
Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

Bureau

Athens, 30–31 January 2014

Informal notes of meeting

Note by the secretariat

I. Opening

1. The following members of the Bureau were present: Mr. Dmytro Mormul (Ukraine), Chair of the Bureau, and Mr. Jochen Ritter (Germany), alternate Chair for Protocol matters; Ms. Vesna Kolar-Planinšič (Slovenia), Chair of the Implementation Committee; Aleksandr Andreev (Belarus); Mr. Felix Zaharia (Romania), First Vice-Chair of the Implementation Committee and alternate for Mr. Andreev for Protocol matters; and four Vice-Chairs of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment: Ms. Ruta Revoldiene (Lithuania), Mr. Piotr Otawski (Poland), Mr. Volodymyr Buchko (Ukraine), and Mr. Georges Kremlis (European Commission). Mr. Aleksandar Vesič (Serbia) was absent
2. The Bureau noted that due to changes in his functions, Mr. A. Vesic, the member nominated by Serbia, would no longer serve in the Bureau and not be replaced by the Government of Serbia prior to the expiry of his mandate in June 2014. The Bureau thanked Mr. Vesic for his longstanding contribution to the activities under the two treaties, including as the former Chair of the Bureau and the Working Group..
3. The Bureau agreed to grant an observer status to two representatives of European Investment Bank (EIB) in a part of its meeting to discuss the possible contribution of IFIs to next MOPs and their role for promoting activities under the Convention and the Protocol.
4. The Bureau adopted its agenda.

II. Status of ratification of the Convention, its amendments and its Protocol

5. The Bureau took note of the recent ratification of the Protocol by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
6. It welcomed the information that Finland and Slovenia had recently adopted both amendments to the Convention and would soon deposit their instruments of ratification with the UN Treaty Depository. It noted, consequently, that only one further ratification was needed for entry into force of the first amendment.
7. The Bureau asked the ECE Executive Secretary to again write to ministers of foreign affairs and to environment ministers of the Parties to the Convention that had adopted the

amendments, or the Protocol, with a view to urging them to proceed promptly with the ratification.

III. Implementation of the workplan 2011-2014

A. Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol

8. The Chair of the Implementation Committee informed the Bureau about the main outcomes of the Committee's twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth sessions (held on 12–14 March, 10–12 September and 10–12 December 2013, respectively)¹. She also presented the main objectives for the Committee's upcoming session (25–27 February 2014), where the Committee was expected to finalize its input to the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (MOP-6) and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (MOP/MOP-2), which included the draft decisions on compliance; proposals for the review of its structure, functions and operating rules; and the report on its activities during the intersessional period 2011–2014. The Bureau took note of the report by the Committee Chair.

9. The Bureau noted the report by the secretariat on the implementation of activities in the workplan that related to compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol, including notably:

(a) Pre-accession legislative assistance provided to Belarus and the Republic of Moldova to implement the Protocol on SEA and to Georgia to implement the Convention; as well as the planned legislative review on EIA in Uzbekistan in early 2014.

(b) Final editing of the draft General guidance on enhancing consistency between the Convention and EIA within the framework of the State ecological expertise, to be submitted to MOP-6 for endorsement;

(c) Finalization of the draft fourth review of implementation on the Convention and the draft first review of the implementation of the Protocol, based on the comments provided by Parties by end of January 2014.

10. The Bureau was made aware that one Party had commented the responses of another Party to the questionnaire on the review of implementation of the Convention and contested their validity. The Bureau agreed that the draft reviews of implementation should not be subject to such comments and advised the secretariat not to reflect them in the draft review to be submitted to MOP-6 for adoption. Instead, as necessary, the Party concerned could express its views to the MOP and have them recorded in the report on the MOP session.

11. Based on the information that to date a few Parties had still not reported on their implementation the Convention and the Protocol, the Bureau agreed that when inviting Parties to the upcoming MOPs, the Executive Secretary of ECE should request those Parties that have not reported to submit their overdue reports.

12. The Bureau noted the information by Ukraine that its EIA legislation would be adopted shortly and that a draft law for ratifying the Protocol on SEA would soon be presented to the Parliament.

¹ Reports on the Implementation Committee's sessions held in 2013 are available at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=7113>

13. The Bureau took note of the update by the European Commission regarding the amendments to the EIA Directive. It invited the European Commission to submit to MOP-6 an informal document presenting the changes made and the extent to which these could impact the alignment of the Directive with the Convention

14. Further to a query from the Bureau member from Belarus, the European Commission and the ECE secretariat clarified that it was not within their mandate and therefore not feasible to officially translate the EIA Directive and its amendments to Russian. The Bureau encouraged the secretariat and the EC to attempt to identify project funding for informally translating them, and for ensuring the high quality of the translation.

