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Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships

Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships

Third session

Geneva, 3-4 December 2019

Report of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships on its third session

I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships held its third session on 3-4 December 2019. Over 150 delegates participated in the meeting. The session was attended by representatives from the following Member States: Albania, Afghanistan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Cyprus, Hungary, France, Germany, Greece, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

2. The European Union was also represented.

3. The following specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations participated in the session: the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Eurasian Economic Commission, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

4. Representatives from non-governmental organizations, private sector entities, academic institutions and independent experts participated in the session.

II. Adoption of the agenda (Agenda item 1)

Documentation:

Annotated provisional agenda for the third session (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/1);

GE.20-01218(E)



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Conclusion 2019 – 1

The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda as proposed by the secretariat.

III. Election of officers (Agenda item 2)¹

Conclusion 2019 – 2

The Working Party re-elected Mr. Arthur Smith (United States) as co-Chairperson and Mr. Steven Van Garsse (Belgium), Mr. Mark Romoff (Canada), Mr. Kaimeng Li (China), Mr. Frédéric Bobay (France), Mr. Ziad Hayek (Lebanon), Ms. Sonia Mezzour (Morocco), Mr. Hafiz Salikhov (Russian Federation), Mr. Isfandiyor Usmonzoda (Tajikistan) and Ms. Sedef Yavuz Noyan (Turkey) as vice-Chairpersons for a further period of two years in accordance with the Commission's Guidelines on Procedures and Practices.

The Working Party also elected Mr. George Katapodis (Greece) as co-Chairperson and Ms. Alena Dadzerkina (Belarus), Mr. Nicolaus-Alejandro Weil von der Ahe (Germany), Mr. Marco Percoco (Italy) and Mr. Bekmurat Talipov (Kazakhstan) as vice-Chairpersons for a period of two years.

IV. Policy discussion:² Implementing People-first Public-Private Partnerships projects in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda item 3)

Documentation:

People-first Project Facilitation Hub (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/INF.7).

5. Mr. Walter Stevens, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to the UN and other international organisations in Geneva, gave a keynote address on the need for complementarity between the work of the UNECE Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships, stressing the importance of the People-first approach to PPPs, with the existing cooperation programmes, initiatives and tools. As such, Ambassador Stevens explained a number of existing programmes in the European Union, such as the Investment Plan for Europe, which mobilised (through to EU guarantees and other tools) over € 335 billion over a three years fiscal period (2015-2017) and was then extended until 2020 with the aim to mobilise up to € 650 billion. The European PPP Expertise Centre (EPEC) established with European Investment Bank (EIB) has played an important role in the Plan's implementation, while offering support to the European public sector in delivering better PPPs. EPEC is open to cooperation with non-EU countries and therefore, Ambassador Stevens encouraged participants to benefit from their services. For the next budgetary period (2021-2027) the European Union is currently working on the programme's continuation under the "InvestEU Programme" umbrella, which will consist of the following three pillars:

(a) The InvestEU Fund: Mobilising public and private investment using an EU budget guarantee;

¹ The officers elected to the Bureau at the second session of the Working Party in 2018 will remain in office throughout 2020.

² The policy discussion consisting of three sessions with a number of expert panel discussions focused on a People-first Project Facilitation proposal. The views expressed by experts under this agenda item do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Member States.

(b) The InvestEU Advisory Hub: Providing technical advice on investment projects needing financing; and

(c) The InvestEU Portal: An easily accessible database that matches projects with potential investors worldwide.

Finally, Ambassador Stevens emphasised a number of guiding principles for the EU when engaging on PPPs with countries and organisations:

(a) A level playing field for businesses;

(b) Equal treatment in terms of market access; and

(c) Transparency in public procurement.

A. Identifying People-first pilot projects for low and middle-income countries

6. The participants appreciated the quality of the presentations of case studies made by the panellists from PPP units and infrastructure agencies from six countries, which considered the five People-first PPP outcomes.

7. Referring to the proposal to create a People-first project facilitation hub to help low and middle-income countries in document ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/INF.7 (the proposal), panellists suggested that it should focus on high-quality People-first initiatives in low and middle-income countries, directly contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with transformative impact on the three pillars of sustainable development and a good balance between social and economic infrastructure.

