

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
119<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
Geneva, 16 December 2021

**EXCOM/CONCLU/119**

**CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS**

## **FORMAL SEGMENT**

### Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda.

1. The provisional draft agenda for the 119th meeting was adopted as revised in the room, with the agreement that discussions on Item 4(b) would be deferred to the next meeting of EXCOM as the silent procedures related to the decisions under that item had not yet been completed.

### Item 2 – Chair’s conclusions from the last meeting.

2. The conclusions from the 118<sup>th</sup> meeting of EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/118) were adopted.

### Item 3 - Update on Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period.

3. The Chair recalled that EXCOM had adopted special procedures in April 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure business continuity, including, inter alia, the submission of decisions taken at informal meetings to a silence procedure for adoption, and also that these procedures had been extended until 31 December 2021 at the last meeting of EXCOM. To ensure business continuity, and also taking into account a potential continuation of COVID-mitigation measures, he proposed that they be extended until 30 June 2022, as outlined in ECE/EX/2021/L.15.

4. The Secretary of the Commission informed that, since the last meeting of EXCOM, 18 silent procedures had been concluded related to formal meetings with remote participation, namely the 158th session of the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport, 116th session of the Working Party on Road Transport, 122nd session of the Working Party on General Safety Provisions, 64th session of the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics, 85th session of the Working Party on Lighting and Light-Signalling, 27th session of the Committee on Environmental Policy, 65th session of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport, 77th session of the Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs, 110th session of the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, 84th session of the Working Party on Pollution and Energy, 185th session of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations, 79th meeting of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), and its joint session with the 41st session FAO European Forestry Commission, 5<sup>th</sup> session of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships, 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing, 75th session of the Working Party on Rail Transport, 2nd session of the Group of Experts on drafting a new legal instrument on the use of automated vehicles in traffic, Special session of the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety, 70th session of the Working Party on Passive Safety. The silence had not been broken for any of these procedures. Silent procedures for the 31st session of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies and the 76th Session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards were underway. Full details were available on the UNECE website. She informed that, as had already been communicated to member States, the secretariat had inadvertently not initiated a silent procedure in relation to the decisions taken at the 30th session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy yet. This oversight would be rectified.

5. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated the special procedures and their implementation by the secretariat, which had allowed for continuous

progress. Of the various decisions contained in ECE/EX/2021/L.15, she preferred not to extend ECE/EX/2020/L.14, as she believed that the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (CICPPP) should take decisions in the same manner as other UNECE subsidiary bodies, i.e. formal meetings with remote participation, or the procedure as laid out in ECE/EX/2020/L.11. Should a hybrid meeting of the Committee not be possible in May, she recommended adopting a new special procedure for this committee, which would include informal consultation followed by a written procedure, as was the case for all the other UNECE subsidiary bodies.

6. The representative of the United Kingdom supported the proposal of the representative of the European Union and its member States.

7. The Secretary of the Commission acknowledged that the modalities for the silence procedure had evolved over time. To phase out the earlier arrangement related to CICPPP, she proposed that the secretariat strike ECE/EX/2021/L.14 from the document currently tabled, and prepare an updated procedure for the CICPPP for consideration at the next meeting of EXCOM that aligns to the arrangements in place of other UNECE subsidiary bodies.

8. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the decision on extension until 30 June 2022 of Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period, as contained in ECE/EX/2021/L.15 and further amended in the room, and requested the secretariat to issue a revised document accordingly.

#### Item 4 - Matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy:

##### a) Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy.

9. The Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (CSE), Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of CSE over the past year and its plans for the future.

