

25 January 2022

English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

Bureau

Forty-eighth meeting

Geneva (online), 14-15 October 2021

Minutes of the meeting

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the Bureau members. The following Bureau members attended: Torill Tandberg (Norway), Chair; Michael Struckl (Austria), Vice-Chair; Martin Merkofer (Switzerland), Vice-Chair; Evgeny Baranovsky (Belarus); Camille Siefriid (European Union); Wivi-Ann Wagello-Sjölund (Finland); Marie-Claire Lhenry (France); Margarita Redina (Russian Federation); Suzana Milutinovic (Serbia); and Jasmina Karba (Slovenia). Helena Fridh (Sweden), Chair of the Working Group on Implementation (WGI), also attended the meeting. Bojan Srdic (Serbia), Co-Chair for the Convention of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG), attended the meeting for the JEG-related item. The meeting was serviced by the ECE secretariat.

2. The Chair of the Bureau as well as the Chief of the Transboundary Cooperation Section and the secretary welcomed the members of the Bureau, highlighting the strategic importance of this meeting for the implementation of the current programme of work and the preparations of the Conference of the Parties in 2022.

3. The Bureau adopted the agenda without changes.

2. Implementation of 2021-2022 workplan

(a) Resource availability and financing

4. The secretariat presented an update on the financial contributions provided and confirmed for 2021 and 2022, totalling approx. USD 1,543,000, highlighting that the only significant additional financial contribution was for a new Project to strengthen tailings safety in Uzbekistan, from Switzerland (CHF 100,000). Furthermore, the secretariat explained that from the additional approx. USD 410,000 available from the previous biennium¹, the majority would be spent by end-2021, with merely about USD 90,000 remaining for spending in 2022, to continue the implementation of the project on strengthening tailings safety in Central Asia, funded by Switzerland. In this regard, the secretariat expressed concern with the decrease in

¹ Funding which had not been spent during the last biennium due to an extension of the period for the implementation of respective activities including capacity development in Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and work on risk assessment.

financial contributions available for this biennium, compared to the last biennium, which would be felt in particular in 2022 and beyond, should no additional larger contributions be made available, similar in scale to those previously provided by France, Norway, the Russian Federation and Switzerland. Moreover, the secretariat provided an overview of the in-kind contributions provided to date in 2021, at an approximate value of USD 280,000,² its major part arising from an in-kind project contribution from Germany to support tailings safety in Kyrgyzstan (approx. USD 175,000). These contributions, taken together, brought the financing of the 2021-2022 workplan budget to 75%, with missing funds for full implementation totalling around 650,000 USD.

5. Due to the missing funds, the secretariat informed the Bureau of not being in a position to engage in the following dedicated workplan activities – unless additional financing becomes available:

- Sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for Central Asia
- Country missions to support implementation of the Strategic Approach, in response to beneficiary countries’ needs and requests, notably to Azerbaijan, Ukraine, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

6. Furthermore, in the present situation, the secretariat did not have the capacity to fully engage in all kinds of strategic partnerships and was not in a position to participate in all meetings of strategic partners, including the meetings it had been specifically invited to attend. In addition, new strategic partnerships could not be explored; the secretariat already had to refuse requests, including from the Sustainable Kazakh Research Institute. When it came to organizing disaster risk reduction (DRR)-related events or the Natech seminar at CoP-12, the secretariat would have to rely heavily on strategic partnerships, with only a 50% consultancy available as of October 2021 (compared to 100% previously) to support this work. At this stage in time, no financing was available to enable the participation of representatives from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe in CoP-12 (29 November–1 December 2022); such financing was also not available for the WGI Special Session/Seminar on Good Practices and Lessons Learned in Implementing the Convention, to be held on 3-4 February 2021.