8. The second panel welcomed the case studies as potential material to develop the Project Impact Assessment Tool currently being finalised by the UNECE.

9. The third panel of this session discussed the policies and enabling environment for People-first PPPs, more specifically on the priority actions that countries should do in developing such environment. The panellists acknowledged that the proposal could play a useful role in developing enabling environments by making the UNECE People-first PPP standards as a benchmark for the beneficiary countries, including the UNECE Standard and Declaration on a Zero Tolerance Approach to Corruption in PPP Procurement and the draft People-first PPP Model law.

B. How can the proposal help to develop these People-first PPP projects?

10. The participants were informed of the experiences and suggestions shared by the panellists on the possible role of the proposal in promoting People-first PPP projects and the SDGs within and outside the UNECE subsidiary bodies, more specifically on:

(a) How can the proposal screen countries that are not able to meet People-first PPP standards and best practices and benefit from its services?

(b) How can the proposal develop capacities by working with governments to deliver projects? and

(c) How does the proposal lower the risks in order to implement and make affordable People-first PPPs?

11. Delegates were informed of the proposal to promote the development of pipelines of People-first PPPs in low and middle-income countries, where high-quality infrastructure projects are needed the most. They also took note that such a proposal could contribute to the implementation of UNECE People-first PPP best practices and standards, including the Standard and Declaration on a Zero Tolerance Approach to Corruption in PPP Procurement. Some delegations however recommended that such a proposal should be supported by many

States, not just a few. In addition, they asked the secretariat to explore other similar ventures to ensure that such a proposal would not be duplicating existing initiatives, especially those at the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs).

12. The proposal would develop capacities by working with governments to deliver People-first PPPs and operate as an experience sharing platform where countries will share on a peer to peer basis case studies, capacity building and lessons learned through regular gatherings under the aegis of the Working Party. It was suggested that the proposal should engage in cooperation with the multilateral platform SOURCE led jointly by the MDBs for infrastructure project preparation. The proposal will include in its scope of its implementation principle 10 of the UNECE Guiding Principles on People-first PPPs and would explore mobilizing the joint IMF-World Bank PFRAM³ dedicated tool. It was also suggested that the proposal would supplement the Working Party providing a role for its different activities and could meet under the auspices of the Working Party.

13. Delegates also recognised the important role played by the MDBs in supporting low and middle-income countries in the due diligence and in the execution of People-first PPP projects and their financing.

C. Key issues in the implementation of the proposal: operations, stakeholder engagement, financing, scaling up and the role of the UN

14. Panellists discussed the key issues surrounding the operations of the proposal such as its structure, funding (through extrabudgetary resources) and the role of the UNECE, more specifically:

- (a) Should it be a Fund located in an MDB or should it be just a Facilitating programme?
- (b) How can the various entities and stakeholders work together?
- (c) Where would the funding come from? and
- (d) What should be the role of the UNECE in its operations?

15. Panellists argued that in this cooperation between the UNECE and MDBs, each entity would focus on its own area where it has full competence.

16. Delegates took note of the increased cooperation in the area of project facilitations. They noted that the MDBs that were present in the policy discussion were fully supportive of the proposal which could deepen the cooperation between the UNECE and the MDBs in pursuit of the SDGs. Representatives from the private sector underlined their considerable support for such an initiative. Delegations also took note that some aspects of the proposal (such as the Fund) are outside the scope of the Working Party on PPPs.

³ The "PPP Fiscal Risk Assessment Model" (PFRAM) is the multilateral tool developed by the IMF in cooperation with the World Bank for fiscal transparency of PPP projects where private financing translates usually into a public debt through government commitments in the PPP contract. Such public debt is generally hidden as it is off-budget and off-balance sheet and thus is often not accounted for in the official national debt data. PFRAM is tailored to help governments monitor their sovereign debt resulting from PPP and covers both off-balance sheet debt resulting from private financing and contingent liabilities resulting from sovereign guarantees and from other government commitments through contract clauses. <https://www.imf.org/external/np/fad/publicinvestment/pdf/PFRAM2.pdf>. The delegation of France argued that in relation to UNECE priorities, PFRAM could be leveraged in view to implement the UNECE Guiding Principles on People-first PPP Principle 10 "Avoid debt traps by ensuring the fiscal sustainability of People-first projects and the transparency of fiscal policies".

