

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For information

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Item 2b of the Provisional Agenda

IMPLICATIONS OF THE UNECE EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. On 30 June, the team of evaluators finalised their work and made their report “The State of the UNECE: External Evaluation Report” available to the Economic Commission, the Geneva Missions of UNECE Member States, and to the Executive Secretary of UNECE. Furthermore, the Chairman of the Commission, Ambassador Roux, sent the report to all chairs of PSBs, including the chair of the CES.
2. The Annex to this document contains the parts of the report that are of special relevance to the Bureau: Foreword, Executive Summary, The Statistical Division, and General Conclusions and Recommendations.
3. At an ad hoc meeting of the Commission on 14 July, the UNECE member states welcomed the publication of the external evaluation report on the state of the UNECE. They expressed their appreciation of the work done by the evaluation team and of those member states that provided extra-budgetary funding for supporting this study. The Commission decided on the follow-up process. In their view, the Evaluation Report should serve as a basis for the negotiations leading to reform measures to be adopted by the UNECE’s member states.

FRAMEWORK FOR REFORM

4. The Commission decided on a framework to make sure the reform process stays on track and is concluded in a timely fashion, with the following elements:
 - a. Timing: the negotiation work will take place from September to November 2005 in order to influence decisions about the resources for the biennium 2006/2007 to be made in New York.
 - b. Procedure: the negotiation process should take place within an “intergovernmental open-ended negotiation committee” chaired by the chairman of the UNECE together with the chairman of GEPW (Group of Experts for the Programme of Work) as Vice-chair, and with the assistance of the UNECE secretariat.
 - c. Roadmap: in order to facilitate the discussion, the negotiation process should follow an indicative list of clusters based on the findings of the external evaluation report. This list includes the following 7 clusters:
 - Mission statement
 - Governance
 - Management
 - Relations with UN and other organizations
 - Cross sectional issues
 - Technical cooperation

- UNECE Divisions and Sub-programmes
- d. The open-ended negotiation committee would start its work with a general discussion on each cluster, taking into account the findings of the external evaluation report. On the basis of this first round, the chairman and the vice-chairman would prepare texts to be negotiated in the committee. The result of this process could be a “working plan on UNECE reform” to be adopted by consensus by the Commission.
 5. The open-ended negotiation committee had its first meeting on 19 and 20 September, followed by consultations of the Chair and Vice-chair.

IMPACT ON THE SUB-PROGRAMME ON STATISTICS

6. Without pre-empting the outcome of the intergovernmental process for the sub-programme on statistics, it is encouraging that statistics is ranked as 3rd priority among 9 programmes. The consolidated replies from countries (ministries of foreign affairs in most cases) on which this ranking is based indicates that NSOs were consulted during the review process, and that their replies contributed to the good ranking of the statistical sub-programme.
7. Some recommendations of the report had already been incorporated when the Statistical Programme 2006 was drafted in July and August 2005, notably the abolishment of the publication “Trends” (activity 2.4), the introduction of activities for improving the promotion of UNECE activities in statistics (activity 2.6), and the strengthening of technical cooperation (activities 4.1 and 4.2).
8. The follow-up to the two issues addressed in the recommendations concerning data work of the Statistical Division, and the transfer of activities (statistical and other) of other divisions to the Statistical Division is more complex. When drafting the Statistical Programme 2006 concerning activity 2.1 (Macro-economic database), it was assumed that some form of economic analysis in the UNECE will continue, even though the products of this analysis are likely to be very different. This analysis will have to be based on comparable and up-to date statistics, although some detailed series might be dropped. On the other hand, some additional details or even series might be required.
9. Concerning the second major data collection and processing activity (gender statistics database, activity 2.2), the report stresses the need for prioritising gender issues (paragraph 285 in the Annex). The database is one of the generally recognised tools for the analysis of gender equality referred to in this paragraph. Both databases not only serve internal purposes, but they are also in the public sphere through their dissemination on the web.
10. In relation to the recommended transfer of activities from other UNECE divisions to the Statistical Division, the secretariat and the chair of the CES have made it clear that neither the CES nor the Statistical Division should assume any responsibility for policy recommendations in substantive areas such as economic policy, ageing or housing, since this would not be compatible with the principle of impartiality of official statistics. The statistical and possibly some analytical parts might be transferable from this point of view, but the three areas mentioned in the report are small programmes, so it would not make much sense to split them between a statistical and a policy-oriented part. The potential of synergies created by the transfer of the statistical parts of these activities is relatively small, and the only activity where such a synergy might be greater, the population database of PAU (activity 6.3 in the Statistical Programme 2005), will not be maintained in the present form. For these reasons, the Statistical Programme 2006 does not include any changes in responsibilities within the UNECE. However, the coordination function of the Statistical Division with respect to the decentralised statistics of UNECE will be reinforced (activity 2.3).
11. In addition to the above two issues, the follow-up to another, more general recommendation may affect the division of work between the Commission and the proposed Executive Committee on

