public and NGOs:	Lead/host countries, with support from the secretariat and from a local counterpart/NGO for logistical arrangements.	Dissemination of seminar results: All countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.		
	(a) Subregional workshop building on the updated Guidelines on EIA in a Transboundary Context for Central Asian Countries	Lead/host country: Kyrgyzstan. Participation by all countries in Central Asia. Could be extended to countries outside ECE, e.g., in South-East Asia. (Could be organized back to back to the subregional coordination and experience-sharing event scheduled to take place in Ukraine in late 2017).	Workshop report(s).	2017 (tbc)	Partial funding available (reallocation of funds Switzerland provided in 2011 for legislative support to Uzbekistan); if extended beyond ECE, further donor funding required.
	(b) Seminar on lessons learned	Lead/host country: Ukraine.		October–	Funding from the

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	from capacity-building activities in 2014–2017, including SEA pilot projects in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine; and a subregional training of trainers event on SEA.	Participation by all countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. (Could be extended to countries in Central Asia and beyond.)		November 2017 (exact dates tbc)	European Union (EaP-GREEN). ^b
III. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA and/or the Convention			Ratifications and other outcomes specified below.	2017–2020	
	III.1. Workshops, including training, on the application of the Protocol for countries in the ECE region and other Parties to the Protocol, in particular countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia:	Lead countries with the support of the secretariat and external consultant(s) and national counterparts.	Workshop and training reports.		
	(a) One national training event and one local training event (tbc).	Kazakhstan.		2015–2017	European Union funding for Kazakhstan. ^a
	(b) [...]				
	III.2. National guidance documents on SEA.	Lead country: Kazakhstan	One published guidance document.	2017–2018	Funding from the European Union for Kazakhstan. ^a
	III.3. Preparation of two-page informal pamphlets or “FasTips” on key issues in SEA practice on topics to be suggested (e.g., SEA for water	Lead organization: IAIA, with the support of WHO, SEA and health experts, and from the secretariat for the dedicated “FasTips” on the	Informal pamphlets.	Ongoing	In kind. For translation of relevant FasTips, possible funding from the European

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	management plans or the waste management sector; analytical methods used in SEA; and monitoring) and on the Convention and the Protocol.	Convention and the Protocol.			Union (EaP GREEN). ^b

Abbreviations: IAIA = International Association for Impact Assessment; MOP8 = the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its eighth session; MOP/MOP4 = the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its fourth session; NGOs = non-governmental organizations; SEA = strategic environmental assessment; tbc = to be confirmed; WHO = World Health Organization;

^a “Supporting Kazakhstan’s Transition to a Green Economy Model”. A European Union-funded multi-stakeholder project for 2015–2018. Funding subject to applicable procedures under the project.

^b “Greening Economies in the European Union’s Eastern Partnership” (EaP-GREEN), a European Union-funded regional multi-stakeholder project. Funding subject to applicable procedures under the project.

Annex II

Proposed list of activities awaiting funding and/or identification of lead countries or organizations for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocol for the period 2017–2020

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
I. Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol	I.1. Reviews of legislation, procedures and practice and technical assistance in drafting legislation to strengthen Parties’ implementation of and compliance with the Convention and the Protocol. Prompted by the Implementation Committee or requested by Parties themselves, as follows:	Undertaken by external consultant(s), with the support of the secretariat. Including a period in-country examining national legislation and based on earlier reviews, as available.	Recommendations to the country on strengthening capacity, including amendments to legislation, procedures and institutional arrangements.		Costs: approximately \$25,000 per review, plus in-kind contributions from Parties providing experts and from target country for interpretation.
Enhance the implementation of and compliance with the Convention and the Protocol	(a) Technical legislative advice further to possible	Supervised by members of the Committee.			Funding to be identified.