7. Moreover, the secretariat highlighted that it considered the biggest risk to the Convention sustaining its progress in the direction of the long-term strategy as being the provision of stable staffing, which was contingent on sustainable financing. Whereas the workplan foresaw 3.5 professional XB staff and 1 GS XB staff, the current financing only enabled the continued engagement of 2 XB staff and a new, temporary 0.5 GS staff. The previous P-1 staff at 50% who was supporting the capacity-development work was on sick leave and ensuing maternity leave from early September 2021 onwards. Given the lack of sufficient financing for this workplan period, the secretariat thus mainly relied on consultancies (either with the UNECE secretariat directly or with EIB, in line with related pledges by the EU/EIB at the CoPs to support activities under the Convention’s workplan). This was an unsustainable arrangement in the medium to longer term, as there were gaps between the different contracts, the UN consultancies were time-limited, and qualified candidates were looking for more stable working conditions elsewhere.

8. The secretariat further reported on its actions to implement the Sustainable Financial Mechanism, notably through the sending of official letters to Heads of the Competent Authorities of the Parties, which was a major undertaking every year. The Chair highlighted her follow-up email to all focal points, sent on behalf of the small group on financing. She also reported on the small group’s meeting held and its agreement to directly reach-out to representatives from Austria, the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden and the United

² The value of in-kind contribution was calculated in accordance with the Sustainable Financial Mechanism (ECE/CP.TEIA/24, annex I, appendix).

Kingdom. **The Bureau welcomed the respective actions taken and envisaged by the Chair and the other members of the small group on financing.**

9. The Chair and the secretariat reiterated the importance of stable financing for the Convention's future. Bureau members engaged in a tour-de-table discussion, reflecting on possibilities and options. In this regard, the representative of the European Union specifically mentioned having initiated a process of considering an additional contribution to the Convention's work for the biennium, and mentioned that he was discussing this with the financial unit of the Directorate-General for the Environment. Furthermore, the Chair recalled the special responsibility of the Bureau to facilitate the financing necessary of the implementation of the workplan, while every Party bore a responsibility. She highlighted successful approaches of the past, where the Polish Bureau member reached out to the French Director-General, this leading to additional extraordinary contributions, as well as the roundtable on financing, organized at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which led to the re-engagement of Italy. The Bureau suggested that such a roundtable could again be considered for the upcoming twelfth or any other future meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Chair further expressed her hope for additional contributions, including from the European Union, France, Norway, and Switzerland. **Bureau members highlighted the importance of stable and predictable financing of the Convention and agreed to engage in efforts within their capacity to bring about the financing required for the implementation of this workplan and the Convention's future progress in the direction of the long-term strategy. The Bureau also stressed that it was important to highlight the Convention's achievements in any contacts with Parties and prospective donor countries.**

(b) **Outreach, communication, awareness-raising and strategic partnerships**

(i) **Cooperation with the European Union**

10. The secretary shared information about a presentation which she gave to the European Union (EU) Working Party on Civil Protection (Prociv) on 14 September 2021, in response to an invitation by the Slovenian presidency of the Council of the EU. In the presentation, she highlighted the Convention's linkages with EU legislation, notably with the Seveso-III Directive and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), the latter becoming increasingly close after the 2019 and 2021 amendments, which have strengthened the transboundary provisions of the UCPM. She informed the Bureau of interest expressed from the side of some EU Member States as well as the European Commission, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) in the Convention's work.

11. **The Bureau welcomed this presentation and discussed the importance to continue to engage in awareness-raising of the Convention's work and achievements. To that effect, it suggested to organize a meeting of the Chair and the EU members of the Bureau with the European Commission in Brussels, involving representatives of different Directorate-Generals.** The Bureau member from the EU welcomed this proposal, and agreed to further discuss it internally and come back with a proposed time for such a meeting preferably in the first quarter of 2022. In this respect, the secretariat explained that a similar meeting several years back by the Bureau of the Water Convention with representatives of the European Commission had proven extremely beneficial, leading to a better understanding of mutual linkages and enhanced EU support for the Convention's implementation.