one side, and the PSBs on the other. In some areas (not statistics), criticism was expressed that “shadow activities” with specific bodies were created, in many cases funded from extra-budgetary resources, which did not have proper UN legitimacy and focused on areas outside the traditional expertise of UNECE. As a consequence, the autonomy of PSBs with respect to creating sub-groups and teams of specialists may become an issue for review. In the case of statistics, the secretariat has argued that all activities of the Statistical Division are strictly within the mandate of the PSB and are made transparent through the Annual Statistical Programmes, and that all groups of specialists have received their mandate from the Bureau, have a sunset clause, and must report back to the Bureau, with their composition and activities displayed in full transparency on the website.

12. The Bureau will be informed orally about any development that has occurred between the finalising of this note and the meeting of the Bureau.

ANNEX

EXCERPT OF THE THE STATE OF THE UNECE External evaluation report

June 30, 2005

FOREWORD

1. During the 59th Annual Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Member States decided to commission a comprehensive report on the state of the UNECE. The primary aim of this report was to develop recommendations on the scope of changes to the role, mandate and functions of the UNECE, which are necessary in light of the changed European institutional and political landscape.

2. Our evaluation team was selected to undertake this work between January and June 2005. It was supported by extra-budgetary funding provided by the Member States. We carried out a wide range of activities in preparation of the final report. These include the following:

- Reviewing relevant UNECE documentation, partly at their respective headquarters;
- Participating in the UNECE 60th Annual Session and interviewing Member States delegations;
- Meeting with several Member State representatives in Geneva and in selected national capitals;
- Meeting with representatives of selected UN and other international organizations that cooperate with the UNECE;
- Meeting with the UNECE Executive Secretary;
- Interviewing senior managers from all UNECE divisions;
- Meeting with the UNECE Bureau, the GEPW and the Steering Committee;
- Preparing and distributing a detailed questionnaire to all UNECE Member States via their permanent missions in Geneva, as well as to relevant international organizations and major groups;
- Analyzing the interviews and questionnaire responses;
- Progress reporting to the Annual Session of the Commission and the Ad Hoc Session of the Commission; and
- Formal reporting of the results of the work to the Bureau, the GEPW and to the Ad Hoc Session of the Commission.

3. The terms of reference (TOR) for the comprehensive work were prepared by the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work (GEPW), a governing body that represents all 55 Member States of the UNECE. The TOR stated explicitly that the primary objective of the report was to identify a new role for the UNECE in light of the important changes in the political and institutional landscape of the region. Member States were clear from the onset that neither the dismantling of the UNECE, nor cuts in its budget would be desirable outcomes. At the same time, Member States indicated that budget increases were unlikely, and that recommendations on how best to streamline, refocus and reallocate limited resources would therefore be of particular importance.

4. Bearing these constraints in mind, the evaluation team produced a series of recommendations to streamline the work of the UNECE and to focus its activities in areas where it has a clear comparative advantage over other international organizations working in the ECE region. The team's analysis was based on the numerous interviews it conducted and on the written responses it received to the detailed questionnaire it developed and distributed to UNECE Member States and its institutional partners; responses were received from 34 Member Countries (62 %) and 20 international and non-governmental organizations. All the geographical areas of the UNECE were covered in the interviews conducted and in the responses received.