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	Committee initiatives (as decided by the Implementation Committee);				
	(b) Technical legislative advice to Parties to the Convention and/or the Protocol requesting assistance (review of primary or secondary legislation; proposals for amendments).	Lead/requesting country: (a) Azerbaijan; drafting of secondary legislation; (b) Kyrgyzstan: drafting of secondary legislation for the application of the Convention and an awareness-raising event to promote the adoption of the amended legal framework.			Funding to be identified.
	I.2. Pre-accession technical legislative advice to a country or countries wishing to join the Protocol and/or the Convention to review national legislation for implementation of the Protocol and/or the Convention and to draft primary or secondary legislation or propose amendments.	Lead/requesting country: (a) Tajikistan: review of national EIA legislation; support in legal drafting; awareness-raising event to promote adoption of the amended law; (b) Uzbekistan: two to three national seminars on application of the Convention.		To be defined by the requesting countries.	Funding to be identified.
	I.3. After the adoption of national law by Georgia, pilot on the application of transboundary EIA between Armenia and Georgia to test their respective laws and improve transboundary procedures.	Lead/requesting country: Armenia, in cooperation with Georgia. Undertaken by external consultant(s), with the support of the secretariat.			Requires funding (around \$100,000).

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	[I.4. Elaborate a long-term strategy and action plan for the future of the Convention and the Protocol (see draft decision VII/7–III/6).	To be carried out by lead countries and organizations, with support from a consultant and the secretariat. To be adopted by the Meetings of the Parties.	A long-term strategy and action plan for the future of the Convention and the Protocol, including to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Set a vision for the next [10] years and beyond; (b) Set priorities to ensure the best use of resources; (c) Identify future activities, partnerships, and funding mechanisms for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Promoting global implementation of the treaties; (ii) Contributing to the achievement of relevant SDGs and targets; (iii) Enhancing cooperation with other international Conventions and processes within and beyond ECE. 	2017–2020	Requires a consultant for drafting (approximately 15,000).]

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
II. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building to strengthen contacts between the Parties and others, including States outside the ECE region		To be carried out by lead countries, with support from the secretariat, as needed.	For all subregions: (a) Possible guidance on subregional issues; (b) Common understanding of elements of application and possible multilateral agreements.		Participants cover their own travel and accommodation costs to the extent possible, while host countries cover organizational and venue costs in kind (approximately \$5,000–\$20 000 per workshop).
Improved and developed application of the Convention and its Protocol within the subregions. Promotion of cooperation in all subregions.	II.A. Baltic Sea subregion Holding of two to three meetings on topics to be identified by the lead country.	To be organized by lead countries: Denmark, Finland and Sweden (tbc by the countries).	Workshop reports and possible reports on specific issues.		In kind.
Increased understanding and professional skills of officials and increased awareness of the public, including NGOs, along with officials at all relevant administrative levels in relation to SEA and transboundary EIA and to the application of the Convention and its Protocol. Common understanding of elements of application and possible multilateral agreements.	II.B. South-Eastern Europe subregion II.B.1. Workshop or dedicated session on implementation of the Convention, the Protocol and the Bucharest Agreement in the subregion. II.B.2. Workshop(s) on implementation of the Convention, the Protocol and the Bucharest Agreement in the subregion: workshop to prepare for the first Meeting of the Parties to the Bucharest Agreement.	Lead countries: Croatia with Romania and Slovenia under the auspices of a regional conference on EIA hosted by Croatia (tbc). Lead country: Romania.	Workshop reports and possible reports on specific issues.	September 2017 (tbc) (tbc)	In kind contributions/donor funding required. Donor/in-kind funding required for travel of experts and participants. In kind (tbc).

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	II.B.3. First Meeting of the Parties to the Bucharest Agreement.	Lead country: Romania.		(tbc)	No funding confirmed yet.
II.C. Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (and beyond)					
	II.C.1. Subregional conference with training of trainers on the application of SEA to climate change mitigation, to be followed by national training sessions and supplemented by the preparation of guidance.	To be hosted by a lead country and contributed to by all participants. Could be extended to all Central Asian countries (and beyond). To be carried out by external consultants, with support from a local counterpart and the secretariat.	Workshop and training reports.		Costs: Subregional conference for up to 50 participants: \$40,000–\$80,000 (depending on the duration). Staff costs for project management: P-3, \$15,000 per month and G-4, \$8,500 per month. Requires donor funding.
	II.C.2. Subregional training workshop on the practical application of SEA and quality control of SEA documentation for SEA practitioners and sectoral authorities.	To be hosted by a lead country and contributed to by all participants. Could be extended to all Central Asian countries (and beyond).	Workshop and training reports.		Costs: Subregional conference for up to 50 participants: \$40,000–\$80,000 (depending on the duration). Staff costs for project management: P-3, \$15,000 per month and G-4, \$8,500 per month. Requires donor funding.