(ii) Inter-agency coordination

12. The secretariat presented an overview of its work on inter-agency coordination. It reported on plans to support the preparations of and participate in the seventh meeting of the Inter-agency Coordination Group on Chemical and Industrial Accidents (IACG), which will be hosted by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on 17 November 2021. The secretariat also presented its updated inter-agency coordination webpage.³ As requested by the IACG at its last, sixth meeting, the webpage now included an overview of the IACG members, including their bodies/organs/processes and links to key instruments/guidance/resources, to which focal points of the partner organizations were consulted on. Furthermore, it now included the terms of reference of the IACG and more information on IACG events. **The Bureau welcomed this work and the compilation of resources from different organizations on the Convention's webpage.**

(iii) Tailings safety, and preparation of an orientation paper for CoP-12

13. The secretariat provided an update on strategic partnerships in the area of tailings safety, the prevention of accidental water pollution and mineral resource governance, established or enhanced as a result of the Swiss-funded projects on strengthening tailings safety under the Convention's Assistance and Cooperation Programme in recent years. It reported on its participation in numerous partner events, including related achievements, and suggested elements for inclusion into the orientation paper, which, in line with CoP-11 decision 2020/1 on strengthening mine tailings safety, was to be prepared by the Bureau – on the basis of the discussions held at the seminar on mine tailings safety – for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting, containing proposals for further actions under the Convention in the field of mine tailings safety and taking into account the activities of other international organizations (e.g. the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP).

14. **The Bureau took note of the information provided, stressing the importance of the tailings work under the Convention, and requested the secretariat to prepare a draft orientation paper for discussion at its next meeting, building on the elements outlined,** such as to: (a) Become a Centre of Excellence for guidance, good practices and lessons learned on tailings safety for all Parties; (b) Encourage countries to use the Strategic Approach (Self-assessments and Action Plans) to identify specific tailings (and Natech) needs and actions; (c) Strengthen transboundary cooperation on tailings safety at the river basin and subregional levels; and (d) Increase visibility of the need to strengthen tailings safety as part of Mineral Resource Governance and Sustainable Infrastructure, in cooperation with strategic partners. In this context, **the Bureau requested the secretariat to reach out to other international organizations, in particular UNEP and OECD, to gather relevant information and discuss possibilities for joint or coordinated activities in the field of mine tailings safety. To facilitate the preparation of the draft paper, the Bureau agreed to reactivate the former small steering group on tailings safety, associating also the recently elected Serbian JEG Co-Chair for the Industrial Accidents Convention.** The Chair and the Austrian Vice-Chair agreed to re-reengage as members. The Swiss Vice-Chair offered to confirm the availability of the Deputy Head of the International Affairs Division at the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment to again represent Switzerland in the small steering group. He highlighted the importance of involving also the former German JEG co-Chair in the work of the group.

³ The updated webpage is available at <https://unece.org/inter-agency-coordination>.

(iv) Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

15. Following an introduction by the secretariat of the upcoming Eighth Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference (Cyprus, 5-7 October 2022), the Bureau reflected on the linkages between the work under the Industrial Accidents Convention and the EfE Ministerial Conference, noting that these were strong in relation to the theme «Sustainable Infrastructure». In this regard, it stressed the importance of highlighting respective linkages and encouraging commitments from the Ministers/high-level representatives, in order to recognize the importance of industrial safety for infrastructure throughout its life cycle, the need to manage related disaster risk and to enhance efforts to address Natech risks, such as mine tailings failures, which could cause wide-reaching transboundary water pollution and are on the rise in the wake of climate change. The Bureau further highlighted the importance of recognizing the role of the Industrial Accidents Convention in this respect, which at its last, eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 2020/1 on strengthening the safety of mine tailings in the ECE region and beyond. **Bureau members agreed to foster and highlight the linkages between the Convention’s work and sustainable infrastructure through their national counterparts preparing the inputs for the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference and participating in the preparatory meetings of the Committee on Environmental Policy.**⁴