5. The team expresses its appreciation to all Member States, members of the UNECE Secretariat, international organizations and to a number of individuals who contributed their time and energy to this evaluation.

Geneva, June 30, 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

6. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was established in 1947 as one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations. The UNECE's terms of reference define its primary objective as increasing economic cooperation among its Member States and improving their economic welfare. From its inception, one of its key purposes has been to support the economic reconstruction of Europe. During the Cold War, UNECE served as an important bridge between the East and West.

7. During the 1990s the political map of Europe changed dramatically. Most notably, the number of Member States to the UNECE increased from 34 to 55. This growth, combined with the recent phase of EU expansion, has presented new challenges to the UNECE. Like other European organizations working in the ECE region, such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe, the UNECE must now define a new role to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness in the changed regional landscape.

8. This external evaluation of the UNECE was carried out at the request and with the financial support of UNECE Member States. It was clearly intended as an exercise in refocusing the UNECE's role and mandate and reallocating its limited resources. It was clear from the beginning that closing the UNECE or cutting its budget would not be an option, but that budgetary increases could not be envisaged either.

9. One of the main conclusions of our work is that the current governance of the UNECE is too heavy and unnecessarily complex. Indeed, the current governance system includes the Bureau, which is comprised of the representatives of the Member States; the Annual Session of the Commission; the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work (GEPW), which also represents all 55 Member States; and the Steering Committee, which represents the different Permanent Subsidiary Bodies (PSBs). It has become clear that this structure is not working optimally and that it must be rationalized. For example, the evaluation team recommends that the UNECE Annual Session should be convened on a biannual basis, and a special high-level seminar should be convened every other year in Geneva or in one of the ECE Member States. The team also recommends that the Bureau and the GEPW merge to form one single governing body, the Executive Committee (ExC). The Steering Committee should be dismantled, but the chairs of the PSBs should be invited to report to the ExC and to participate in the formal discussions related to their specific work programmes.

10. Another key observation the team would like to highlight is that the current governance structure provides too much freedom to the PSBs to establish their own ad-hoc working groups and task forces. This has effectively led to the creation of "shadow programmes" that function over and above the accepted work programmes of the UNECE, with the consequence that new priorities are identified, which cannot be met with the existing budgetary resources. In this light, the team

recommends that all of these bodies be streamlined and provided with clear mandates, time frames, and budgets, to be formally approved by the ExC.

11. In addition, the team recommends a number of changes to the current organization of the UNECE's divisions and respective sub-programmes. This recommendation reflects the clear feedback from Member States that even the most highly regarded programmes require some reform. For example, while Member States expressed considerable appreciation and continued support for the sub-programmes on environment, statistics, transport, timber, sustainable energy, trade development and technical cooperation, the team recommends that their mandates be reviewed to ensure optimal performance.

12. Taking the views of Member States into consideration, the team also recommends that the sub-programmes on human settlements, industrial restructuring and enterprise development, and economic analysis should be discontinued. Some of the activities of these sub-programmes should be relocated to other divisions: economic analysis activities, for instance, could be carried out in the statistical division. It is important to note that the economic analysis division received the heaviest criticism from Member States.

13. In order to function more effectively in a very different ECE region than the one that existed at the time of its inception 60 years ago, the UNECE is encouraged to establish more partnerships with a number of organizations in Europe. In the context of technical assistance to the developing countries of Europe (e.g. in the Balkans, in Central Asia and in Caucasus), closer cooperation should be established with UNDP and the World Bank. UNECE should also take concrete steps to ensure more systematic cooperation with the European Commission (EC), with the Council of Europe (CoE), and with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Memorandum of Understanding with the OSCE provides a useful model for collaboration that should be explored with other organizations.

14. The team maintains that the pace of reform to be undertaken by the UNECE and its Member States is particularly critical; especially in light of the challenges it currently faces regarding its efficiency and effectiveness. The evaluation team consequently recommends fast-track implementation of the key recommendations of this evaluation, including the discontinuation of activities that are not receiving strong support from the Member States.