15. Finally, the Bureau noted the publication by the European Commission of the *Guidance on the Application of the Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure for Large-scale Transboundary Projects*² and recommended that the publication be made available through the Convention website and at the next MOP sessions.

B. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building

16. The Bureau took note of the report by the secretariat on the implementation of activities in the workplan that related to subregional cooperation and capacity-building in the subregions of South-Eastern Europe; Mediterranean; Baltic Sea; and the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

17. The Bureau noted that several workplan activities in particular in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, were no longer requested or were postponed to the next intersessional period by the countries that had proposed them in 2011. It also acknowledged that MOP-5 had not foreseen a budget for these activities and welcomed the fundraising efforts of the secretariat that had secured financing for most of them.

C. Exchange of good practices

18. The Bureau was informed about the implementation of activities in the workplan that related to the exchange of good practices. The Bureau:

(a) Noted the report by the secretariat on the outcomes of the workshop on the impact of nuclear energy-related activities held during the third meeting of the Working Group (11-15 November 2013). It acknowledged the importance of developing in the next intersessional period related good practice recommendations to assist countries in the practical application of the Convention (draft decision VI/7), and stressed the need for identifying relevant funding for covering the consultancy costs for this purpose. The Bureau agreed that the recommendations should address and clarify issues raised during the workshop. It also suggested the preparation of detailed terms of reference for the consultant;

(b) Noted the report by the Chair of the Implementation Committee on the outcomes of the seminar on sharing good practice and tools for communication, cooperation and conflict resolution, in particular in the context of countries with no diplomatic relations, which was also held during the third meeting of the Working Group. The Bureau agreed that the outcomes should be endorsed through a MOP decision. It agreed furthermore that possible objections to adopting a decision on this issue should be duly recorded in the report on the MOP session.

² <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/pdf/Transboundry%20EIA%20Guide.pdf>

D. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol

19. The Bureau took note of the report by the secretariat on the implementation of activities in the workplan that related to promoting ratification and application of the Protocol. In particular, the Bureau noted that the Russian version of the Resource Manual to Support Application of the Protocol was being proofread and edited by the secretariat and would be published electronically in Spring 2014. The secretariat also reported that the draft Good practice recommendations on public participation in SEA would be submitted for endorsement to MOP/MOP-2, as further revised by the Working Group in November.

20. The Bureau welcomed the report by the secretariat on the capacity-building activities implemented in 2013 with funds from the EaP-GREEN programme and the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC), including:

- (a) Reviews of SEA legislation of Belarus and of the Republic of Moldova;
- (b) Legal drafting on SEA in the Republic of Moldova;
- (c) National training workshops on SEA in Armenia (26-29 November, 2013) and Ukraine (1-4 October, 2013) and three local trainings in Belarus (Grodno, Brest and Homel, in October 2013).

IV. Budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance

21. The Bureau took note of the report by the secretariat on the receipt of contributions to, and on expenditure from, the Convention's trust fund, with reference to the draft biannual financial report covering the period until end of December 2013; and agreed to its issue.

22. The Bureau acknowledged the insufficiency and unpredictability of funding for covering the budget adopted by MOP-5 and the lack of any funds by Parties for the capacity building activities foreseen in the workplan for 2011-2014 adopted by MOP-5. It noted that the pledges made by Parties at MOP-5 for the intersessional period 2011-2014 had represented only less than 50% of the budget, and that the letters it had requested the secretariat to send to Parties in 2012 and 2013 to invite further contributions, had only had a limited impact. The exceptions had included the substantial amount of additional funds provided by Norway (representing seven times more than its initial pledge), deriving to a large extent from development aid funds from the foreign ministry. The Bureau suggested that other Parties explore similar funding opportunities within their Governments.

23. The Bureau also noted information from the secretariat on savings, notably in terms of staff costs due to the delay in filling the post of the external expert funded through the trust fund, and overspending (minor expenditure on financial support of participants), as described in the biannual financial report. It also noted and approved the expected variation from the budget regarding the costs of its meeting in Athens, which were due to unexpected need for the secretariat to finance the interpretation from the Convention budget.