17. While a number of delegations expressed their support to the proposal, a number of others expressed their concerns raising a number of issues especially on its role, governance, value added, geographical scope, conflict of interest, the division of responsibilities to avoid duplication and how the proposal would fit within the mandate of the Working Party. The same delegations requested further details on these modalities.

18. In summing up, it was proposed that subject to agreement by the Member States:

(a) The proposal could focus in the upstream work in the sensitizing of governments and the development of their capability to deliver effective projects - a point made by the MDBs suggesting that this will be the added value of the proposal;

(b) The secretariat would present in line with the mandate, a detailed account on the governance, value added, the roles and responsibilities between the MDBs and the UNECE to avoid duplication, and the role of the private sector;

(c) The proposal would focus on facilitating projects in low and-middle income countries in the UNECE region; and

(d) The secretariat would consult with the other Regional Commissions on the proposal.

19. The delegate of the EU, on behalf of the EU and its Member States thanked the secretariat, the Bureau and the experts for their efforts to promote the UNECE People-first approach and the standard on a Zero Tolerance approach to Corruption in PPP Procurement. The delegate raised a number of concerns to be taken into account going forward:

(a) Following the regional review of the UN Development System reform, the UNECE membership agreed that the Commission and its subsidiary bodies should focus first on the ECE region. UNECE products are useful in other regions, and the EU agrees that the best practices and standards should also be shared with the other Regional Commissions, and the EU is happy to learn that such cooperation among the secretariats exists;

(b) The delegate drew the Working Party's attention to the ongoing discussions within the UNECE concerning the overstretched resources within the secretariat, and the need to streamline current processes, avoid duplication of efforts and ideally streamline the number of subsidiary bodies. The delegate argued that the resources of the UNECE secretariat are overstretched due to the expanding mandate of the Commission, as well as an increasing number of non-ECE countries joining the UNECE Conventions, standards and other products;

(c) The delegate argued that the "global role" of the UNECE has also become an issue for the Commission's progress and the EU and its Member States struggle to have UNECE decisions endorsed in the ECOSOC in New York given that a number of non-ECE members are questioning the exact global role of the UNECE;

(d) The EU's understanding is that this Working Party has a mandate to develop standards, recommendations, best practices, and to disseminate them including via capacity building, and the EU requires more time to better understand the idea to develop a project facilitation hub in cooperation with the MDBs. The delegate added that those member States in need of support in the implementation of the People-first approach can request these services to the Working Party, which will be provided subject to extrabudgetary resources and funding as foreseen by its Terms of Reference; and

(e) Going forward, the EU and its Member States are not yet convinced of the idea of creating a facilitation hub or programme, or a feasibility study on this proposal, and asked the secretariat to map the existing project facilitation initiatives and tools, for possible future engagement and for the promotion of the People-first approach.

V. Review of the work since the second session of the Working Party on PPPs on 20-21 November 2018 (Agenda item 4)

A. Policy documents: International PPP Standards, Guiding Principles, Declarations, and Recommendations

Documentation:

UNECE/EBRD draft People-first PPP model law and commentary (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/INF.3); and

Proposed People-first Project Facilitation Hub (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/INF.7).

PPP Standards and guidelines under preparation

20. The secretariat provided a progress report on the draft standards and guidelines at various levels of development, namely:

- (a) Water Supply and Sanitation;
- (b) Urban Rail Transit; and
- (c) Guidelines on Waste-to-Energy projects.

21. The Working Party was also informed of the work on the People-first PPP Model law and commentary developed by a Project Team, which is currently in public review. The Project Team leader assured the delegates that the draft model law has been aligned with the UNCITRAL model legislative provisions on PPPs and the legislative guide adopted by UNCITRAL in July 2019. While the bankability of projects remains a key guiding principle, the novelty in the draft model law is that for first time the People-first principles have been translated into legal text with many of the features designed to give greater protection to the public interest or ‘value for people’. This, it was argued, is the first attempt by the UN to include such a comprehensive SDG-compliant set of legal principles into a model PPP law.