THE STATISTICAL DIVISION

Objectives and activities

15. The overall objective of the statistical sub-programme is to improve the reliability of national official statistics and ensure their comparability at the international level. The planned accomplishments of the sub-programme include:

- further developed national institutional frameworks and corresponding implementation practices of Member Countries;
- increased implementation of internationally recommended standards and practices to ensure comparable statistics, particularly by the less advanced countries in the region;
- streamlined activity patterns of statistical work between international organizations through elimination of overlaps and gaps;
- increased access by users to reliable, timely and comparable macroeconomic, social and demographic statistics.

16. These accomplishments are to be achieved through some of the following outputs and activities:

- servicing of inter-governmental and expert bodies, especially the Conference of European Statisticians;
- production of regular publications such as the Statistical Journal of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and Trends in Europe and North America; as well as

- booklets, fact sheets, wall charts, and technical materials like the updated online database "Integrated Presentation of International Statistical Work Programmes in the ECE region";
- carrying out technical cooperation operations in the Member States;
- providing advisory services, training courses, seminars and workshops.

17. Technical assistance is directed towards South-Eastern European and CIS countries; it mainly undertakes capacity building interventions to assist Member governments in the organization of statistical systems, indicators of human development and MDG reporting, principles of statistics and more. Technical assistance is carried out by the regional adviser on statistics or the Statistical Division staff.

18. The work under the Sub-programme is carried out by the Statistical Division and steered by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) under the joint auspices of the ECE and the United Nations Statistical Commission. CES is the principal subsidiary body of the Programme. The CES is also in charge of coordinating all statistical work in ECE, including statistical work carried out in the Economic Analysis Division and its Population Activities Unit; in the Environment and Human Settlements Division; in the Timber Branch of Trade Development and Timber Division; and in the Transport Division.

19. The total number of staff in the Statistical Division is 32, of which 18 are professionals.

Relevance and comparative advantage

20. Member Countries' views on the importance and relevance of the UNECE Statistical Programme were quite unanimous. In 55.6 % of the replies to the questionnaire, the Sub-programme was deemed highly important. Only 14.8 % of the Member States who replied identified the Statistical Programme as having low importance, and indeed, it seems to enjoy the most solid Member State support after the Environment and Transport Divisions.

21. Based on the views expressed in the interviews and replies to the questionnaire, the most relevant parts of the Programme seem to be the coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region and the methodological work carried out in various statistical areas. The main product of the coordination work is the Integrated Presentation of International Statistical Work, which is maintained and updated by the CES.

22. Most of the Member States expressed satisfaction with the way the CES is leading the Statistical Programme, both in terms of substance and working methodologies. Possible overlapping elements with the participating organizations' statistical activities are checked regularly as a part of the coordination of their work. The sub-groups have been established according to product and required time frame. This helps in keeping the number of sub-groups under control.

23. The relevance of the UNECE Statistical Sub-programme for the OECD and EU countries is obviously more limited than for the SEE, Caucasus, Balkans and CIS countries. The former are served by their national statistical bureaus, by EUROSTAT, and by the OECD. They consequently mainly appreciate the UNECE Statistical Programme for its coordinating functions and methodological work.

24. The collection, processing and dissemination of macroeconomic, social and demographic statistics is not the most appreciated part of the Sub-programme. Quite a few Member States even doubted the rationality of attempting to produce statistics when the gathering the data, and publishing and marketing the outcomes seem to stretch the scarce resources beyond reason. But these Programme components were nevertheless highly rated by some Member States, notably by non-EU and non-OECD countries. Practically all Member States found great value in the Statistical Programme's ability to function as a bridge between different Member groups, bringing together statisticians representing extremely varied situations and levels of economic and administrative development.

25. Cooperation between UNECE and other international organizations was seen to function well.

26. Some Member States wanted to see the Statistical Programme's resources strengthened and other divisions' statisticians to be moved to Statistical Division.

Findings

27. The UNECE Statistical Programme seems to have found its niche in the area of international statistics. Its relevance appears to be high, since the CES – which actually leads the programme – has become something of a clearing-house for open questions and issues in its field. The CES also provides a fairly successful forum for exchanging views and promoting international harmonization in statistics. The heterogeneity of UNECE Member States does not seem to be an obstacle. Indeed, countries with differing economic and social situations can participate meaningfully in the meetings and learn from each other. The fact that countries outside the UNECE region are willing to participate in the Programme's activities may also be seen as an indicator of its success.

