

On the Progress of Ratification of the Espoo Convention by the Russian Federation and Harmonisation of the National Environmental Legislation with the Convention since April 2016 to Date

Statement by the delegation of the Russian Federation

We would like to inform the Secretariat of the Convention on the Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) on steps taken in the Russian Federation to harmonise the Russian legislation with the requirements of the Espoo Convention.

The Government of the Russian Federation and its Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment have taken and continue taking considerable effort to enhance the national environmental legislation in the interest of sustainable development. During the past few years, the Ministry has prepared a package of draft laws amending the Russian legislation to bring it in line with the legal framework of the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation. These amendments are underpinned by the sustainable development principles, Green Growth Dialogue, focus on the sustainable management of natural resources, access to information and public participation in dealing with environmental issues. The majority of these amendments have been adopted and already come into force. They include the Law No. 219 on introducing the integrated pollution prevention and control and encouraging the transition toward the best available technologies; and the Federal Law No. 458 on enhancing the industrial and household waste management system by, inter alia, encouraging the development of waste recycling sector in the country. It is also worth to mention the Law No. 254 that sets out roles and responsibilities regarding the mitigation and management of accumulated environmental damage and other pieces of legislation including the laws on the state environmental supervision, improvement of the state environmental monitoring, and prevention of oil spills from offshore shelf activities. One of key documents in this package is the draft law introducing the legal and regulatory framework for the application of the strategic environmental assessment of plans and programmes that are likely to cause environmental impacts. It also aims to enhance the environmental impact assessment and state environmental review process. This draft Law fully serves the purpose of harmonizing the national legislation with the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment. It should be noted that this draft Law has been prepared as part of implementing the Principles of the Russian Federation Environmental Policy until 2030, approved in 2012 by the President of the Russian Federation and identifying the introduction and application of the strategic environmental assessment as one of the priority areas of Russia's Environmental Policy.

We would also like to stress that the Law on the Strategic Planning in the Russian Federation, passed in 2014, sets out a framework for regulating relations among stakeholders involved in the strategic planning process at various stages including setting the objectives, forecasting, planning and programming the economic development of the Russian Federation and its constituent members, municipalities and economic sectors in a manner that ensures the national security. Once the Law on the Strategic Environmental Assessment is passed, mainstreaming sustainable development into the strategic planning at the national and regional level will become a key priority.

In conclusion, we would like to inform the Work Group members that back in early January 2016, the President of the Russian Federation took a crucial decision that the year of 2017 will be the Russia's Year of Ecology. This move aims at demonstrating that the environment is one of the key national priorities. The Russian Federation Government has approved the 'Action Plan for the Year of Ecology' with its two actions being directly related to the introduction and application of strategic environmental assessment. They include the approval of the above mentioned draft laws and implementation of pilot strategic environmental assessment projects in Amur Region.

The President of the Russian Federation is regularly updated on the status and progress of the ratification process for the Espoo Convention. It is planned to complete the legislative harmonization process not earlier than in 2019.

We would like to use this opportunity and wish the members of the 6th Work Group for the Espoo Convention and its SEA Protocol productive work, meaningful discussion and concrete outcomes in the area of the environmental protection in a transboundary context.

We also hope that our useful cooperation with the Espoo Convention Secretariat continues and we express our appreciation for consistent support and assistance in the preparation of the national environmental legislation.

International Cooperation Department
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia
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