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	<p>II.C.3. Subregional capacity-building activities to promote public participation in decision-making on EIA and SEA, including to strengthen the capacities of national Aarhus Centres for Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Environmental Information Exchange Centre for Georgia and the regional Aarhus Centres Network in the EIA and SEA processes, using the Good Practice Recommendations on Public Participation on SEA and the general guidance on enhancing systemic consistency:</p> <p>(a) Preparation of capacity-building materials on public participation in decision-making on environmental matters;</p> <p>(b) Multi-stakeholder national workshops in each country, one subregional workshop on the challenges to and opportunities for effective public participation in decision-making in various sectors and fields, including communication and facilitation skills and techniques for stakeholder dialogue in the field of the</p>	<p>Lead/target countries: Countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in cooperation with the Aarhus Convention (and relevant partner organisations).</p>	<p>Capacity-building materials.</p> <p>Workshop and training reports.</p>		<p>Requires donor funding.</p>

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	environment, and one regional workshop on the role of civil society organizations in addressing environment and security issues;				
	(c) Support Aarhus Centres in organizing and facilitating public hearings on draft legislation, development and investment projects, and policies and programmes.				
	II.C.4. National awareness-raising events to support the updating of the Guidelines on EIA in a Transboundary Context for Central Asian Countries and to promote its application.	Lead/target countries: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Undertaken by external consultant(s), with the support of a national coordinator and the secretariat	Comprehensive comments to the Guidelines and raised awareness on the benefits of its use.	2017–2020	Requires donor funding (\$7,000 per event).
II.D. (South-East) Asia					
	Organization or contribution to a subregional awareness-raising and/or capacity-building workshop on transboundary EIA and SEA.	Lead/target countries: China, Cambodia, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Viet Nam, to be organized in collaboration with the Mekong River Commission and the Asian Development Bank (tbc).	Workshop and training reports.	(tbc)	Requires donor funding.

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
<p>III. Exchange of good practices</p> <p>Shared knowledge and experience in appropriate legislation for implementation of the Convention and the Protocol, leading to better national legislation and application.</p> <p>Improved implementation and application of the Convention and the Protocol by learning from Parties' experiences.</p> <p>Awareness-raising on the Convention, its amendments and its ratification.</p>	<p>III.1. Workshops or half-day seminars within meetings of the Working Group or the Meetings of the Parties on:</p>	<p>To be organized by a lead country(ies) with support from the secretariat.</p>	<p>From each workshop or seminar, a brief, clear document presenting advice on the most important problems identified for the theme in question.</p> <p>Contribution to the application of SDGs.</p>	<p>2017–2020</p>	<p>Costs (e.g., for speakers, provision and translation of materials) to be covered in kind by lead countries, to the extent possible (approximately \$10,000 per seminar). (Travel costs for countries eligible for financial support and non-ECE countries should be covered from the budget.)</p>
	<p>[(a) Application of the Protocol on SEA to urban planning;</p>	<p>Lead country(ies) or organization(s) to be identified. Possibly in cooperation with THE PEP, the ECE Housing and Land Management Unit, and the ICLEI network;</p>	<p>Contributes to implementation of SDG target 11.3: “By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries”.]</p>		
	<p>[(b) Application of the Protocol on SEA to climate change adaptation and mitigation;</p>	<p>Lead country(ies) or organization(s) to be identified. With possible participation of the UNFCCC secretariat;</p>	<p>Contributes to implementation of SDG target 13.2 “Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning”.]</p>		