28. The Sub-programme further succeeds in drawing together the main national and international organizations and in coordinating their work programmes, though "coordination" in this instance signifies providing a forum for exchanging information and avoiding overlaps rather than actual guidance or management. Finally, the UNECE Statistical Division appears to be successful in providing the required support and secretarial services.

29. In the field of statistics the UNECE has filled the gaps between various actors and responded to actual demand. It has thus acquired significance beyond the ECE region as well. UNECE statistical methods have more than once raised interest outside the region and been adopted by countries that are not members of the UNECE. The enlargement of the EU will, however, progressively decrease the Programme's relevance, as work on economic, social and demographic data and statistics of EU Member Countries is carried out by their national statistical bureaus and by EUROSTAT.

30. The evaluation team considers the coordination of international statistical work, the work on methodology in various statistical areas and, to some extent, technical assistance to be the core of the UNECE statistical programme and the ones to which resources should be channelled.

31. The main tasks of coordination are updating and maintaining the Integrated Presentation of International Statistical Work and secretariat support to the CES. Both of these are fairly labour intensive components of the Programme, as is the methodological work, which requires both technical expertise in statistics and logistical, publishing and other kinds of services for the steering groups, task forces and other meetings in specialized areas. In the methodological work the main expertise comes from national experts participating in the Programme.

32. The most labour intensive part of the programme, however, is the collection, processing and dissemination of macroeconomic, social and demographic statistics. It engages the majority of staff members in one way or another. Data for EU and OECD countries are, to the extent possible, taken from other organizations (OECD and, in the case of EU countries, EUROSTAT), and an extension of this possibility of data collection to cover all data from new EU countries can be expected for the near future.

33. Today already some publications and components of statistical production seem to add very little to services and publications provided by other international and national institutions. One example is the above-mentioned online database, which contains information on EU and OECD countries that can be found elsewhere. In the case of transition economies, moreover, it is legitimate to wonder whether resources could be more efficiently used to support these countries' representatives'

participation in UNECE's coordination exercises, methodological work and technical assistance, rather than to produce statistics on their economies.

Recommendations

- i) The team regards coordination, methodological and technical assistance work as the genuine niche for the Statistical Programme's work. Consequently, the team recommends that the UNECE reconsider the actual production and publication of member country statistics (the third component of the Statistical Programme). Long-term results of the Programme for transition economy countries' capacities would probably benefit from this.
- ii) To begin with, it is recommended that publications such as "The Trends" be discontinued and that the contents of the online database be reviewed and improved.
- iii) The restructuring of the Economic Analysis Programme as proposed in this evaluation should lead to the freeing of Statistical Division human resources, which could be used in the niche areas defined above.
- iv) More funds will be needed for technical assistance in capacity building for transition economies. This, however, would require technical assistance interventions to be more carefully planned and designed, so as to ensure real impact and sustainability of their outcomes.
- v) The Statistical Programme should take over the statistical tasks of the Sub-programmes that this evaluation recommends be downsized or discontinued.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

34. Based on the questionnaires completed by the Member States, the interviews conducted and the discussions with senior members of the UNECE Secretariat, the team would like to draw the following general conclusions and recommendations.

Form a new mission statement for the UNECE

35. The UNECE was once a forum for European East-West dialogue. Since then, it has been seeking a new identity. There now is a need to provide a clearer definition of the role, purpose and mission of the UNECE.

36. The UNECE has been carrying out important work on the environment, transport, statistics, norms and standard setting, and also in many technical sectors, such as timber. While this work is not reported on the front page of leading international press on a daily basis, it still plays an important role in the process of European integration. Many of these activities have impacts on areas beyond European borders. For example, the UNECE has been the cradle of standards and conventions adopted worldwide.

37. The UNECE has 55 Member States, of which 14 are categorized as developing countries. Poverty and underdevelopment are still problems for many European citizens. These areas need development cooperation and technical assistance.