24. The Bureau also noted the information from the secretariat about the recruitment of a new extrabudgetary professional staff member funded by the trust fund. In addition, with the EAP-Green project funding the secretariat had been able to recruit another full time professional and one half-time support staff to manage the capacity building work under the two treaties. Finally, the Bureau welcomed the decision by Finland to finance a junior professional officer to support the work of the secretariat for a fourth consecutive year. It encouraged other Parties to explore opportunities to provide similar assistance to the secretariat.

25. The Bureau again expressed concerns about the prevailing lack of administrative support to the Espoo Convention secretariat from the ECE regular budget (which had been substantially reduced in June 2012).

V. Preparations for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties (MOP-6 and MOP/MOP-2)

A. Practical arrangements

26. The Bureau noted the decision by the Executive Secretary of the ECE that in absence of a security clearance for Kyiv from the UN Department of Safety Security, the MoP-6 and MoP/MoP-2 should be held in Geneva. It acknowledged that the Executive Secretary was responsible for convening and preparing the Meetings of the Parties in accordance with article 13 of the Convention. The Bureau was also made aware that the rules of procedure under the Espoo Convention (rule 3) specify that "the Meetings of the Parties shall be held at the UN Office at Geneva, unless other appropriate arrangements are made by the Parties in consultation with the secretariat"; and that the organization of meetings under the auspices of ECE were subject to and governed by detailed host country agreements. It noted that the Government of Ukraine until to date had not counter-signed the host country agreement specifying the terms of the organization of the upcoming MOPs. The Bureau was informed that the ECE Executive Secretary would discuss the matter the following week with the Ambassador of Ukraine to the UN Office in Geneva.

27. A representative of Ukraine stated that Ukraine had set aside the necessary funds and established a high-level organization committee for holding of the MOPs. According to him, the meeting could still be held in Kyiv, but moved from the Ukrainian House to another venue, considered more calm and safe.

28. The Bureau reviewed the time schedule for the main preparatory steps for the MOPs and acknowledged the need for the ECE Executive Secretary to invite send out the invitations to the Ministers in February, providing in annex to the letter the necessary practical information on the venue, registration formalities, financial support available, need for credentials etc.

29. The Bureau agreed that the ECE Executive Secretary should write to the environment ministers with a copy to ministers for foreign affairs of the Parties, personally inviting the environment ministers to the high-level segment of the MOPs, and drawing attention to the need for financial contributions for 2014-2017 to support the implementation of the workplan and to enable the secretariat to fulfil its functions.

B. Outstanding issues

1. Workplan 2014-17

30. The Bureau reviewed and revised the draft workplan on the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol for the next intersessional period 2014-17. It asked the secretariat to contact by mid-February the lead countries for the activities that had no confirmed funding, to seek confirmation on the workplan items and their funding. It asked the secretariat to finalize the draft workplan accordingly and submit it for consideration by the MOPs. The Bureau emphasized that the activities with no confirmed funding should be included into a waiting list and forwarded for consideration by the MOP as an annex to the draft workplan.

31. The Bureau concluded on the need to develop updated guidance on the implementation of the Convention that would in part build on the opinions and findings of the Implementation Committee as agreed by the MOPs. The guidance would be particularly useful for capacity building purposes. The Bureau agreed to inquire the possibilities of EIB to contribute to financing of such guidance.

32. The Bureau then discussed and finalised draft decision VI/3-II/3 on the adoption of the workplan for submission to the MOPs. It agreed that the part of the draft decision assessing the rate of implementation of the previous workplan, should acknowledge that some activities had no longer been wanted by the concerned Parties, and that the implementation of several other activities was ongoing and would be completed in next intersessional period.

2. Proposals to align the three language versions of the Convention

33. The Bureau reviewed and agreed on draft decision VI/6, and on the proposed corrections to the text of the Convention to be addressed through a correction procedure, which would be submitted to the MOPs as an annex to the draft decision. It reached a consensus that the term “discussions” under article 2 paragraph 5 should remain unchanged and not be changed to “consultations”.

3. Draft decision on accession by UN Member States not members of UNECE

34. The Bureau reviewed and revised draft decision VI/5-II/5 on accession by UN Member States not members of UNECE, taking into account the advice received from the UN Treaty Section. It, for example:

(a) Reconfirmed the need for the same procedure for accession to the Convention by non-ECE and ECE countries, which should not be subject to prior approval by the MOP or to fulfilment of the conditions set out in decision I/8-V/8. It agreed that, once adopted, decision VI/5-II/5 would provide a blanket approval to future requests for accession and supersede decision I/8-V/8;

(b) Added a new paragraph 5 with a similar language regarding the Protocol;

(c) Deleted all references to “Associate Party” status, on the basis that the Convention did not provide for such a status and the MOP did not have the capacity to create a status that is different from that of a regular Party State.