22. A number of participants commented on the draft model law raising a number of pertinent issues, such as the need of treating all comments fairly and in a transparent manner, ensuring that the draft is balanced and not favouring the lenders at the expense of the public interest, linked to this there is a need to ensure that the People-first PPP principles are properly reflected, how should the contributing partners⁴ be acknowledged in the document, and ensure consultation on the draft document, including other Regional Commissions and UN agencies.

Conclusion 2019 – 4.1

The Working Party took note of the status of the standards and guides at various stages of development in the following areas:

- (a) Water and sanitation;
- (b) Urban Rail Transit; and
- (c) Waste-to-Energy.

It urged the project teams to continue working on these standards and guides and to finalise them in due course and to consider different ways for implementing these useful instruments.

⁴ The Working Party agreed with the Chairperson’s proposal to discuss the reference to the contributing partners in the document at a Bureau meeting.

Conclusion 2019 – 4.2

The Working Party took note of the draft People-first PPP model law and commentary (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/INF.3) and the comments by participants. It also requested the Bureau to submit the draft law and the commentary to the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships for information and guidance at its fourteenth session in March 2020.

The People-first Project Facilitation proposal and the Project Impact Assessment Tool**Conclusion 2019 – 4.3**

The Working Party took note of the discussion under agenda item 3 on the People-first Project Facilitation proposal (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/INF.7).

23. The Chairperson requested the secretariat to give a progress report on the work of the Project Impact Assessment Tool. The secretariat informed the Working Party that following the decision to set up a Project Team,⁵ the secretariat issued a call for participation and received over 100 requests from PPP experts to be involved in this work. Based on their interest, the experts were divided into five sub-groups each responsible for one of the five People-first PPP outcomes. The secretariat is preparing a number of benchmarks and questions for each of the five outcomes to be used by the sub-groups as a basis for their work, which is expected to be concluded in the coming months. Simultaneously, the secretariat is collecting case studies to be used as empirical evidence in the development of the Tool.

24. The secretariat also referred to the desire by Member States for the UNECE to establish formal cooperation with the Sustainable Infrastructure Foundation (SIF), led and funded by the Multilateral Development Banks. It informed that a partnership agreement has been agreed and letters were exchanged in November 2019 with a number of tasks and outcomes. This agreement will allow the UNECE to use SOURCE as the platform for the Project Impact Assessment Tool and as a means to implement UNECE PPP normative documents such as the standard on a Zero Tolerance approach to Corruption in PPP Procurement.⁶

25. One delegation suggested the inclusion of questions in the Tool to assess whether projects are viable as People-first PPPs. It added that SOURCE was a good capacity building platform and invited other countries to use its services.

Conclusion 2019 – 4.4

The Working Party took note of the groundwork carried out on the development of the Project Impact Assessment Tool to identify People-first projects that support the achievement of the SDGs. It requested the Bureau and the secretariat to continue giving priority to this tool in consultation and in collaboration with other stakeholders.

International PPP Specialist Centres affiliated to the UNECE

26. The Chairperson recalled that there are eight PPP Centres affiliated to the UNECE and that there is a growing interest by others to join. He reminded prospective candidates that

⁵ The project proposal with the expected deliverables is available at:

<https://wiki.unece.org/display/pppp/Impact+Assessment+Tool>

⁶ As part of this cooperation, SIF will conduct an initial mapping of SOURCE questions vis-à-vis the five People-first outcomes; will integrate the methodology and its scoring mechanism into the SOURCE platform; and will support the promotion of the methodology as part of SOURCE's outreach activities through webinars, training and participation in international events.

new Centres should not stretch the UNECE resources in any form and that the following three guiding principles need to be taken into account when seeking affiliation:

- (a) Government support;
- (b) Financial contribution towards UNECE PPP work⁷; and
- (c) Become operational within six months from establishment.