38. The UNECE is promoting sustainable development in the wider Europe. This includes economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development for Europeans.

Create more effective governance

39. The current governance of the UNECE is too heavy and unnecessarily complex. The UNECE Annual Session should be convened on a biannual basis. The Bureau and the GEPW should merge to form one single governing body, the Executive Committee (ExC). The new Executive Committee should supervise and conduct a continuous dialogue with the Secretariat. Member States should give it a firmly legitimate role and position it between the PSBs and the Commission with a clear mandate to focus on coordination, cross-sectoral issues, and the budget. The Steering Committee should be dismantled, but the chairs of the PSBs should be invited to report to the ExC and to participate in the formal discussions related to their specific work programmes.

Improve management

40. The UNECE should strengthen its programme planning, monitoring and evaluation (PPME) resources and launch a concentrated effort to bring its managers up to speed in the application of the pertinent skills. A dedicated unit for planning and evaluation should be established.

41. Relations between the Secretariat and the Member States need to be improved. Currently, there is a high degree of mistrust between the Member States and the UNECE secretariat, which partially paralyses the work of the UNECE and hampers the securing of extra-budgetary funding from the Member States.

42. There is a need to enhance horizontal communication by convening more regular meetings between divisions and sub-programmes, and by establishing joint projects and programmes between them.

43. Information dissemination and outreach should also be strengthened.

Raise the political profile

44. Much of the work of the UNECE – for example the activities related to norms, standards setting and transport – is viewed as highly technical. Despite their relevance for European and global trade and the world economy, these issues do not grab the political interest of governments and decision-makers.

45. Only in the area of environment has the work of the UNECE succeeded in systematically engaging political actors – for instance through the regular process of Environment for Europe, which benefits from the participation of ministers of environment in the pan-European region.

46. In several areas where the UNECE has failed to draw the political interest of decision-makers and ministers, other organizations have been successful. Examples exist in the transport and forest/timber sectors. Political interest and support is of great value when increasing the comparative advantage of various sectors in the UNECE. Getting the message to political decision-makers, parliamentarians and members of government, furthermore, will help considerably in any fundraising efforts UNECE undertakes.

Restructure the divisions and sub-programmes

47. All divisions and sub-programmes received criticism from the Member States during the interviews and in questionnaire responses. Recurring issues are the lack of horizontal communication, the lack of overall planning and prioritizing in the Secretariat, the view that divisions are seeking to “keep busy” with new activities that are not properly planned and established, and the lack of coordination with other international organizations which leads to duplication of work and overlaps. Some sub-programmes, moreover, have only very weak support by the Member States. Resources that are released from closing down the activities that are no longer supported by the Member States should be used to increase the comparative advantage of the ongoing other UNECE activities.

Invest in comparative advantage

48. All organizations should specialize in areas in which they have a comparative advantage. The work of the UNECE in several sectors is well recognized and respected. The UNECE should focus on the areas where it possesses a greater capability than other relevant organizations. In parallel, the UNECE should systematically phase out activities that are clearly inefficient, ineffective, or that overlap with the work of other organizations that are better placed and equipped to carry out the functions in question. The organization should also identify potential new niche strengths in order to better respond to the ever-changing differentiating needs of the Member States.

Implement the Millennium Development Goals

49. Action is needed to implement several of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including to fight poverty, improve health conditions, improve housing, and to guarantee safe drinking water. UN Regional Commissions play a role in implementing these MDGs. In Europe, many international organizations, UN agencies, financial institutions and development agencies work in parallel. This calls for good coordination and division of labour. The UNECE could function as a “clearing house” by providing a forum to all stakeholders to share their information, views and experience, and to improve the coordination of these activities. With its current resources, it would not be realistic for UNECE to take the lead or even to have the coordination responsibility for such a variety of important development goals.