10. The representative of the European Union and its member States said that the work of the Committee could make significant contributions to the achievement of the Paris Agreement in the region. She welcomed the agreement reached on the strategic review of the Sustainable Energy subprogramme, and its planned contribution to achieving in particular SDGs 13 and 7. She also welcomed the new focus on just transition of the Expert Group on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition, and recalled that further discussions were required to fine-tune the language concerning its objective and key areas of work. Regarding the Programme of Work 2022-2023 of the subprogramme, discussions on which had been deferred to the next meeting of EXCOM, she pointed out that it did not contain agreed language on two additional items requested by her delegation in the 2023 planned deliverables. She requested that the Implementation Plan for 2023 include a study on how best to address efficient use of energy resources and a mapping of relevant studies and activities of other UN and international bodies to support building of synergies and to avoid duplication. Ideally, this should be reflected in the relevant documents in the silent procedure. This comment was also relevant for agenda point 9 on the Programme Budget 2023.

11. The representative of the United States agreed on the importance of the work of the Committee for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, highlighting in particular the work streams on achieving superior performance in buildings, addressing growing concentrations of methane in the atmosphere, and modernizing resource management. He noted the significant potential of reducing methane emissions for limiting global warming. In that

context, the United States and the European Union had announced a Global Methane Pledge at COP26, with over 100 countries signing on to take voluntary actions with a view to reduce global methane emissions by at least 30 per cent from 2020 levels by 2030. This could eliminate a temperature increase of over 0.2°C by 2050. He urged all countries to join the Pledge and achieve the global goals through both domestic methane reduction and international cooperative action. In that context, he recognized that the General Assembly Declaration on an International Decade for Methane Management proposed by the Committee had great potential synergies with the Pledge, and urged member States to support the Declaration.

12. The representative of the Russian Federation noted the vital role of the Committee in nurturing expert dialogue on comprehensive development of energy systems, leveraging all available cutting-edge technologies. He favored a balanced approach to energy and climate challenges, including the most efficient and environmentally friendly use of fossil fuels, without which a reliable universal access to energy could not be assured in the near future. He welcomed the strategic review of the Sustainable Energy subprogramme and said it was important for member States to agree on interaction in such areas as effective resource management, hydrogen, and establishing a comparison index of carbon footprint from various sources of energy based on a life-cycle assessment.

13. The representative of the United Kingdom said that the Committee had an important role in helping to translate the commitments made at COP26 to rapid action via its work on supporting countries to use a diverse, net-zero energy mix, energy efficiency in buildings, methane reduction and sustainable management of resources. In line with the commitment of the United Kingdom to an inclusive COP26, she welcomed the Committee's focus on the gender dimensions of a just energy transition. The United Kingdom was proud to be collaborating with UNECE and other international partners to ensure a resilient and ethical supply of technology-critical minerals and metals, and had hosted on 23 November a related event in Geneva. There, the British Geological Survey had announced a project to contribute to the development of the United Nations Framework Classification of Resources and the United Nations Resource Management System, to facilitate an equitable, traceable and sustainable supply of minerals internationally. She looked forward to working with partners in the region and beyond to advance this important work.

14. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Committee on Sustainable Energy for the comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the activities and achievements of the Committee and being kept aware of future directions of its work.

#### Item 5 - Matters relating to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management:

##### a) Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.

15. The Chair of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM), Ms. Doris Andoni, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of CUDHLM over the past year, as well as on the Committee's plans for the future. She invited EXCOM to approve the programme of work for 2022 of the Housing and Land Management Component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme.

16. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated the publication “#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region” and encouraged its further promotion. She also welcomed the newly adopted Regional Action

Plan 2030. She appreciated the efforts of UNECE at COP26 to promote the role of cities in addressing climate change and to promote climate-neutral housing. The European Union and its member States remained fully committed to the preparations of the next Forum of Mayors.

17. The representative of the Russian Federation welcomed the outcomes of the October UNECE Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and said that the Regional Action Plan and the publication would increase the capacity of cities to respond to contemporary challenges. He noted with satisfaction the interest of Russian regions and municipalities in conducting voluntary assessments of SDG implementation and welcomed the approval by the Committee of guiding principles for the development of such local reviews. He also welcomed the preparations for the 2022 Forum of Mayors and said that the Russian Federation would take active part in the event. He had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval.