35. The Bureau noted the comment by the UN Treaty Section that a MOP decision could not abolish the requirement set out in the first amendment to the Convention to expedite the accession by countries outside the ECE region. It invited the secretariat to further consult with the Treaty Section to explore possible alternative ways to accommodate the wishes of the Working Group for expediting the globalization of the Convention. This could include the assessment of the possibility to adopt an “Agreement” modifying the article 17 para. 3 and entering in force soon after its adoption, through simplified no objection procedure. Should this option be feasible in the view of the UN Treaty Section, the secretariat should circulate a text of a draft agreement for the Bureau’s comments and approval in the course of February. Failing this, or in absence of consensus by the Bureau regarding the Agreement, draft decision VI/5-II/5 should be revised by deleting the words “without having to wait until all the Parties that adopted the amendments ratify them”.

4. Other draft decisions to be forwarded to MOP-6 and MOP/MOP-2

(a) Draft decision on Good practice on communication, cooperation and conflict resolution (VI/9)

36. Taking account of its earlier deliberations (under item III.C), the Bureau examined draft decision VI/9 that had been made available to the Working Group at its third meeting but not discussed by it. The Bureau minimized the square brackets in the text and agreed on a draft to be forwarded to MOP-6 for its consideration.

(b) Draft decision on budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance (VI/4-II/4)

37. The Bureau reviewed draft decision VI/4-II/4, which had been agreed by the Working Group at its third meeting.

38. It noted the information from a representative of the European Commission on its ongoing internal discussions related to its financial contributions to all the five ECE environmental treaties that would subsequently lead to formal proposals for harmonizing the budgetary practices under these treaties to the extent possible.

39. Further to the inquiry from the Bureau member from the European Commission regarding the “core budget” and “the priorities for financing”, the secretariat reminded that these were determined by the Parties and adopted as an annex to the decisions on budget and financial arrangements at the MOP sessions for each intersessional period. Typically, the budget aimed to cover at least the staff costs of an external expert to support the secretariat and the preparation of draft reviews of implementation by a consultant (priority 1); as well as financial support to participation at the meetings of the Parties, meetings of the Working Group, the Bureau and the Implementation Committee; secretariat travel in relation to the workplan; and possibly some informal translation of documents; and compliance and implementation related work (preparation of draft reviews of implementation, guidance documents, country specific performance reviews) (priority 2). As a rule, however, the contributions to the trust fund by Parties were largely insufficient for covering the adopted budget. Furthermore, usually no funding was made available by Parties for the capacity building activities foreseen in the workplan (priority 3): their implementation being dependent almost entirely on the fundraising efforts by the secretariat.

40. The Bureau acknowledged the need to ensure sufficient voluntary contributions from the Parties to support the functioning of the secretariat and the implementation of the workplan. It acknowledged the increase in the workload of the secretariat in particular to support the review of compliance and implementation; and the capacity building work under the Convention and the Protocol. It noted that the need for the secretariat support was expected to further increase with the outreach and awareness raising activities in connection with the global application of the Protocol and the future opening up of the Convention to the non-ECE countries. The Bureau invited the secretariat to annex a table to the draft decision with information regarding the current secretariat staffing, in particular that covered by the UN regular budget.

41. The Bureau invited the European Commission to liaise directly with the secretariat to clarify its possible further amendment proposals to the draft decision. The secretariat should then circulate the revised draft decision for the Bureau to comment and to finalize electronically prior to its submission to the MOPs.

(c) Draft decisions by MOP-6

42. The Bureau agreed that the following draft decisions were ready to be put forward for consideration by MOP-6 as they had been finalized by the Working Group:

- (a) Draft decision VI/1 on Reporting and review of implementation;
- (b) Draft decision VI/7 on Application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities;
- (c) Draft decision VI/8 on General guidance on enhancing consistency between the Convention and environmental assessment within State ecological expertise in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

(d) Draft decisions by MOP/MOP-2

43. Similarly, the Bureau also agreed not to propose further changes to the following draft decisions, which the Working Group had revised and agreed to forward to MOP/MOP-2:

- (a) Draft decision II/1 on Reporting and the review of implementation of the Protocol;
- (b) Draft decision II/8 on the Format for notification
- (c) Draft decision II/9 on Good practice recommendations on public participation in Strategic Environmental Assessment

44. Due to the lack of time, the Bureau was brought to review and agree electronically on draft decision II/6 on aligning the authentic language versions of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, which had been revised by the Working Group.