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	(c) Improving intersectoral cooperation and institutional arrangements for the application of the Protocol on SEA and the Convention;	Lead country(ies) or organization(s) to be identified. With the participation of WHO (tbc);			
	[(d) Synergies between transboundary EIA and SEA with biodiversity assessment;	Lead country(ies) or organization(s) to be identified. Possibly in cooperation with the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats and the Convention on Biological Diversity;	Contributes to implementation of SDG 15: “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”]		
	[(e) Synergies between transboundary EIA and SEA and UNCLOS, arts. 204-206]	Lead country(ies) or organization(s) to be identified.	Contributes to implementation of SDG 14: “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.” Possible link with SDG 1 with regard in the context of the ongoing global process for strengthening of international ocean governance and development of a legally binding instrument on the conservation and		

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			sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.]		
IV. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA and/or the Convention		Lead: secretariat in cooperation with the concerned countries and as specified below.	Ratifications and other outcomes specified below.	2017–2020	
Ratification, full legal implementation and practical application of the Protocol and the Convention.	IV.1. Development of country- and sector-specific guidance for the assessment of potential health impacts of plans and programmes and for the involvement of health authorities, building on the chapter on health in the SEA Resource Manual. (Could be linked with a possible subregional workshop.)	Undertaken by external consultant(s), with the support of the secretariat and WHO.	Guidance document(s). Contributes to implementation of SDG target 3.9: “By 2030 substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination”.		
Increased professional skills of officials, and increased awareness of the public, including NGOs, and officials at all relevant administrative levels in relation to SEA and to the application of the Protocol and the Convention.					
Increased exchange of information on and experience in the application of the Protocol and the Convention.	IV.2. Development of good practice recommendations for the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into plans and programmes through SEA.	Undertaken by external consultant(s), with the support of the secretariat, involving a survey to gather good practice.	Guidance document. Contributes to implementation of SDG target 13.2: “Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning”.		Requires consultant(s) for drafting and funding for translation of the survey and responses to it (approximately \$25,000).

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	IV.3. Development of guidance on the application of the Protocol on SEA to urban planning.	Undertaken by external consultants, with support from the secretariat, possibly in cooperation with THE PEP, the ECE Housing and Land Management Unit, WHO and the ICLEI network.	Guidance document. Contributes to the implementation of SDG target 11.3: “By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries”.		Requires consultant(s) for drafting and funding for translation (approximately \$25,000).
	IV.4. Translation into national languages of the video promoting the benefits of SEA and the Protocol.	To be carried out in cooperation with the target country, with support from an external consultant.	A video for dissemination within countries.	2017–2020	Requires donor funding (around \$4,000 per language version) and in-kind contributions.
	IV.5. Workshops for national and local sectoral authorities, as well as environmental and health authorities, including training, on the application of the Protocol for countries in the ECE region and beyond and the application of SEA for integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation measures into plans or programmes.	To be carried out in cooperation with the lead/target countries, e.g., Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, with support from an external consultant and the secretariat.	Increased awareness about SEA among key stakeholders with a view to promoting the adoption of the legislation (where relevant) and improving its application.	2017–2020	Requires donor funding (\$10,000 for two-day workshop) and in-kind contributions.
	IV.6. Pilot SEAs in selected countries, in selected sectors, involving the following activities: (a) Two to three workshops for scoping and the analysis of the baseline, impact	Lead/target countries and selected sectors (based on requests by the countries): (a) Armenia (urban development); (b) Georgia;			Requires funding for pilot (\$80,000-\$100,000) and for staff costs of a project manager and support personnel, P-3 (\$15,000 per

<i>Activity objectives</i>	<i>Method of work (sub-activities)</i>	<i>Organizational arrangements</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>	<i>Budget</i>
	assessment; development of mitigation measures and development of recommendations; (b) Two to three public consultation events; (c) Preparation of the SEA report and training on its quality control.	(c) Republic of Moldova; (d) Russian Federation; (e) Kazakhstan; (f) Ukraine (waste management and energy sectors); (g) Tajikistan. In collaboration with the support of an external consultant, national experts and the secretariat, in collaboration with partner organizations, as relevant.			month) and G-4 (\$8,500 per month).
IV.7. National guidance documents on the implementation of SEA.		Lead/target country to be identified.	A guidance document.	2017–2018	Requires funding.
IV.8. Preparation of fact sheets on the application of the Protocol on SEA.		Lead: All Parties invited to propose fact sheets. (The Party preparing the fact sheet will be responsible for its layout.)	Fact sheets to be published on the Convention website by the secretariat.	2017–2020	In kind.
IV.9. Preparation of a video to promote application of the Convention.		Secretariat, consultants	A promotional video in English and in Russian.	2017–2020	Requires funding: \$35,000-\$40,000