18. The representative of the United States recalled the very successful Climate Breakfast with Mayors co-organized by UNECE, the American Permanent Mission in Geneva, and the Norman Foster Foundation at COP26. Several projects were planned as a follow-up to the event, some of which would hopefully be featured at the 2022 Forum of Mayors.

19. The representative of Switzerland had no objections to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval and appreciated the outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting.

20. The representative of Albania appreciated the work of the Committee on promoting sustainable urban development, including in the post-COVID-19 context. Housing was a top priority for the Albanian government and Albanian authorities were therefore actively engaged and had also participated at the 1<sup>st</sup> Forum of Mayors. The Geneva Declaration adopted at that event was a milestone document for enhancing the resilience of cities. He said that the “#Housing2030 publication offered effective tools to policy makers in addressing climate change, and the social and economic aspects of the post-pandemic recovery. He had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval.

21. The representative of Belarus appreciated the assistance provided to Belarus in the context of the Smart Sustainable Cities Profile of Grodno. He had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval.

22. The representative of Kazakhstan supported the work of the Committee and noted that Kazakhstan was a beneficiary of two projects: the Smart Sustainable Cities Profile of Nur-Sultan (the city was currently implementing all the recommendations) and the UN Development Account (UNDA) 12th tranche project “Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda”, of which Almaty was a beneficiary. Almaty would present the outcomes of this project at the 2022 Forum of Mayors.

23. The representative of Georgia recalled that Tbilisi was a beneficiary of the UNDA 12th tranche project “Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in the UNECE Region” and thanked UNECE for its support to Georgian authorities on topics such as innovative financing and the application of the Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities. She had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval.

24. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management for the comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the activities and achievements of the Committee and being kept aware of future directions of its work.

b) Decisions on matters relating to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management:

25. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the programme of work of the Housing and Land Management Component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2022, as contained in document ECE/HBP/2021/9.

Item 6 – Decisions on matters relating to the Committee on Environmental Policy:

26. The Chair noted that the report of the Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy would be presented at an upcoming EXCOM meeting but requested EXCOM to consider the decisions tabled for approval in ECE/EX/2021/L.18 and ECE/EX/2021/L.19 in order to ensure business continuity.

27. The representative of the European Union and its member States had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval, but requested that in the future, such decisions be presented together with the report from the Committee Chair, as was the case for other UNECE subsidiary bodies. She expressed her full support for the 9<sup>th</sup> Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.

28. The representative of the Russian Federation had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval. He supported the request of the representative of the European Union and its member States.

29. The representative of the United Kingdom had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval. She supported the request of the representative of the European Union and its member States.

30. The representative of Switzerland had no objection to the decisions tabled for EXCOM approval. Switzerland was a strong supporter of the Environment subprogramme, its alignment with the 2030 Agenda, and its efforts to improve environmental governance and performance in the region via Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other instruments.

31. The Secretary of the Commission appreciated the flexibility shown by EXCOM to permit business continuity under these exceptional circumstances, and said that the secretariat would make every effort to comply with the request of the representative of the European Union and its member States in the future.

32. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the extension of the mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, as contained in the annex to document ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2021/3, until 30 June 2023; and the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2022, as contained in document ECE/CEP/2021/5.

**INFORMAL SEGMENT**

Item 7 – Preparations for the seventieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe

33. On behalf of the EXCOM Bureau, the representative of Austria presented informal

document 2021/32 containing the proposed theme for the high-level segment of the 70th Commission session, namely “Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the UNECE region”. She noted that the Bureau had refined the document through exchanges with interested delegations and thanked member States for their flexibility and cooperation. The theme was relevant to the whole of the organization and built on the previous theme of circular economy.

34. The representative of the European Union and its member States found the proposal topical and close the UNECE’s unique expertise and thanked the Bureau, member States and the secretariat for their collaborative approach.

35. The representative of the Russian Federation likewise appreciated the constructive cooperation and had no objections to the proposal.

36. The representative of the United States congratulated the Bureau on the proposal and looked forward to international action to be undertaken in line with the proposed theme over the next two years.