5. Draft declaration

45. The Bureau reviewed and revised the draft declaration prepared by the secretariat with inputs from the Lithuanian presidency of the European Council and the European Commission for the part on nuclear energy-related activities.

46. Taking into account its deliberations under item V. B above, the Bureau agreed that the part of the declaration on the global application of the Convention and the Protocol might need further adjustment based on the additional clarifications to be provided by the UN Treaty Office regarding the possibilities for expediting the global opening of the Convention.

47. The representatives from EIB indicated that it could in general agree with the intent of the declaration but that the paragraphs in the draft declaration “calling on” or referring to IFIs would be subject to further consultations and comments by the IFIs. For example, the non-exhaustive list of individual IFIs might be better replaced by a more general reference to IFIs.

48. The Bureau agreed that it would finalize the draft declaration electronically based on a revised draft to be prepared by the secretariat including taking into account the advice from the Treaty Office.

C. Programme for MOP-6 and MOP/MOP-2

1. Chairs of MOP-6 and MOP/MOP-2

49. The Bureau confirmed the nominations for the chairs of the MOP-6 and MOP/MOP-2 (both general and high-level segments) that had been provided by the Working Group at

its third meeting: Ukraine for the chair of MOP-6, both general and high-level segments; Lithuania for the high-level segment of the MOP/MOP and Poland for its general segment (unless Ukraine would have ratified the Protocol 90 days before the MOPs).

50. The Bureau agreed that a change of the venue of the MOPs would not need to impact their chairmanship.

2. Provisional agendas for the two MOPs and the high-level segment

51. The Bureau considered the provisional annotated agendas for the two MOP sessions. It focused its attention on the proposal by the secretariat to organize the high-level segment panel discussions in two parts in order to address the application of the Convention and the Protocol to energy related issues but also to discuss the opportunities for applying the two treaties beyond the ECE region. This would contribute to raising awareness about the treaties outside the ECE region and to learning about the needs and expectations of the non-ECE countries.

52. The Bureau welcomed the willingness of the EIB and initially also of several other IFIs to contribute to the panel discussions and their organization. It acknowledged the role of IFIs in particular in the assessment of large scale projects and programmes. In its view, the IFIs could provide valuable support to countries within and outside ECE region for the development of the necessary legislation and capacity for meeting the obligations under the the Convention and the Protocol. It agreed that a future enlargement of the membership of the treaties was likely to entail important awareness raising and capacity building needs.

53. In the brainstorming that followed, the EIB suggested building the proposed (second) panel discussion (on the needs and expectations of the non-ECE countries) on the outcomes of the first panel showcasing experience gathered from the ECE region in the application of the Convention and the Protocol to energy related issues. It stressed that energy-related issues were of key importance also globally. According to EIB, IFIs could be invited to present their experience in applying environmental assessments within the ECE region (eg. Nabucco gas pipeline) and beyond, including e.g. on transboundary energy infrastructure projects by the Asian Development Bank, and on large hydropower projects by the African Development Bank. Furthermore, representatives from Latin America should be invited to attend, as according to the World Bank, the continent would be interested in introducing transboundary EIA procedures and in learning from the practice gained under the Espoo Convention. The EIB also stressed the importance of civil society's participation in the discussion, including from outside the ECE region

54. The Bureau supported the proposed focus of the high-level segment on energy-related issues. The suggestions by the Bureau members included inviting Ministers to play an active role in the panel discussions that should cover topics of key interest to them, such as the application of the Convention and the Protocol to the development of energy infrastructure: corridors for gas pipelines, nuclear power plants, hydropower plants and wind farms. In contrast, the Bureau did not reach a consensus on addressing the exploitation of shale gas during the MOPs.

55. Ukraine confirmed the interest of its Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources as well as its Minister for Coal and Energy to chair and contribute to the high-level segment. The participation of environment ministers from Lithuania and Poland was being considered. The Bureau did not provide suggestions for key-note speakers.

56. Some Bureau members estimated that the indicative time allocated for two high-level panel discussions, of approximately 2.5 hours, was relatively short for expressing all views, and suggested that more time be devoted for the panel on the energy-related matters in the ECE region.