Abbreviations: Bucharest Agreement = Multilateral agreement among the countries of South-Eastern Europe for implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context; EIA = environmental impact assessment; IAIA = International Association for Impact Assessment; ICLEI = Local Governments for Sustainability; NGOs = non-governmental organizations; SDG = Sustainable Development Goal; SEA = strategic environmental assessment; SEA Resource Manual = Resource Manual to Support Application of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (ECE/MP.EIA/17); THE PEP = Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme; tbc = to be confirmed; UNCLOS = United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; UNFCCC = United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and WHO = World Health Organization.

^a The financing of the activities foreseen in the budget of the Convention and its Protocol for 2017–2020, to be set out in annex I to draft decision VII/4–III/4, will be contingent on sufficient funds being made available by Parties through their voluntary contributions to the Convention trust fund.

Draft decision VII/4–III/4

Budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol), meeting in joint session,

Recalling decision VI/4–II/4 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the Meeting of the Parties of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, on the budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance for the period up to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol,

Also recalling the financial strategy adopted through decision VI/4–II/4 (annex II), including with a view to improving the sustainable availability and predictability of resources under the Convention and the Protocol and to ensuring a more equitable and proportionate sharing of the financial burden among the donors,

Recognizing the wish of the Parties for a high degree of transparency and accountability regarding the status of and developments in the financing of activities under the Convention and the Protocol,

Welcoming the biannual financial reports prepared by the secretariat during the present intersessional period

Acknowledging with appreciation the contributions made in cash and in kind in the present intersessional period, while noting with regret that the financial burden was not evenly distributed, with three donors providing the bulk of the funding and with several Parties not contributing at all,

Recognizing the need to:

- (a) Ensure that sufficient resources are available to implement the workplan for the next intersessional period, 2017–2020, adopted through decision VII/3–III/3,
- (b) Increase the willingness of donors to make further financial and in-kind contributions, as well as assist in financial and project management,
- (c) Ensure that the financing of activities under the Convention and the Protocol should be distributed among as many Parties and non-Parties as possible,

Aware of the importance of wide participation by the Parties in activities under the Convention and the Protocol in order to ensure progress,

Aware also of the need to facilitate the participation of certain countries with economies in transition that may otherwise not be able to take part,

Recalling decision II/14 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, which amends the Convention to allow United Nations Member States not members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to accede to the Convention, and also article 23, paragraph 3, of the Protocol, which allows United Nations Member States not members of ECE to accede to the Protocol,

1. *Agree* to maintain the existing scheme of financial contributions for covering the budgeted costs for the implementation of the workplan for the next intersessional

period, whereby Parties and signatories to the Convention and to the Protocol contribute an amount that they choose to pledge on a voluntary basis;

2. *Also agree* that, in line with paragraph 21 below, that work will continue during the intersessional period to ensure that the financial arrangements and the financial strategy foster the effective implementation of the workplan;

3. *Confirm* for State Parties the system of shares endorsed by decision III/10 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, whereby countries make contributions equivalent in value to a number of shares of the budget;²

4. *Urge* all Parties to contribute to ensuring sustainable funding of activities and an equitable and proportionate sharing of the financial burden among the Parties, and also invite signatories, other interested States, organizations and international financial institutions to contribute;

5. *Strongly urge* Parties that have so far only committed limited funds or in-kind contributions to raise their contributions during the current and future budget cycles;

6. *Request* donors to pledge, where possible, their yearly or multi-annual financial and in-kind contributions prior to the adoption of the workplan and the budget by the Meetings of the Parties.