27. The Chairperson recalled that at the last session, the secretariat informed the Working Party of a meeting of the Centres in Beijing, China, in December 2018 which kick-started a fruitful process of cooperation and collaboration among the Centres with a focus on key results and impact. He added that among the key outcomes of that meeting was a decision to establish an informal rotating chairmanship system, with Mr. Marc Frilet (Centre in France) being elected as the first chairperson and Mr. David Dodd (Centre in the United States) taking over this role in the summer of 2019. Before giving the floor to Ms. Sonia Mezzour (Morocco) to make a presentation on behalf of the Bureau on the results and impact of the Centres, the Chairperson informed the Working Party that at its last session in March 2019, the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and PPPs requested the secretariat and the Bureau to prepare a code of conduct for the Centres and to submit it to the Working Party for its endorsement (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/4).

28. Ms. Mezzour informed the Working Party that two meetings of the Centres were held since the last session:

- (a) 3-4 December 2018, in Beijing, China; and
- (b) 2 April 2019, in Paris, France.

29. Among the commitments taken by the Centres individually and collectively are to:

- (a) Promote the Guiding Principles on People-first PPPs;
- (b) Promote the compliance of PPPs with the People-first outcomes;
- (c) Support the work of the UNECE Project Team developing the Project Impact Assessment Tool;
- (d) Collect People-first PPP case studies; and
- (e) Undertake training and capacity building activities.

30. On the specific results and impact, she reported that these varied from: holding events to promote the People-first PPP approach; organising study tours and trainings for government officials from other Member States; translating the UNECE PPP normative documents into Chinese and Spanish thus bringing the UNECE PPP work to 1.7 billion people; collecting People-first case studies; and preparing studies and carrying out research analysis on People-first PPPs in various sectors.

31. Ms. Mezzour concluded her presentation by informing the delegates that the next coordination meeting of the Centres will be held in New Orleans, hosted by the Centre on PPPs in Resilient Infrastructure under the chairmanship of Mr. David Dodd on 2-6 March 2020.

32. The Chairperson thanked Ms. Mezzour for her comprehensive presentation on behalf of the Bureau and congratulated the Centres for their achievements in the past twelve months and their planned activities in 2020. He then asked the informal rotating chairpersons to make very brief remarks.

⁷ Funding by the Centres should be used for mandated UNECE activities

33. Mr. Marc Frilet and Mr. David Dodd, the first and the current informal rotating chairpersons of the Centres respectively, highlighted some of the key activities, including the importance of holding regular coordination meetings of the representatives of the Centres such as those held in Beijing in December 2018 and in Paris in April 2019, with the next meeting to be held in New Orleans in March 2020.

Conclusion 2019 – 4.5

The Working Party welcomed the presentation by the Bureau on the results and impact of the International PPP Specialist Centres affiliated to the UNECE (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/INF.4). It also took note of the statement of intent agreed by the Centres at their meeting in Beijing, China in December 2018.

The Working Party endorsed the code of conduct for UNECE-affiliated International PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/4).

B. Implementation: Capacity building activities and policy advisory services

Implementation of People-first PPP policy documents

34. The Chairperson expressed the Bureau's concerns that the People-first PPP normative documents prepared by the UNECE were not being sufficiently used by Member States. He proposed that the Working Party takes a more active role in their implementation and redouble its efforts to mobilize resources. The Chairperson added that in order to address this, a document with three practical recommendations was submitted by the Bureau to the Working Party for its consideration and endorsement (ECE/CECI/PPP/WP/2019/3). These are:

- (a) Develop implementation strategies of the UNECE People-first PPP standards, guiding principles, best practices, declarations and recommendations;
- (b) Build new partnerships to scale up the implementation and impact of UNECE People-first PPP standards, guiding principles, best practices, declarations and recommendations; and
- (c) Develop indicators to measure the implementation and impact of UNECE People-first PPP standards, guiding principles, best practices, declarations and recommendations.

35. The Chairperson recalled that an earlier version of this document was sent to the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and PPPs at its last session in March 2019, and that a session on this topic was organised by the secretariat at the fourth PPP Forum in May 2019. He concluded that this document synthesised the consensus by experts in these discussions.

Conclusion 2019 – 4.6

Recognising the need to scale up the implementation and impact of the UNECE PPP policy documents, the Working Party endorsed three recommendations aimed at member States and contained in the document "Measuring and scaling up the Implementation and Impact of ECE standards, guiding principles, best practices, declarations and recommendations" (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/3).

The Working Party requested the Bureau to monitor their implementation in countries, working together with the Working Party members and the secretariat.