37. The Chair concluded that EXCOM adopts the decision on the cross-cutting theme for the high-level segment of the 70th session of UNECE as contained in informal document 2021/32.

#### Item 8 - Preparations for the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, 2022

38. The representative of the European Union its member States were ready to adopt the provisional agenda of the 2022 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD), and looked forward to the event.

39. The representative of the Republic of Moldova said her country was fully committed to the 2030 Agenda and had presented its first Voluntary National Review last year. The RFSD was an excellent platform to identify regional trends and exchange best practices and solutions for the SDGs. The Republic of Moldova was considering chairing the 2022 RFSD. A confirmation to that end would be made communicated following final consultations with the capital.

40. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the provisional agenda for the 2022 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, as contained in informal document 2021/33.

#### Item 9 – Proposed programme budget of the Economic Commission for Europe for 2023.

41. The Executive Secretary Executive Secretary presented the proposed UNECE programme budget for 2022 to EXCOM for comments, noting that the format, structure and the content followed the annual format introduced in 2020, with enrichments reflecting General Assembly resolutions 74/251 and 75/243. The document also reflected recommendations under the sequential review procedure of the programmes of work of UNECE subprogrammes, as agreed by EXCOM on 5 March 2021. She recalled that deliberations on it would take place at the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the 5th Committee of the General Assembly.

42. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated the swift adoption and implementation of new processes that allowed member States to make

recommendations and comments this year on the Programme of Work of the individual subsidiary bodies for 2023. Ensuring coherence and promoting synergies between the activities of the different subprogrammes were crucial to be effective and efficient in the organization's contribution to the SDGs. Coherence could be further improved, e.g. in the field of environment and transport, across the two trade-related bodies or across innovation, competitiveness and PPPs. She invited the secretariat to address this issue in the future, including in the implementation of the 2022 and 2023 work plans. She inquired how the results of the evaluation on UNECE's engagement with the private sector had been taken into account. She also noted said that listed outcomes in the budget should be measurable, meaningful and relevant for the objectives of the organization as well as the 2030 Agenda. Some of the listed examples appeared to lack ambition, possibly because their measurements on an annual basis provided little informational value. For example, Result 1 of the Environment Subprogramme listed as an objective to gather data from 116 countries in 2023 whereas the current number was 115, due to a three-year cycle that did not allow much ambition. Result 3 of the Transport subprogramme listed the number of contracting parties to the UN legal instruments on transport administered by the UNECE as 1807, with an objective for 2023 as 1813.

43. The representative of the Russian Federation welcomed the transparency ensured by the new practice. He noted that comments his delegation had made regarding the goal of the Sustainable Energy subprogramme had not been reflected, and asked the secretariat to use wording agreed upon in the strategic review of the subprogramme.

44. In response to the representative of the European Union and its member States, the Executive Secretary explained that the evaluation of UNECE engagement with the private sector and the 2023 Proposed programme plan had been finalised at the same time. Therefore, the findings of the evaluation were not directly reflected in the Proposed programme plan beyond proposed paragraph 20.19. However, the Management response to the evaluation would be tabled at the January 2022 meeting of EXCOM. UNECE was accepting the main recommendation arising from the evaluation, namely the preparation of a Partnership strategy which would clarify the benefits of engaging with the private sector at the subprogramme level and provide a roadmap for engagement, determining the type of partnerships and their roles in advancing UNECE's mandate. On the topic of the targets that seemed unambitious, she noted that the proposed programme plan for 2023 was prepared following guidance provided by the Secretary-General, reflecting General Assembly resolutions 74/251 and 75/243. In particular, these guidelines require to ensure that performance measures included in the programme plan are strategic, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. In addition, the respective performance targets should be presented on an annual basis to facilitate a better understanding and assessment of progress made. The performance targets selected by the secretariat for 2023 reflected its best estimates, based on careful assessment of external factors as well as the resources expected to be available for implementation. With regard to the concrete examples mentioned under subprogrammes 1 and 2, even though the increases in the performance targets for 2023 may seem marginal, each additional Member State reporting on indicator 6.5.2 for transboundary water cooperation or becoming a contracting party to the UN legal instruments on transport represented a significant achievement to which UNECE directly contributes through its work. In cases where these Member States were from outside the ECE region, this attested to the relevance of both the UNECE legal instruments and extensive capacity development and other support provided at the national level. The Executive Secretary also recalled that the actual figures for 2021 and the planned figures for 2023 for all subprogrammes represented the secretariat's assessment as of mid-November 2021. These would be updated in January 2022 prior to the submission of the draft to the Headquarters, to reflect the final performance for 2021 and the latest estimates for 2023.

