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

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

Report of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on its seventh session and of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on its third session

Addendum

Decisions and the declaration adopted jointly 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

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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 the 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;

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.

7. *Decide* that during the intersessional period that extends until the next ordinary 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 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

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>
<p>I. Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol</p> <p>Enhance the implementation of and compliance with the Convention and the Protocol.</p>					Most items included in Implementation Committee and secretariat costs. Exceptions are identified below.
	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>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. 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.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>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.7. Pre-accession legislative assistance to Kazakhstan, including advice on drafting the necessary legislation and secondary legislation to promote ratification and implementation of the Protocol and implementation of the Convention.	Undertaken by external consultant(s), assisted by a national counterpart, with the support of the secretariat.	Recommendations to the country on strengthening capacity, including new draft legislation and amendments to legislation, procedures and institutional arrangements.	2017–2018	Costs: approximately \$35,000 for legal drafting, plus in-kind contributions from Kazakhstan providing national experts and interpretation. Funding from the European Union, ^b with possible additional funding from Switzerland for a legislative review on EIA.
	I.8. Collection of findings and opinions from the Committee regarding the Convention and the Protocol, posted on the website.	Carried out by the secretariat.	Online collection of the Committee's findings and opinions.	Annual updates	—
	I.9. Draft terms of reference for possible guidance on addressing the applicability of the Convention with regard to decisions on the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants, involving a workshop to discuss and recommend their adoption by the Working Group on EIA and SEA.	Lead countries: Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland The terms of reference are to be developed by an ad hoc working group including, among others, the following States Parties: ^c Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Finland (tbc), Germany, Greece (tbc), Italy (tbc), Luxembourg, Poland (tbc), Portugal (tbc), Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the European	Draft terms of reference for a possible guidance document.	First meeting of the ad hoc group in the fourth quarter of 2017, to be followed by at least one other meeting prior to the seventh meeting of the Working Group on EIA and SEA (date to be specified). Terms of reference and	—

<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>Commission, serving as a secretariat to the group. (The ad hoc group might subsequently be extended to include international organizations and NGOs, as decided by the Working Group on EIA and SEA).</p> <p>The workshop will be organized by the ad hoc working group, with the participation, among others, of the Implementation Committee, civil society and, possibly, IAEA and OECD/NEA.</p>		the possible extended scope of the ad hoc working group to be agreed by the Working Group on EIA and SEA in May 2018.	
	I.10 Finalization of the development and update of the Guidelines on EIA in a Transboundary Context for Central Asian Countries:	Undertaken by Central Asian countries with the support of external consultants and the secretariat.	Updated and further developed guidelines.	By 2020	Funding from Switzerland.
	(a) One subregional meeting (to be organized back to back with the subregional conference in Ukraine (see item II.C (b)));			October- November 2017	Travel costs funded through savings from the previous period.
	(b) Reviews of national legislation with regard to compliance with the provisions of the Convention and the development of recommendations (to enhance part III of the draft Guidelines).			By summer 2018	Costs: Approximately \$7,000–\$10,000 per country for consultancy costs.