Capacity building activities and policy advisory services

36. The Chairperson referred to the key highlights and interventions at the fourth International PPP Forum held in Geneva on 7-9 May 2019 (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/INF.8) in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa, and asked the secretariat to report on the main outcomes of the Forum, and other capacity building activities and policy advisory activities which took place since November 2018.

37. The secretariat provided detailed information on the following activities (in date order):

(a) Russian Federation: presentation by the UNECE of the PPP readiness assessment report of Tatarstan (Kazan, 13 December 2018);

(b) Switzerland: discussion on People-first PPP approaches to BRI projects at the World Economic Forum jointly organised by the UNECE with Tsinghua University, UNIDO and UNCTAD (Davos, 22 January 2019);

(c) France: high-level workshop on People-first PPPs jointly organised by the UNECE with the Paris Bar Association and the International Specialist Centre of Excellence on PPPs in policy, law and institutions (Paris, 1 April 2019);

(d) United States: policy session “Making PPPs work for sustainable development” jointly organised by the UNECE with UNCDF and UNCTAD at the SDG Investment Fair (UN Headquarters, New York, 16 April 2019);

(e) Switzerland: fourth edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum (Geneva, 7-9 May 2019). The Forum was organised by the UNECE in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa and it identified three milestones, namely: 1. Making the People-first model more operational; 2. Increasing the collaboration between the public and private sectors; and 3. Identifying ways in which stakeholder engagement can be increased in People-first PPPs. The discussions that ensued focused on practical solutions to address these challenges. The highlight of the Forum was the participation of four of the five Executive Secretaries of Regional Commissions – UNECE, ECA, ESCAP and ESCWA – who made a strong commitment to enhance People-first PPP cooperation across all regions. A proposal was made to hold the fifth edition of the Forum in Africa co-organised by the UNECE and ECA;

(f) Singapore: workshop organised by the UNECE on the topic “People-first PPPs for climate resilient infrastructure” at the Innovate4Climate conference (Singapore, 4 June 2019);

(g) Belarus: regional PPP workshop jointly organised by the UNECE with the PPP unit of Belarus and the Brest City administration (Brest, 27 July 2019);

(h) Kuwait: high-level training workshops on PPPs for Ports jointly organised by the UNECE with ESCWA (Kuwait City, 27 July 2019);

(i) Tajikistan: field mission to review the PPP law of Tajikistan jointly organised by the UNECE with the State Committee on Investment and State Property Management (Dushanbe, 19-21 August 2019);

(j) Belarus and the Russian Federation: study tour for Kyrgyz senior government officials to learn about the PPP institutional capacity in Belarus and the Russian Federation facilitated by the UNECE (Minsk and Moscow, 26-31 August 2019);

(k) Kyrgyzstan: field mission to Kyrgyzstan to prepare guidelines to assist the public sector in the process of identification and initiation of PPP projects jointly organised by the UNECE with the Ministry of Economy (Bishkek, 3-5 September 2019);

(l) Belarus: workshop to present the draft PPP guide prepared by UNECE for the regional authorities in Brest jointly organised by the UNECE with the Ministry of Economy and the local authorities in Brest (Brest, 24 October 2019);

(m) Kyrgyzstan: seminar to present the guidelines prepared by the UNECE to assist the public sector in the process of identification and initiation of PPP projects, jointly organised by the UNECE with the Ministry of Economy (Bishkek, 30 October 2019);

(n) Kyrgyzstan: roundtable discussion on “New PPP legislation in the Kyrgyz Republic”, jointly organised by the UNECE with the Ministry of Economy (Bishkek, 31 October 2019);

(o) China: Roundtable “Promoting People-first PPPs for the SDGs and the BRI: Introduction to the establishment of a People-first Project Facilitation Hub”, jointly organised by the UNECE with the China Chamber of International Commerce (Beijing, 15 November 2019); and

(p) Jordan: workshop on PPPs in the Ports sector jointly organised by the UNECE with ESCWA and the Islamic Development Bank for government officials from Greece, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon and Syria (23-24 November 2019).