Improve cooperation with other organizations

50. The UNECE should build partnerships with key international organizations and institutions in all areas of its work. Memorandum of understanding should be agreed on with all key partners, including the EC, CIS, UNDP, Council of Europe, OECD and the World Bank. This would also minimize the risk of overlaps and duplication of work. Several key UN agencies have their headquarters in Geneva, and many others have regional or liaison offices here. There is often room for improvement in the exchange of information between UN agencies and programmes. To use resources effectively, UN agencies must ensure closer cooperation. The UNECE can create a positive model of cooperation with other UN agencies.

Build partnership with UNDP

51. An important partner for the UNECE in providing technical assistance in the Balkans, in the Caucasus and in Central Asia is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). UNDP's Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC) was established to assist countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Central Europe, the Baltic States, and the Balkans. UNDP has a total of 24 country offices in the area, which would provide excellent contact points for these countries. UNDP country offices are specifically mandated within the UN system to assist other UN bodies and specialized agencies. The country offices are managed by UNDP's Resident Representatives, who also coordinate United Nations activities in their countries and serve as UN ambassadors to their host countries.

Promote cooperation with regional commissions

52. The UNECE should seek to replicate the existing partnerships it has in Central Asia (with ESCAP and SPECA), in other geographical areas, such as the Mediterranean area (with ECA and ESCWA) and the Middle East (with ESCWA). The cooperation with the UN regional organizations should be enhanced.

Invest in public relations

53. The UNECE has to improve its own corporate image. This will require allocating greater resources for public relations work, contacts with media, having more materials and publications available on the Internet, and identifying the printed materials that are in real demand. Currently only one professional staff member is responsible for public relations in the UNECE. This is obviously inadequate.

Revamp fundraising activities

54. Once changes have been made to the governance structures, a new corporate image will restore the organization's credibility with governments and other international organizations, and will impact favourably on fundraising efforts. Fundraising efforts could also benefit from the creation of joint projects with other stakeholders. The arrival of additional funds will allow new programmes and initiatives to start.

Improve human resources management

55. Improved communication is needed within the divisions and sub-programmes of the Secretariat. This can be achieved by human resources management measures to ensure that employees in the UNECE periodically change divisions and sub-programmes, and by encouraging staff members to gain experience at other UN and international organizations, as well as in the field. Measures should be taken to facilitate staff visits to the Member States, participation in important meetings and conferences in their specific field, and to arrange key events in the Member States. In addition, regional advisors should have adequate travel budgets to allow them to best serve the interests of the organization.

Use professional UN project services

56. The UNECE is implementing several technical cooperation projects within its sub-programmes, some of which are funded with extra-budgetary resources, which need professional handling and administration of projects. A UN body has been established for these specific purposes: the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS) provides technical and administrative support to other UN entities. UNOPS also has representatives and offices in many of the countries in which UNECE is carrying out or planning technical assistance projects. To avoid unnecessary administrative costs and delays use the professional UN arm for project services.

Prioritize gender issues

57. Issue related to gender should be given high priority. Special efforts should be made to consider this aspect in the everyday management and governance of the UNECE. Efforts should be made to provide equal opportunities to both genders and to systematically support the gender that is less well represented both in the staffing of the Secretariat, and in the Committees, PSBs and working groups. Member States should also be encouraged to seek gender balance in their participation in UNECE meetings and seminars. Performance on attaining gender balance in the divisions, sub-programmes and projects of the UNECE should be reviewed on a regular basis. In the UNECE sub-programmes and related projects, a professional gender impact analysis should always been carried out. There are several internationally recognized tools for the analysis of gender equality and impacts within projects, used by governments and development agencies. These methods should be fully adopted.

Strengthen the role of the private sector

58. The role of the private sector in the UNECE should be strengthened, and the representatives of the private sector should always have access to the different activities of the UNECE. In addition, the

public relations efforts towards the private sector should be strengthened. Public-private partnerships should be implemented wherever feasible.

Strengthen the role of NGOs

59. The role of the non-governmental organizations in UNECE should be strengthened. In some areas – such as transport and environment – non-governmental organizations already play a very substantial role. Means of supporting NGO participation in all UNECE activities should be explored.

Implement recommendations on the sectors

60. In each of the sections of this report there are specific recommendations to be implemented to improve the overall performance of the UNECE. These changes in the UNECE are urgent, as keeping the momentum of change is of utmost importance

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