<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. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building to strengthen contacts between the Parties and others, including States outside the ECE region</p> <p>Improved application of the Convention and its Protocol within the subregions.</p> <p>Promotion of cooperation in all subregions.</p>			<p>Common understanding of the requirements for implementation of the Convention and the Protocol.</p> <p>Possible development of multilateral agreements.</p> <p>Possible guidance on subregional issues, such as public participation and the role of NGOs.</p>		
<p>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 Convention and its Protocol.</p>	<p>II.A. Baltic Sea subregion</p> <p>Two meetings on topics to be identified by the lead countries.</p>	<p>To be organized by lead countries: Denmark, Finland and Sweden.</p>	<p>Workshop reports.</p>	<p>(a) Autumn 2018 (on a ship between Finland and Sweden);</p> <p>(b) Autumn/winter 2019 in Denmark.</p>	<p>In kind.</p>
<p>Common understanding of elements of application and possible multilateral agreements.</p>	<p>II.B. South-Eastern Europe subregion</p>		<p>Workshop reports and possible reports on specific issues.</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>
Increased coordination between environmental legislation/treaties.	A dedicated session on implementation of the Convention, the Protocol and the Bucharest Agreement in the subregion.	Lead countries/organizations: Croatia, Romania and Slovenia and the secretariat, held under the auspices of a regional conference on EIA hosted by Croatia.		14 September 2017, in Vodice, Croatia	In kind (but funding required for travel of additional experts/participants).
	II.C. 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. (Organized back to back to the subregional coordination and experience-sharing event scheduled to take place in Ukraine in late 2017).	Workshop report(s).	Autumn 2017	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 from capacity-building activities in 2014–2017, including SEA pilot projects in	Lead/host country: Ukraine. Participation by all countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.		October–November 2017 (exact dates tbc)	Funding from the European Union (EaP-GREEN). ^d

<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>
	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine; and a subregional training-of-trainers event on SEA.				
<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>Workshops or half-day seminars within meetings of the Working Group or the Meetings of the Parties:</p>	To be organized by a lead country(ies) with support from the secretariat.	<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>	2017–2020	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.)
Awareness-raising on the Convention, its amendments and its ratification.	<p>(a) Seminar on improving intersectoral cooperation and institutional arrangements for the application of the Protocol on SEA and the Convention;</p> <p>(b) Other workshops (tbc)</p>	Secretariat with inputs from volunteering delegates and with the possible participation of WHO. To be held in the framework of a meeting of the Working Group on EIA and SEA.		2019	In kind.

<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. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA and/or the Convention			Ratifications and other outcomes specified below.	2017–2020	
Ratification, full legal implementation and practical application of the Protocol and the Convention. 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.	IV.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.		
Increased exchange of information on and experience in the application of the Protocol and the Convention.	One national training event.	Kazakhstan.		2015–2017	European Union funding for Kazakhstan. ^b
	IV.2. National guidance documents on SEA.	Lead country: Kazakhstan	One published guidance document.	2017–2018	Funding from the European Union for Kazakhstan. ^b

<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. Preparation of two-page informal pamphlets or “FasTips” on key issues in SEA practice on topics to be suggested (e.g., SEA for water management plans or the waste management sector; analytical methods used in SEA; and monitoring) and on the Convention and the Protocol.	Lead organization: IAIA, with the support of WHO, SEA and health experts, and from the secretariat for the dedicated “FasTips” on the Convention and the Protocol.	Informal pamphlets.	Ongoing	In kind. Translation of (some five) relevant “FasTips” into Russian funded by WWF Russia.
	IV.4. Pilot SEA in Kazakhstan, involving the following activities: (a) Two workshops for scoping and the analysis of the baseline, impact assessment, development of mitigation measures and development of recommendations; (b) Two public consultation events; (c) Preparation of the SEA report.	Lead country: Kazakhstan as the lead/target country, with the support of an external consultant, national experts and the secretariat, and in collaboration with partner organizations, as relevant.			Likely funding from the European Union ^b Costs: for the pilots (\$80,000-\$100,000) and for staff costs of a project manager and support personnel, P-3 (\$15,000 per month) and G-4 (\$8,500 per month).
	IV.5. Preparation of fact sheets on the application of the Protocol.	Lead countries: Germany and other Parties. (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.

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; IAEA = International Atomic Energy Agency; 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; OECD/NEA = Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Nuclear Energy Agency; SDGs = Sustainable Development Goals; SEA = strategic environmental assessment; tbc = to be confirmed;

WHO = World Health Organization; WWF = World Wide Fund for Nature.

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

^b Through “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.

^c Further Parties were invited to express their interest in participating in the ad hoc group by 30 September 2017.