38. The Chairperson congratulated the secretariat for organising a very successful fourth edition of the International PPP Forum from 7 to 9 May 2019. He also expressed his gratitude to the PPP experts participating in policy advisory services and the capacity building activities, and especially those who did so on a pro bono basis, and to the secretariat for organizing and servicing these activities.

39. The delegation of Belarus appreciated the assistance given by the UNECE to Belarus in the past year to develop a municipal PPP projects’ development manual, which will be used as a blueprint for other regions in Belarus.

40. The delegation of Tajikistan appreciated the field visit in Dushanbe in August 2019 and the work on a list of policy recommendations to improve the PPP development in Tajikistan.

41. The delegation of Kyrgyzstan appreciated the assistance given by the UNECE, in particular in formulating guidelines and templates on project identification and initiation, which were presented to the Government at a workshop and roundtable in Bishkek on 30-31 October 2019.

42. The Chairperson reminded the Working Party that its policy advisory services and capacity building programme depended on extra budgetary funding. He expressed his appreciation to the donors who had provided in-kind and financial contributions in support of the UNECE’s People-first PPP work, including the development of People-first PPP standards and the organisation of demand-driven policy advisory services and capacity building activities of the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence, namely:

- (a) The Government of the Russian Federation;
- (b) Tsinghua University, Beijing, China;
- (c) City University of Hong Kong; and
- (d) China International Engineering Consulting Corporation

43. The Chairperson urged Member States and other stakeholders to follow in the footsteps of existing donors and support the work of the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence with extra-budgetary resources for consideration and approval by the Executive Committee, and in-kind contribution.

Conclusion 2019 – 4.7

The Working Party expressed its gratitude to the secretariat for organising a very successful fourth edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum from 7 to 9 May 2019 in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa. While taking note of the highlights and key interventions at the fourth PPP Forum (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2019/INF.8), the Working Party welcomed the participation of the Executive Secretaries of the UNECE, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in a high level panel expressing their desire to deepen the People-first PPP cooperation among the Regional Commissions in support of the SDGs.

Conclusion 2019 – 4.8

The Working Party appreciated the People-first PPP capacity building and policy advisory activities organised in Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and the People-first PPP workshops co-organised with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Jordan and Kuwait. It also took note of the PPP discussion on the People-first PPP outcomes led by UNECE at the SDG Investment Fair at the UN Headquarters in New York from 15 to 17 April 2019 in the context of the 2019 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development.

The Working Party also expressed its appreciation to the experts who took part in these activities for their contribution towards their successful organisation.

Conclusion 2019 – 4.9

The Working Party also expressed its gratitude to the donors who have provided in-kind and financial contributions in support of the UNECE People-first PPP work, including the development of People-first PPP standards and guides, and the organisation of demand-driven policy advisory services and capacity building activities of the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence, namely:

- (a) The Government of the Russian Federation;
- (b) Tsinghua University in Beijing, China;
- (c) City University of Hong Kong; and
- (d) China International Engineering Consulting Corporation

VI. Implementation plan for 2019-2020 (Agenda item 5)

Documentation:

Report of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships on its thirteenth session (ECE/CECI/2019/2, Annex II – Intersessional implementation plan for 2019-2020);

Report of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships on its second session (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2018/2); and

44. The chairperson referred to Annex II of the report of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships on its thirteenth session in March 2019 (ECE/CECI/2019/2), which contained the list of mandated PPP activities. He added that a number of these activities have already been completed as per the secretariat's detailed report under agenda item 4.

45. Referring to the annual International PPP Forum, the Chairperson informed the Working Party that the secretariat received an offer from the Economic Commission for Africa to host the Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

46. The secretariat referred to the list of mandated PPP activities and highlighted in particular (in date order):

(a) A workshop on the role of People-first PPP in efficient, resilient and sustainable infrastructure jointly organised by the UNECE with ECLAC in Santiago, 10 December 2019;

(b) A seminar on resilient People-first PPP infrastructure jointly organised by the UNECE with the Chilean Chamber of Construction, Santiago, 11 December 2019;

(c) A workshop to present the study prepared by UNECE on the regulatory impact of the new PPP law in Tajikistan, jointly organised by the UNECE and the State Enterprise PPP Centre in Dushanbe, on 17 December 2019;