(c) Facilitation of implementation**(i) Risk assessment**

16. The Swiss Vice-Chair of the Bureau provided an update on the work on risk assessment, notably the development of a draft report on *Risk Assessment for Industrial Accident Prevention: An Introduction to Methodologies and Available Software Tools* and the responses received to a call for the submission of case studies on risk assessment methodologies. He stressed that, despite the encouragement of the members of the small group, it seemed unlikely that case studies from countries with economies in transition or Russian-speaking countries would be submitted for inclusion into the second part of the report - which would become available as a draft for the Bureau’s review in April 2022 -, mainly due to concerns in relation to making this information available by the countries. He reported that the final reports on risk assessment would be available at the Bureau’s next meeting for submission as official documents to CoP-12.

17. The Bureau took note of the information provided, welcomed the progress made, including on the submission of case studies, and provided initial feedback on the draft report. **Bureau members agreed to send written comments on the draft report (part 1) by 29 October 2021 to the Swiss Vice-Chair, copying the secretariat.**

(ii) Agenda 2030 and Sendai Framework: Industrial/chemical accident risk at European Forum on DRR and Global Platform

18. The Chair of Bureau, as Chair of the small group on DRR and Natech, gave an update on the meetings of the Group, and its preparations of the focused thematic discussion on chemical/industrial accident risk on 24 November 2021, organized in the framework of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR), entitled *Preventing another Sandoz, Baia Mare or Beirut accident: Perspectives in risk management in the context of the Sendai Framework*. The secretariat gave a further update on the conduct of the thematic session.

4

The Committee on Environmental Policy held its regular, twenty-seventh session 3-5 November 2021 and will hold a special session from 9-12 May 2022.

Furthermore, it shared information on its contributions to the working session on DRR and climate change adaptation and the plenary session “Roadmap 2030: Accelerating implementation of the Sendai Framework.”

19. The secretariat provided additional background on the preparation of a dedicated chapter on technological risk management for the UNDRR Regional Assessment Report for Europe and Central Asia (to be issued in 2022), in cooperation with the EU Joint Research Centre, and in consultation with the small group, some of whose members had commented on a draft.

20. In addition, the secretariat provided information on the seventh session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Bali, Indonesia and online, 23–28 May 2022) and the secretariat’s contribution to one of its Thematic Sessions through its participation in the respective Session Organizing Team, namely “Thematic Session 3: Breaking the Silos – Towards multi-hazard, multi-sectoral approaches to managing risks.” The Chair highlighted the relevance of this work in light of the Convention’s long-term strategy, notably its vision for the Convention to be widely recognized as an instrument for technological DRR.

21. **The Bureau took note of the information provided and welcomed the engagement and guidance by the small group and the secretariat as well as the consultant working under the joint EIB/UNECE project to prepare this event. It agreed to further promote attendance of the respective events at the European Forum on DRR and foster the consideration of industrial accident risk at the European Forum as well as the Global Platform on DRR, e.g., when preparing Ministerial or other high-level statements.**

(iii) Natech risk management

22. The Chair of the Bureau, as Chair of the small group on DRR and Natech, gave an update on the considerations by the Group in relation to the organization of a UN/OECD seminar on Natech risk management in the margins of CoP-12, to be prepared in cooperation with members of the Natech Steering Group, notably the UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit and the EU Joint Research Centre. Furthermore, the secretariat presented the seminar outline - which would also be presented at the 31st meeting of the OECD Working Party on Chemical Accidents, 19-21 October 2021 -, including information on session contents, target audience and preparatory activities, which the Bureau took note of. The Bureau agreed with the preparation of a draft decision on Natech risk management in the UNECE region (and beyond) for adoption at CoP-12, in addition to short seminar conclusions, which would be annexed to the meeting report. It further agreed that a stand-alone report on the seminar would be prepared only if related funding was provided.