^d “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

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 Enhance the implementation of and compliance with 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.
	(a) Technical legislative advice further to possible Committee initiatives (as decided by the Implementation Committee);	Supervised by members of the Committee.			Funding to be identified.
	(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>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.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.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: (a) Set a vision for the next years; (b) Set priorities to ensure the best use of resources; (c) Identify future activities, partnerships, and funding mechanisms for:	2017–2020	Requires in-kind contributions or 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>
<p>II. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building to strengthen contacts between the Parties and others, including States outside the ECE region</p> <p>Improved application of the Convention and its Protocol within the subregions.</p>	<p>II.A. South-Eastern Europe subregion</p>	<p>To be carried out by lead countries, with support from the secretariat, as needed.</p>	<p>(i) Promoting global implementation of the treaties;</p> <p>(ii) Contributing to the achievement of relevant SDGs and targets;</p> <p>(iii) Enhancing cooperation with other international Conventions and processes within and beyond ECE.</p> <p>For all subregions:</p> <p>(a) Possible guidance on subregional issues;</p> <p>(b) Common understanding of elements of application and possible multilateral agreements.</p>		<p>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).</p>
<p>Promotion of cooperation in all subregions.</p>			<p>Workshop reports and possible reports on specific issues.</p>		<p>In kind contributions/donor funding required.</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>
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 Convention and its Protocol.	II.A.1. 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 country: Romania.		tbc	In kind (tbc).
Common understanding of elements of application and possible multilateral agreements.	II.A.2. First Meeting of the Parties to the Bucharest Agreement.	Lead country: Romania.		tbc	No funding confirmed yet.
Increased coordination between environmental legislation/treaties.	II.B. Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (and beyond)				
	II.B.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.

<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.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.
	II.B.3. 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.B.4. Promotion of principles of the Convention and the Protocol in Central Asia and beyond in the context of the recent economic developments in Asia:	Lead/target countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and other countries.			
	(a) Subregional seminar to promote the application of the Guidelines on transboundary EIA for Central Asian countries (among high-level officials) at the Central Asian International Environmental Forum in Uzbekistan,	To organized by CAREC and Uzbekistan.		Tentatively in summer 2018.	Requires funding: (\$7,000-10,000)

<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>
	possibly in the context of the “one belt one road initiative”;				
	(b) Pilot application of the Guidelines on transboundary EIA for Central Asian countries	Lead organization: CAREC (tbc)		tbc	Requires funding: (\$100,000-\$150,000).
III. Exchange of good practices	Workshops or half-day seminars within meetings of the Working Group or the Meetings of the Parties on:	To be organized by a lead country(ies) with support from the secretariat.	From each workshop or seminar, a brief, clear document presenting advice on the most important problems identified for the theme in question.	2017–2020	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.)
Shared knowledge and experience in appropriate legislation for implementation of the Convention and the Protocol, leading to better national legislation and application.			Contribution to the application of SDGs.		
Improved implementation and application of the Convention and the Protocol by learning from Parties’ experiences.					
Awareness-raising on the Convention, its amendments and its ratification.	(a) Application of the Protocol on SEA to climate change adaptation and mitigation;	Lead country(ies) or organization(s) to be identified. With possible participation of the UNFCCC secretariat;	Contributes to implementation of SDG target 13.2 “Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning”.	(a) Application of the Protocol on SEA to climate change adaptation and mitigation;	Lead country(ies) or organization(s) to be identified. With possible participation of the UNFCCC secretariat;

<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>
	(b) Synergies between transboundary EIA and SEA and UNCLOS, arts. 204-206	Lead organization: European Commission.	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 sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.	2019	In kind.
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. Increased professional skills of officials, and increased awareness of the public, including	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,		Possible European Union funding. (Beneficiary countries to reconfirm their needs.)

<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>
NGOs, and officials at all relevant administrative levels in relation to SEA and to the application of the Protocol and the Convention.			water and soil pollution and contamination”.		
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 (supported by good practice examples).	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).
	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).