(d) A roundtable seminar on strengthening PPP institutional capacity and promoting the People-first PPP approach, jointly organised by the UNECE and the State Enterprise PPP Centre in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 18 December 2019;

(e) A meeting of the Specialist Centres of Excellence affiliated to the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence, in New Orleans, United States, on 2-6 March 2020;

(f) An International PPP Forum on People-first PPPs for CIS countries and beyond, jointly organised by the UNECE and the State Enterprise PPP Centre in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 21-22 April 2020;

(g) The fifth edition of International People-first PPP Forum to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 5-7 May 2020, organised jointly by the UNECE with the Economic Commission for Africa;

(h) An event in 2020 to convene a number of cities in Barcelona to adopt a declaration on People-first PPPs in smart and sustainable cities in support of the SDGs. This work will be led by the Barcelona City Council; and

(i) The second PPP dialogue for Belt and Road countries to be organised in 2020, subject to extrabudgetary resources to be approved by the Executive Committee.

47. The secretariat also referred to Annex I of the Report of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships on its first session (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2017/2), which contains a list of topics for People-first PPP standards. The secretariat explained that no changes to the list were envisaged. The secretariat added that the work on the standards under preparation would continue in the coming months, as will the campaign to reach 500 People-first case studies, with an emphasis on UNECE member States.

48. The delegation of Tajikistan informed the delegates of the International People-first PPP Forum for the CIS and beyond on 21-22 April 2020 to be jointly organised with UNECE. The delegation also mentioned the two UNECE PPP events that will be held in Dushanbe on 17-18 December 2019 with the support of UNDP and the Office of the UN Regional Coordinator in Tajikistan.

49. The delegate from the Barcelona City Council informed the Working Party of the initiative by the Barcelona City Council to convene a number of cities in Barcelona to adopt a declaration on People-first PPPs in smart and sustainable cities in support of the SDGs.

50. The delegation of the EU and its Member States requested that the topics of the agenda of the fifth International People-first PPP Forum be submitted to the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships for its consideration.

51. Referring to the participation of non-UNECE Member States in the work of the Working Party on PPPs, the delegation of Morocco referred to the UNECE mission statement which clearly states that the UNECE sets out norms, standards and conventions to facilitate international cooperation within and outside the region. She added that non-UNECE Member States have been making important contributions to the UNECE norms and standards, and remarked that Morocco, and in her opinion other non-UNECE Member States, are very proud to continue doing this in the future, and that their work should not be seen as slowing down UNECE progress but should be appreciated.

Conclusion 2019 – 5.1

The Working Party requested the secretariat to invite members to share their ideas on the future work of the Working Party, including how the Working Party could further promote the implementation of its standards and guiding principles. The Working Party asked the secretariat to then work closely with the Bureau and present a detailed account, in line with the mandate and for consideration by the Member States at its fourth session, on the possible way forward including in the implementation of the People-first approach, and the possible role and added value that the Working Party could play within its existing mandate. The Working Party also requested the secretariat to consult with other Regional Commissions and to explore possible cooperation that would ideally save on the UNECE secretariat's scarce resources. The secretariat was furthermore asked to explore possible fund-raising opportunities from donors in line with the UNECE Resource Mobilization Strategy and approved by the Executive Committee.

Conclusion 2019 – 5.2

The Working Party took note of the list of activities planned for the rest of 2019 and for 2020, including those mandated by the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (ECE/CECI/2019/2, Annex II).

Conclusion 2019 – 5.3

The Working Party took note with appreciation of the offer by the Economic Commission for Africa to co-organise jointly with the UNECE the fifth International People-first PPP Forum in Addis Ababa on 5-7 May 2020. It requested the secretariat to develop the term of reference of the Forum and the topics of the agenda for submission to the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships and co-organise the Forum in consultation with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Bureau.

VII. Other business (Agenda item 6)

Dates of the next session

Conclusion 2019 – 6

The Working Party agreed that its next meeting be held in the fourth quarter of 2020. The secretariat will fix the dates in consultation with the Bureau and the conference room services at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

VIII. Adoption of the report (Agenda item 7)

Conclusion 2019 – 7

The Working Party adopted the report of its third session and requested that it be published in English, French and Russian.