7. *Adopt* the report prepared by the secretariat on the budget and financial arrangements during the present intersessional period contained in document ECE/MP.EIA/2017/3–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2017/3;

8. *Decide* that activities under the workplan for 2017–2020 that are included in the budget of the Convention and the Protocol for that same period, as set out in the annex to this decision, and which are not covered by the United Nations regular budget, should be covered by contributions of [1,168] [1,208] shares of 1,000 United States dollars each, of which [625] shares would cover the core (priority 1) requirements and [543] [608] shares would cover the remaining non-core (priority 2, 3 and 4) requirements;

9. *Agree* the budget of the Convention and its Protocol for 2017–2020, as set out in the annex hereto;

10. *Also agree* that contributions shall be allocated to the budgets of the individual items in the budget table contained in the annex in the order of priority set for each item, unless a contributor specifies that a contribution should be allocated to a particular item in the budget; where funds remain after the completion of such items, the surplus shall be transferred to the overall budget to be spent on the budget items in the order of priority set for each item;

11. *Further agree* that financial contributions should preferably be made towards the overall implementation of the workplan;

12. *Request* that Parties seek to transfer their contributions to the ECE Trust Fund on Local Technical Cooperation under the Convention and the Protocol as early as possible in their budget year and, insofar as possible, contributions for a given calendar year should be made by the end of the preceding year so as to secure payment of staff costs and to provide greater certainty for future financial and project management;

13. *Request* the secretariat, to prepare and submit to the Bureau annual financial reports with a view to assisting in the preparation of the report to the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol, at their eighth and fourth sessions, respectively,

² Language to be modified based on the agreement of the “financial scheme”.

in accordance with paragraph 17 below, and further request the Bureau to consider the reports and to agree their circulation to the Parties;

14. *Also request* the secretariat to include in the reports information on the resources available (including in-kind contributions and United Nations programme support) and the expenditure, and to highlight significant developments;

15. *Further request* the secretariat to provide Parties with timely reminders concerning outstanding pledges;

16. *Decide* that the Executive Secretary of ECE has authority, after consultations with the Bureau, to make adjustments to the budget, up to a maximum of 10 per cent, where such adjustments are necessary before the next sessions of the Meetings of Parties, and that Parties are promptly informed of such adjustments;

17. *Request* the secretariat, in accordance with the financial rules of the United Nations, to monitor the expenditure of the funds and to prepare a report for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties, based on the information contained in the annual reports and giving a clear indication of the significant developments during the period in order that Parties can best meet future demands for resources under the Convention and its Protocol;

18. *Request* the Executive Secretary of ECE to seek additional staff funded by the regular budget of the United Nations to provide long-term and stable secretariat functions;

19. *Recognize* that the current financial constraints of ECE do not allow for the financing of sufficient administrative staff and, therefore, on an exceptional basis for the next intersessional period, are willing to support the secretariat by calling on Parties to provide additional contributions or to authorize the Bureau to redistribute available funding from the Trust Fund for this purpose;

20. *Underline* the need for appropriate and stable staffing of the secretariat by giving the highest priority to financing an external expert or experts to the secretariat to provide support for the Implementation Committee under the Convention and the Protocol;

21. *Decide* that the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment shall prepare a further draft decision on financial arrangements for adoption by the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol at their eighth and fourth sessions, respectively, based on the experience gained in the meantime under the financial arrangements adopted at the present joint session;

22. *Call upon* countries with economies in transition to finance to the extent possible their own participation in the activities under the Convention and its Protocol in order to ensure that the limited funds available are used efficiently;

23. *Urge* Parties and encourage non-Parties and relevant international organizations to contribute financial resources to enable countries with economies in transition and non-governmental organizations to participate in the meetings under the Convention and its Protocol;

24. *Urge* the secretariat to ensure that financial support is provided to participants in formal meetings, in accordance with the budget decided by the Meetings of the Parties and subject to the availability of funds for this purpose, and that, among participants, priority should be given to representatives of Parties, then of non-governmental organizations and finally of non-Parties, according to criteria to be set by the Bureau;