23. Moreover, the Chair asked the Bureau to consider the option of organizing a high-level segment on DRR and Natech, in addition to the seminar. The members of the Bureau expressed their views on benefits and drawbacks of organizing such a high-level segment, concluding that such an event could add value for specific technical messages to meet political attention and gather high-level support, in addition to providing a good opportunity for high-level politicians and policymakers meeting and discussing DRR and Natech issues. They recognized that a high-level segment would bring more political attention to the Convention’s work and respective linkages with DRR and climate change – while stating that it was important to keep the Convention’s more technical activities in mind. In this regard, the secretariat remarked that its experience of high-level segments at the Meetings of the Parties of the other MEAs, in particular the Water, Aarhus and Espoo Conventions, revealed that political attention benefitted progress of the technical matters. **The Bureau agreed that the possibility of organizing a high-level segment at CoP-12 be further considered by the Chair, Vice-Chairs and secretariat, who will make a proposal on how to proceed for the Bureau’s consideration at its next meeting.**

(iv) **Update from the Working Group on Implementation; Seminar on good practices and lessons learned on the implementation of the Convention**

24. The Chair of the Working Group on Implementation updated the Bureau on progress made within the Group. She provided information from the Group's last meeting (Geneva and online, 12-13 October 2021), including on the receipt and reviews of additional national implementation reports and the discussion on updating the template for the next reporting round. In addition, the secretariat updated the Bureau on the Group's Special Session featuring a Seminar on good practices and lessons learned on the implementation of the Convention (Geneva and online, 3-4 February 2022), including by presenting the draft concept note and draft agenda for the seminar. The secretariat mentioned that the Seminar would fulfil part of the group's mandate to facilitate an exchange of information between countries and that it could be of interest to all countries and their various competent authorities – not only Parties to the Convention, but also beneficiary countries to the Assistance and Cooperation Programme. Moreover, the secretariat stated that the conclusions of the seminar would be attached to the Group's report and submitted to the Conference of the Parties as official documentation at its twelfth meeting.

25. The Bureau welcomed the Group's work and analysis of the national implementation reports, including the submission of Bosnia and Herzegovina's report being the first one submitted since the country's accession to the Convention in 2013. Moreover, the Bureau welcomed the Group's work, in cooperation with the secretariat, on developing the seminar and its envisaged hybrid format. The Chair stated that the seminar would provide a means to learn about the Convention, suggesting that follow-up work could help sustain the use and application of good practices, such as through the development of a related guide. **The Bureau agreed to promote the seminar and encourage participation from different authorities.**

(v) **Seminar in follow-up to the 2020 Beirut port explosion**

26. The Austrian Vice-Chair of the Bureau updated the Bureau on the preparations for the UN/OECD seminar in follow-up to the 2020 Beirut port explosion (online, 14 December 2021), including the past meeting of the Advisory Group, with members from 11 countries and 4 industry associations, which he was chairing. He stressed the importance of reviewing existing regulations and good practices on the safe management of ammonium nitrate and ammonium nitrate-based fertilizers, since unfortunately accidents involving ammonium nitrate were not new and continued to happen. He also reported that the Advisory Group discussed the scope of the seminar in depth and agreed to address – due to the limited time and resources – ammonium nitrate as a case study, focusing on port areas, whereas many of the regulations, lessons learned and good practices were relevant for hazardous substances more generally. In addition, the secretariat updated the Bureau on the meeting of the seminar's Organizing Committee and the progress made in preparing the seminar. It presented a synthesis of results from the advance survey conducted by the partner organizations (UNECE, ILO, IMO, UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit, UNDRR Regional Office for Arab States and OECD), under UNECE's lead, which resulted in 101 responses from 43 countries and all regions of the United Nations. The secretariat also informed the Bureau that the Advisory Group and Organizing Committee were planning to meet again in early November.

27. The Bureau welcomed the progress made in preparing the seminar and the preliminary results of the survey analysis. It welcomed UNECE's engagement and leadership of both the seminar's preparations, in partnership with many other international organizations and in consultation with the Advisory Group, and the survey results, recognizing the large amount of work conducted and the excellent analysis. The Chair recalled the importance of this work in view of the initial and ongoing consequences of the Beirut port explosion. Based on her encouragement, **Bureau members agreed to promote the seminar widely. The Bureau further recommended that the secretariat organize a meeting of the Organizing**

Committee following the seminar, in order to discuss follow-up activities by the different international organizations, including possible joint or coordinated activities. It also agreed that the Chair, together with the Vice-Chairs and the secretariat, further consider the strategic implications and follow-up to the Beirut seminar under the Industrial Accidents Convention, and report back to the Bureau at its next meeting.