<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.4. 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.5. 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 assessment and the development of mitigation measures and recommendations; (b) Two to three public consultation events; (c) Preparation of the SEA report and training on its quality control.	Lead/target countries and selected sectors (based on requests by the countries): (a) Armenia; (b) Georgia (urban development, agriculture); (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, and partner organizations, as relevant.			Requires funding for pilot (\$80,000-\$100,000) and for staff costs of a project manager and support personnel, P-3 (\$15,000 per month) and G-4 (\$8,500 per month).

<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.6. National guidance documents on the implementation of SEA.	Lead/target country to be identified.	A guidance document.	2017–2018	Requires funding (\$20,000–\$40,000).
	IV.7. Preparation of a video to raise awareness about and promote application of the Convention.	Secretariat, consultants	A promotional video in English and 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; CAREC = Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia; EIA = environmental impact assessment; ICLEI = Local Governments for Sustainability; NGOs = non-governmental organizations; SDGs = Sustainable Development Goals; 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; and WHO = World Health Organization.

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;

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 1,183 shares of 1,000 United States dollars each, of which 625 shares would cover the core (priority 1) requirements and 558 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, 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 expenditures, 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 be 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 first to representatives of Parties, then to non-governmental organizations and finally to 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 implementation of 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 shall take place in Geneva, unless otherwise decided by the Parties based upon an offer of a contracting Party to host the sessions.

Annex
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) ^a	Meeting	—	6	4	24

<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>
Meetings of the Implementation Committee	2	Participation of CITs (Committee members) ^a	Meeting	—	6	9	54
External expert to provide secretariat support for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol ^b	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) ^b	2	Administrative staff at 50% (United Nations Standard Salary Cost, including net salary, taxes and common staff costs)	Year		55	3	165
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 activity for details					

<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>
Future of the Convention and the Protocol	2	A long-term strategy and an action plan, including regarding the opening of the Convention and the Protocol and contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (support to drafting)	Consultant				15
Subtotal (substantive activities)							15
Grand total (in shares, 1 share = \$1 000)							1 183

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

^b 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

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 the 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 for 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, resources permitting, 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 coming years to address priorities and to meet challenges, including with respect to climate change, biodiversity, energy, land-use and urban planning, agriculture, waste management and transport;

(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) Ensuring coordination 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.

Minsk Declaration

We, the high-level representatives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States and the European Union gathered in Minsk from 13 to 16 June 2017 on the occasion of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment,

Recalling the entry into force of the Espoo Convention in 1997 and the considerable impact on international environmental law and the environment it has had since then,

Mindful of the added value that the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment has produced and will produce in the future by extending the application of strategic environmental assessment to the earliest stages of decision-making, i.e., to plans and programmes and, where appropriate, to policies and legislation,

Recalling decision VI/5–II/5 on accession by Member States of the United Nations not members of ECE and the Geneva Declaration (Part B) on the Global Application of the Convention and the Protocol, both adopted jointly by the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol in 2014,

Welcoming the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,² which came into effect on 1 January 2016 and will guide the decisions of the United Nations Member States over the next several years in areas of importance for humanity and the planet, subject to annual review and follow-up by the high-level political forum on sustainable development to ensure their implementation,

Also welcoming the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,³ the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030⁴ and the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the

² General Assembly resolution 70/1.

³ General Assembly resolution 69/313.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 69/283.

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris Agreement)⁵ as key milestones towards a sustainable future,

Further welcoming the outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016),

Recognizing that environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment are cross-cutting tools designed to prevent and mitigate a wide range of adverse environmental and health impacts likely to arise from envisaged economic activities or development,

Recognizing also that the transboundary environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment procedures render decision-making regarding economic development planning more inclusive, transparent, participatory and representative by requiring consultation of the environment and health authorities, other stakeholders and the public at the local, national and international levels, and by ensuring that the outcomes of these consultations are duly taken into account,