25. *Recommend* that the Convention and its Protocol should apply the guiding criteria established and periodically updated by the Committee on Environmental Policy for

financial assistance to support the participation of experts and representatives from countries with economies in transition in meetings and workshops organized within the framework of the Convention and its Protocol and other relevant activities, depending upon the availability of funds for this purpose;

26. *Request* the secretariat to grant, subject to the availability of funds for this purpose, in accordance with the budget decided by the Meeting of the Parties, financial assistance to designated experts from non-governmental organizations identified by the Bureau for their participation in meetings under the Convention and under the Protocol, unless otherwise decided by the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment;

27. *Decide* that the Bureau shall, depending on the availability of funding for this purpose, in accordance with the budget decided by the Meeting of the Parties, and subject to priority being given to funding the workplan, examine requests for possible financial assistance for the participation by representatives and experts from States outside the ECE region in meetings under the Convention and its Protocol.

28. *Decide* that, as a rule and in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Convention and its Protocol, the sessions of the Meetings of Parties take place in Geneva, unless otherwise decided by the Parties based upon an offer of a contracting Party to host the sessions.

Annex

Draft budget for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocol for the period 2017–2020 for activities to be funded from the Convention trust fund or by in-kind contributions

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Notes/sub-activities</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Cost per item per unit (shares)</i>	<i>Cost per unit (shares)</i>	<i>Number of units over three years</i>	<i>Total cost over three years (shares)</i>
Organizational activities and support to the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol		Most meetings will take place in Geneva					
Eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol	2		Meeting		80	1	80
		Participation of countries with economies in transition (CITs)		30			
		Participation of non-governmental organizations		20			
		Invited speakers		15			
		Participation of non-ECE countries		15			
Meetings of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment	2		Meeting		36.5		110
		Participation of CITs		20			
		Participation of non-governmental organizations		10			
		Participation of non-ECE countries		6.5			
Bureau meetings (free standing)	2	Participation of CITs (Bureau members) ^b	Meeting	—	6	4	24
Meetings of the Implementation Committee	2	Participation of CITs (Committee members) ^b	Meeting	—	6	9	54
External expert to provide secretariat support for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol ^a	1	External expert (United Nations Standard Salary Cost, including net salary, taxes and common staff costs)	Year	—	200	3	600
Administrative staff to provide secretariat support (half time)	2	Administrative staff at 50% (United Nations Standard Salary Cost, including net salary, taxes and common staff costs)	Year		55	3	165

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Notes/sub-activities</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Cost per item per unit (shares)</i>	<i>Cost per unit (shares)</i>	<i>Number of units over three years</i>	<i>Total cost over three years (shares)</i>
Informal translations of informal papers for meetings listed above	2		Meeting	—	1	25	25
Further support for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol	2		Year		20	3	60
		Secretariat travel in relation to the workplan		15			
		Promotional materials		5			
Reporting under the Convention and the Protocol	1	Consultancy costs for drafting reviews of implementation, translation of reports	Consultant				25
Promotion of contacts with countries outside the ECE region (with reporting of the results to the Working Group)	4	Travel of secretariat, experts and Chair	Mission	—	5	5	25
Subtotal (organizational)							1 168
Selected substantive activities		See corresponding workplan for details					
Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA							
	3	Guidance on SEA and climate change (survey, drafting, translation)	Consultant				25
	3	Guidance on SEA and urban planning (survey, drafting, translation)	Consultant				25
Future of the Convention and the Protocol	2	A long-term strategy and an action plan, including regarding opening of the Convention and the Protocol and contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (support to drafting)	Consultant				15
Subtotal (substantive activities)							65
Grand total (in shares, 1 share = \$1 000)							1 208

^a Full time staff member at the P-3 level to support the secretariat to fulfil its functions as required by the Convention and the Protocol, including notably regarding the review of implementation and compliance under the Convention and the Protocol, capacity-building and maintenance of the website. The external expert and a support staff on a 50 per cent basis are required to supplement the secretariat staff funded through the United Nations regular budget, which currently comprises one staff member at the P-4 level and, 50 per cent of a (support) staff member at the G-4 level

^b The actual costs will depend on the final composition of the Bureau and the Implementation Committee.