(vi) Prevention of accidental water pollution

28. The Co-Chair from Serbia of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG) gave an update on the JEG activities in the biennium 2021–2022, highlighting tailings management, contingency planning at the river basin level and Natech risk management as important topics. He presented the planning for upcoming meetings of the JEG (an online call preceding a full meeting of the newly reconstituted JEG in the spring of 2022), and further elaborated the activities to implement the items related to the JEG in the workplan as adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting. In addition, the Co-Chair included in his report an overview of the nominations for JEG members received to date, including nominations from countries from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, and (new) Parties to the Water Convention. The call for nominations would close on 31 October 2021. **The Bureau took note of and agreed with the envisaged conduct of JEG activities during the biennium 2021–2022.**

(d) Assistance and Cooperation Programme and other assistance activities

29. The secretariat provided an update on the implementation and planning of activities under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme. It also shared information received from the German focal point about the carrying out of other assistance activities under the Convention's workplan, notably the implementation of a project on the safety of tailings management facilities (TMF) in Kyrgyzstan, under the oversight of the German Environment Agency. Furthermore, in response to a question raised by the Chair, the secretariat explained that the Online Toolkit and Training for Strengthening Mine Tailings Safety proved to be useful for the member States, entailing a rich source of knowledge, comprising information on past accidents, a 3-step training explaining the Safety Guidelines and Checklist methodology, and links with further resources.

30. In addition, the secretariat noted that the implemented and planned activities under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme allowed to move forward with the implementation of the Convention's long-term strategy. In this regard, the on-going process of launching the National Policy Dialogues for Industrial Safety in Serbia and Central Asia allowed to create sustainable coordination processes, initiated with the support of UNECE and eventually to be sustained by the countries themselves. This process was thus a natural evolution of the activities under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme launched back in 2004, following the development of the Strategic Approach with its self-assessments and action-plans, and the conduct of in-country missions.

31. **The Bureau took note of the assistance activities implemented and endorsed the conduct of activities for the remainder of the biennium, as envisaged by the secretariat. It welcomed the development of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme in line with the long-term strategy, while recognizing that further financing was required to sustain this progress. Following an invitation by the Chair, the Bureau agreed to support attracting financing for the assistance activities included in the workplan.**

(e) **Twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties**

32. The secretariat informed the Bureau that it had reserved a room in the Palais des Nations from 29 November – 1 December 2022 for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP-12). This would allow for the possibility of a hybrid meeting to be hosted in Geneva, allowing for both physical and online presence, as was the case for CoP-11, should no host country be available.

3. Draft workplan 2023-2024

(a) **Draft Priorities, workplan and resources for 2023-2024**

33. The secretariat reported to the Bureau on its update of the format of the workplan and, in this context, its preparation of an early first draft workplan for 2023-2024. In this regard, it recalled the European Union's request at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva and online, 7-9 December 2020): namely for the secretariat to develop a proposal for a revised format for the workplan that increasingly distinguishes core and non-core activities and allows each activity to be matched with an expected deliverable and key objective/s of the long-term strategy (ECE/CP.TEIA/42, para. 30). Accordingly, the secretariat prepared a draft workplan for 2023-2024, corresponding to such a format, in cooperation with the Bureau's small group on financing.