57. Considering that the participation of ministers from outside the ECE region would be unlikely, and in particular, if the expected globalization of the Convention would be further delayed, the need for a high-level panel discussion on the application of the Convention and the Protocol outside the ECE region might need to be reassessed. The legal advice from the UN Treaty Office in this regard should therefore also inform the decision regarding the organization of the high-level panel(s.)

58. The Bureau supported the proposal to organize a seminar during the general segment, on Wednesday 4 June, in the afternoon, that would address the experience of IFIs in using transboundary EIA and SEA, and discuss how in concrete terms the IFIs could promote the awareness and the application of the Convention and the Protocol. It agreed that the outcomes of this seminar should be reported to the high-level segment. Should the Bureau decide, based on the advice from the UN Treaty Office, not to hold a high-level panel discussion on the future globalization of the Convention and the Protocol, representatives from non-ECE countries could be invited to speak in the seminar on their views and expectations in this regard. The representative of EIB confirmed that EIB would be flexible and willing to contribute to the organization of a seminar in the general segment in addition to or as an alternative to the high-level panel discussion.

59. The Bureau concluded that it would decide on the organization of the high-level segment and of the seminar in the light of the advice from the UN Treaty section. It invited the secretariat to revise the provisional agenda for the MOPs, taking into account of the advice provided, and to agree on the provisional agenda by e-mail by 20 February.

60. The Bureau acknowledged the substantive amount of work for the preparation of the high-level segment and the limited time available for identifying key-note speakers. The secretariat invited the Bureau members to provide it with guidance in this regard.

3. Seminar on renewable energy

61. The Bureau reviewed and revised the programme for the seminar for the exchange of good practices on renewable energy, focusing on wind energy, to be organized by Poland during the general segment of the MOPs (on Tuesday, 3 June, in the afternoon session). It agreed to allocate one hour to hydro-energy, replacing the small group discussions on wind-energy originally proposed by Poland. The Bureau member from Slovenia confirmed that she would present good practice in applying the Protocol on SEA by Slovenia and Croatia to national spatial plans for hydropower plants on the Sava River. The representative from Ukraine confirmed that Ukraine would make a presentation on hydro-energy. The Bureau also noted the suggestion from EIB to contribute to this part of the seminar. Ukraine and EIB were invited to specify to the secretariat the topic and the speakers for their respective contributions by mid-February. The secretariat was asked to finalize the draft programme based on the additional inputs in consultation with the Bureau.

4. Side events

62. The Bureau took note of a draft programme for a side event by a Ukrainian NGO, Ecoclub on application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities.

63. The secretariat clarified that side events were to be scheduled before or after the plenary sessions or during the breaks and that their organization would not imply costs for the Convention budget. The secretariat explained that for meetings held elsewhere than in the UN Geneva Office, the host country agreement specified that the payment of equipment and other details of requirements were subject to agreement between the organizer of the side event and the host country.

64. The Bureau invited the secretariat to encourage the organization of further side events during the MOPs.

5. Financial assistance priorities

65. The Bureau reconfirmed that the budget available for the two MOPs was that originally foreseen in the budget adopted by MOP-5 in 2011 (US\$ 90,000). At least one and maximum two participants per eligible ECE country with its economy in transition would receive financial support (budget US\$ 40,000); as well as one representative from the five NGOs previously identified by the Bureau: the Caucasus Environmental NGOs Network (CENN), EcoGlobe (Armenia), Environment & Justice, European ECO Forum and the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) (budget US\$ 20,000); invited speakers (budget US\$ 10,000) and 4-5 representatives from non-ECE countries (e.g.: from China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mongolia, Viet Nam, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) (budget US\$ 20,000).

VI. Future Bureau members, Vice Chairs of the Working Group, members of the Implementation Committee

66. The Bureau reviewed nominations of officers for the next intersessional period, which included those from Armenia, Switzerland, the Republic of Moldova and the European Commission for the membership in the Bureau; from Ukraine and Azerbaijan for the vice-chairmanship of the Working Group; and from Belarus, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania and Ukraine; as well as from Austria (subject to confirmation) for the Implementation Committee. There were no proposals for chairing of the Working Group nor for hosting of MOP-7 and MOP/MOP-3 (according to the tradition the next host country would provide the Chair of the Bureau).

XIII. Closing of the meeting

67. The Bureau agreed to continue working electronically on pending items and to next meet in the morning of 2 June 2014.

68. The meeting of the Bureau concluded on Friday, 31 January 2014. It invited the secretariat to draft the informal meeting report and to circulate it for its comments prior to its finalization.