45. The Executive Secretary promised to look into the language issue raised by the

representative of the Russian Federation.

46. The Chair concluded that EXCOM takes note of the proposed programme budget for 2023. EXCOM encourages delegations to liaise with their counterparts in New York in order to ensure that their views are well represented at the budget discussions at UN headquarters.

#### Item 10 - Evaluation Policy of the Economic Commission for Europe

47. The Executive Secretary presented the UNECE Evaluation Policy for approval, explaining that it had been updated from its 2014 version to comply with the August 2021 administrative instruction from UN Headquarters, on “Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat”. The Policy was based on the Norms and Standards for Evaluation from the UN Evaluation Group and built on guidance from the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

48. The representative of the European Union and its member States said that evaluations were crucial for results-based management and contributed to effective and efficient use of resources. She inquired how the outcomes of specific evaluations were implemented throughout the entire organization. She believed that UNECE should focus on its unique expertise and its concrete added value vis-à-vis the work of other international organizations in order to ensure efficient use of resources. This included the need to cooperate, where possible, with relevant other organizations. She wondered whether this was addressed in internal evaluations. She also noted that in 2022, ECOSOC would review its work and those of its subsidiary bodies to improve alignment with the 2030 Agenda. She wondered whether this evaluation was taken into account in the new evaluation policy as well as the respective evaluation work plans.

49. The representative of the Russian Federation proposed that, for clarity, the current practice of dedicating 2 per cent of the value of extrabudgetary projects exceeding USD 250,000 to financing internal assessments be explicitly reflected in part 7 "Resources for the UNECE internal evaluation" of the Policy.

50. The acting chief of the UNECE Programme Management & Support Services Division said that the secretariat would address the request from the representative of the Russian Federation. On the incorporation of evaluation results into ongoing work, he explained that UNECE carried out an annual lessons learned exercise with all project managers having conducted evaluations, leading to list of best practices that was translated into the annual report on evaluations presented every year to EXCOM. Furthermore, this report contained an annex with the implementation status of all recommendations from evaluations.

51. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the UNECE Evaluation Policy as contained in informal document 2021/35 and amended in the room, and requested the secretariat to issue a revised version of the document.

#### Item 11 - 2023 Evaluation Work Plan

52. The Executive Secretary presented the Evaluation Workplan for 2023 for approval. If approved, evaluation activities would be reflected in paragraphs 20.18 to 20.20 of the Proposed programme budget for 2023.

53. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the UNECE Evaluation Workplan for 2023

as contained in informal document 2021/36.

Item 12 - Briefing by the Executive Secretary: Important new developments and key upcoming events.

54. Regarding cooperation with other organizations, the Executive Secretary informed EXCOM of a Memorandum of Understanding under preparation with the Development Solutions Institute from Armenia, related to the establishment of a Geneva UN Charter Centre of Excellence in Yerevan. The Centre would support cooperation on housing, smart sustainable cities and urban development with CIS countries. The Development Solutions Institute was a non-profit foundation that worked closely with the government's Urban Development Committee.

55. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following recent events:

- 18-22 October, Geneva: Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs.
- 1-12 November, Glasgow: COP 26
- 3-5 November, Geneva: 27th session of the Committee on Environmental Policy
- 17-19 November, Tashkent: SPECA Economic Forum and Governing Council.
- 22-25 November, Rome: Foresta2021 - the Joint Session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission.
- 29 November – 1 December, Budapest: Planet Budapest Forum.
- 3 December, New York: Supporting event as part of the preparatory process for the GA High-level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety planned for July 2022.
- 15-17 June 2022, Rome: 5th UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing

56. The Executive Secretary also informed EXCOM that the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNECE would be commemorated in the spring of 2022 and encouraged delegations to submit proposals for the programme of this commemoration.

57. The representative of Uzbekistan highlighted the substantive content of the SPECA Economic Forum and Governing Council that had taken place in Tashkent and thanked the secretariat for its support in the organization of these events.

Item 13 – Extrabudgetary projects (for approval).

58. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the extrabudgetary projects contained in informal documents 2021/37, 2021/38, 2021/39, 2021/40, 2021/41, 2021/42, 2021/43, 2021/44 and 2021/45.

Item 14 - Meeting servicing arrangements.

59. The Executive Secretary recalled that in 2021, UNECE had been able to continue operations with the support of colleagues from the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG) and its conference servicing team, thanks to exceptional financial support by the Controller, covering additional costs arising from remote simultaneous interpretation. This arrangement was not foreseen to be extended in 2022, leaving no resources for hybrid meetings. Any proposed solution involving the regular budget would need to go through ECOSOC before being presented to the Fifth Committee, and therefore would not be applicable before 1 January

2023. Therefore, the regular budget of UNECE for 2022 would not have any resources that could be repurposed for hybrid meetings, essential during the pandemic. She had reached out to UN Headquarters to seek an extension of the 2021 measures to ensure the business continuity of UNECE's official calendar of meetings. The matter was pending. She would welcome the opportunity to present EXCOM with an options paper. As this would likely include an extrabudgetary proposal, she called on all delegations to consider how they could support this urgent need with some resources already in the coming weeks. She also encouraged political engagement by delegations at UN Headquarters, especially in the ongoing discussions of the Fifth Committee, where the business continuity matter was also addressed and options for exceptional regular budget funding for 2022 could also be considered. She highlighted the urgency of the matter and the impending suspension of all hybrid meetings unless a solution could be found.

60. The representative of the European Union and its member States thanked the secretariat for the updates and requested a more detailed assessment of the situation, including how many meetings can be serviced with the currently planned budget and identifying the exact gaps. She would subsequently welcome a discussion among member States based on different options.

61. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks UNOG and the UNECE secretariat for the information provided on meeting servicing arrangements related to the official calendar of UNECE meetings. In light of the ongoing pandemic and the reduced availability of conference facilities during the renovation of the Palais des Nations, it notes with concern that there are currently no provisions to cover the additional costs related to hybrid meetings in 2022, including for the technical moderation, that may be required to ensure business continuity. EXCOM requests the secretariat to elaborate options to address the situation for consideration at its next meeting.

#### Item 15 - Preparations for the 75th anniversary of the Inland Transport Committee

62. The Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the latest status of preparations for the 2022 session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and encouraged delegations to advocate for high-level participation and support to the Ministerial Declaration from their capitals. Moving on to the matter of the revised Terms of Reference of the ITC, she informed EXCOM that discussions were ongoing in New York at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). After the extensive consultations by the UNECE Chair during her headquarters visit in October, many bilateral discussions had taken place. Alternative language proposals were being considered to bridge some differences, while preserving the intent of the revisions. She hoped that member States would come to an agreement on this matter in ECOSOC before the end of the year.

63. The representative of the European Union and its member States reiterated commitment to the preparatory process and to a meaningful positive outcome of this special ITC session.

64. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on the preparations for the 75th anniversary session of the ITC. EXCOM encourages member States to confirm high-level participation as soon as possible and to consider the possibility of being added to the list of countries endorsing the Ministerial Resolution expected to be adopted at the event.

#### Item 11 – Any other business

65. The Chair informed EXCOM that its next meeting would take place on 26 January 2022

and wished delegations happy holidays, thanking them for the good collaboration throughout the year.

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