Decision VII/5–III/5

Guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol), meeting in joint session,

Recognizing the need to more effectively mitigate the effects of possible industrial accidents and the consequences on human health, the environment and cultural heritage within countries and across borders,

Acknowledging important interlinkages, synergies and complementarities between the obligations of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) in the area of land-use planning, safety and siting of hazardous activities,

Convinced of the benefits of the application of these treaty obligations in a mutually consistent and complementary manner,

Aware of the challenges in the practical implementation of these legal instruments within and across countries in relation to land-use planning, safety and hazardous industrial activities,

Wishing to support public authorities and practitioners in applying the relevant treaty obligations.

Having considered the outcome of the workshop organized jointly with the Working Group on the Development of the Convention under the Industrial Accidents Convention (Geneva, 13 April 2016), which highlighted the importance of exchanging information and experiences and promoting synergies and cooperation among stakeholders at the national and international levels,

Having also considered the two parts of the draft guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects — divided into general guidance and technical guidance,

1. *Recognize* the need to support competent public authorities and practitioners in applying the relevant treaty obligations;
2. *Endorse* the general part of the guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects, as set out in document ECE/MP.EIA/2017/6–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2017/6;
3. *Take note* of the technical part of the guidance, contained in document ECE/MP.EIA/2017/11–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2017/10;
4. *Invite* Parties to promote the implementation of the guidance and cooperation and consultation among land-use planners, environmental assessment experts and industrial safety specialists;
5. *Invite* the relevant treaty body secretariats to publish the guidance.

Decision VII/7–III/6

Development of a strategy and an action plan for the future application of the Convention and the Protocol

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol), meeting in joint session,

Recognizing the important contribution of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to improving international cooperation, the integration of environment and health concerns into development activities, environmental governance and transparency in planning and decision-making,

Convinced that the Convention and the Protocol continue to be effective instruments in fostering environmentally sound and sustainable development, and believing in their potential to contribute to the implementation by countries of a wide range of Sustainable Development Goals, as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Conscious that, despite progress in implementing the Convention and the Protocol, challenges remain, and that new important environmental and health problems have emerged since the adoption of the treaties,

Recalling decision VI/5–II/5 on accession by Member States of the United Nations not members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and the 2014 Geneva Declaration (Part B) on the global application of the Convention and the Protocol,

Wishing to be able to respond both to the remaining and the new challenges and to adapt to the changing environment, focusing on the key priority activities and building and enhancing partnerships and cooperation with relevant international treaties and processes,

1. *Decide* to include in the Convention and the Protocol workplan for the next intersessional period the elaboration, with the assistance of a consultant, as appropriate, of a long-term strategy with an action plan that will:

(a) Set a vision for the next [10] years and beyond to address priorities and to meet challenges, including with respect to climate change, biodiversity, [nuclear] energy, urban planning, [...];

(b) Set priorities on the strategic and operational level to ensure that the best use is made of the limited resources of the Parties and the secretariat;

(c) Identify future activities, partnerships and funding mechanisms, including with a view to:

(i) Promoting the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol globally, raising awareness on these instruments, their achievements and benefits, and promoting cooperation and exchange of experience with countries outside the ECE region;

(ii) Contributing to the achievement of relevant Sustainable Development Goals and targets;

(iii) Enhancing cooperation with other international conventions and processes within and beyond the ECE region;

2. *Agree* that the long-term strategy and the action plan should build, inter alia, on the outcomes of the brainstorming session on the future of the Convention and the

Protocol and the workshop on the global application of the two treaties held at the sixth meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, the reviews of implementation of the Convention and the Protocol and the external evaluation of ECE activities;

3. *Invite* Parties, non-Parties, and other stakeholders to lead and to contribute to work under this activity, and also invite the secretariat to support the work;

4. *Decide* that the draft long-term strategy and the action plan will be submitted for adoption to the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol at their eighth and fourth sessions, respectively, and that they will be implemented through actions and decisions agreed by Meetings of the Parties;

5. *Further decide* to assess progress in the implementation of the strategy and the action plan at sessions of the Meetings of the Parties.