1. *Celebrate* the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention;
2. *Acknowledge* the vast benefits witnessed by Parties from the application of the Convention and the important contribution of the instrument in the protection of the environment through the development of anticipatory and prevention policies against significant adverse environmental impacts, in shaping sustainable development policies and fostering international cooperation throughout the region;
3. *Stress* the need to accelerate the entry into effect of the first amendment through the attainment of the remaining ratifications, and call once again upon those Parties that were Parties to the Convention on 27 February 2001 that have not yet done so to ratify the first amendment as soon as possible;
4. *Take note* with satisfaction that the second amendment to the Convention, adopted by decision III/7, is expected to enter into force in autumn 2017 and that it will therefore further expand and improve the application of the Convention;
5. *Recognize* that by applying the Protocol during the past seven years Parties have enhanced the protection of the environment and the implementation of their sustainable development objectives in all sectoral policies, and have promoted green growth;
6. *Also recognize* that, on account of the applied frameworks provided by the Convention and the Protocol, the region is a front-runner in integrating environmental and health concerns into economic development, which constitutes a good practice worldwide;
7. *Emphasize* that the Convention and in particular the Protocol play an important role in supporting countries to translate international principles and global commitments for the protection of the environment and sustainable development into practical action at the national level and thus contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
8. *Also emphasize* that promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals in general at the national and international levels may lead in turn to improved and all-inclusive processes for impact assessment, and hence to the effective application of the Convention and the Protocol;

⁵ FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, annex.

9. *Further emphasize* that strategic environmental assessment is a key tool for the development of national climate change action and planning, and for the incorporation of specific climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into regional development and sectoral plans, programmes and policies;

10. *Call upon* Parties to the Convention and the Protocol to take action to maximize the effectiveness of the application of the Convention and the Protocol, respectively, so that the best possible results are achieved;

11. *Welcome* the Good practice recommendations on the application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities,⁶ which seek to assist countries in the consistent practical application of the Convention;

12. *Invite* Parties, signatories, civil society and all stakeholders, partner organizations, international financial institutions and the secretariat to widely promote awareness of the Convention and the Protocol, and their role in the achievement of global commitments;

13. *Recognize* that the Convention and the Protocol are also effective instruments for realizing benefits worldwide, by contributing to the achievement of the global sustainable development commitments within and beyond the ECE region;

14. *Call upon* Parties to introduce all necessary national measures, both legal and practical, to fully meet their obligations and to reap the full benefits of the Convention and the Protocol;

15. *Invite* any interested State not party to provisionally apply the Convention and the Protocol, pending accession, and to develop sufficient capacity for the successful implementation of those treaties, including in the pursuit of sustainable development and climate change goals and actions;

16. *Request* Parties to assist other United Nations Member States from within and outside the ECE region in their efforts to implement the Convention and to implement and accede to the Protocol;

17. *Welcome* the design and implementation of workplan activities and the development of information materials in the forthcoming intersessional period that highlight the contribution of the Convention and the Protocol to the attainment of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals;

18. *Also welcome* decision VII/7–III/6 of 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 (Meetings of the Parties) on the development of a long-term strategy and an action plan for adoption at the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties;

19. *Acknowledge* the importance of information sharing and cooperation among Parties to the Convention and the Protocol, in particular through up-to-date networks of points of contact for notification and of focal points for administrative matters, bilateral agreements and subregional cooperation;

20. *Call* for the active participation of, and the strengthening of cooperation among, countries and for their cooperation with other international treaties, national and international organizations, civil society, the private sector and financial institutions to support the application of the treaties;

⁶ ECE/MP.EIA/2017/10.

21. *Request* Parties to upgrade the sustainable availability of financing for the successful implementation of the activities under the Convention and the Protocol, and invite interested States, financial institutions, organizations and other stakeholders to also support the mobilization of means and resources for the widespread application of the two instruments worldwide.

22. *Thank* the Government of Belarus for hosting the seventh and third sessions, respectively, of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in Minsk and for its generous hospitality.