34. The Bureau welcomed the work of the secretariat in preparing a first draft of a comprehensive workplan well in advance of CoP-12. It agreed that the draft document had a clear and logical structure and provided valuable information, including expected deliverables, expected accomplishments and specific long-term strategy objectives per activity. Furthermore, Bureau members discussed the length of the document and concluded that a balance should be maintained between simplicity and details when it will be further updated, and that repetition should be avoided. Moreover, the Bureau requested the secretariat to make some formatting changes by adding the table header to each page. **The Bureau further agreed to provide written comments to the secretariat on the draft by the end of February 2022. On the basis of the discussion and taking into account any eventual additional comments, the Bureau also requested the secretariat to prepare an updated draft for its review at its next meeting.**

35. Furthermore, the secretariat presented a background note on the previous considerations by the Bureau and the decisions by the subsequent meetings of the Conferences of the Parties, by adopting the respective workplans, on distinguishing core and non-core activities. The secretariat recalled that core and non-core activities did not imply any differentiation between important and less-important activities, nor did it correspond to regular budget and extrabudgetary resources. As opposed to other MEAs hosted by other UN entities, such as UNEP, for UNECE's MEAs there were no mandatory contributions and there was no core budget to ensure the funding of related core activities. The contributions to the Convention's trust fund have historically shown that some core activities received earmarked funding, whereas other core activities received non-earmarked funding. Several core and non-core activities were not sufficient funded, or not funded at all. Some Parties provided unearmarked funds, while others provided earmarked contributions for specific projects, both for core (e.g. for the work on risk assessment) and for non-core activities (e.g. for activities and projects under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme). In this regard, the majority of the larger multi-annual, earmarked project funding has been provided for assistance activities; this has been essential in more recent years, to enable the Convention's growth in the direction of the long-term strategy. Moreover, in referencing the approaches adopted under other UNECE Conventions, the secretariat suggested that pragmatism should drive the discussion and that, while unearmarked contributions were preferable in general, project-

related earmarked multi-year contributions were important to enhance the resource-base and facilitate implementation of the respective treaties and capacity-development, in particular in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

36. In addition, Bureau members discussed the option of removing the distinction between core and non-core activities all together in the workplan and to simply list the workplan activities agreed by the Bureau and subsequently, the Conference of the Parties. In this respect, the secretariat recalled that the activities included in the workplan, with the respective funding, were activities which the Parties attached priority to. The introduction of table 3 in the workplans, listing activities which were not funded at the time of the respective Conference of the Parties, had been a means of indicating activities of lesser priority to Parties at the time of the meetings of the Conferences of the Parties when the workplans were adopted.

37. Several Bureau members expressed support for removing the existing distinction between core and non-core activities, since it did not lead to any change or more stability in the financing of core activities over the past bienniums and as it appeared to be leading to some confusion, adding another layer of complexity (in addition to regular budget and extrabudgetary, earmarked and non-earmarked contributions), seemingly applying a concept of other MEAs outside of UNECE (with mandatory contributions or a core budget) to the UNECE Convention. Other Bureau members suggested keeping the core and non-core distinction as it has been introduced in the past. Bureau members further agreed that it was important to prioritize the activities included in the workplan. In this context, the secretariat recalled that the preparation of the workplan itself should be an exercise deciding on priorities, and that the early initiation of the discussion on the workplan this time was a chance for Parties to indicate early on which activities they would be interested in conducting under the Convention's auspices, with the respective financing. **The Chair invited to Bureau to reflect on this discussion and provide written comments on the possible removal of the core and non-core distinction within their feedback on the draft workplan by the end of February 2022.**

(b) Possible update of location criteria, in follow-up to Leverkusen accident

38. The secretariat informed the Bureau members of a proposal by Germany to consider updating or enhancing the location criterion for the air path to at least 50 km, in view of its recent accident in Leverkusen (27 July 2021) that carried sooty particles much further than 15 km. The secretariat also reminded the Bureau of a closely related request by the Conference of the Parties, arising from its tenth meeting (Geneva, 4-6 December 2018), to "task the Bureau, in cooperation with the Working Group on Implementation and the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, to review the Guidelines (taking into consideration effect and risk assessment methodologies) and to prepare a draft decision containing the proposed amendments to the Guidelines for consideration at a future meeting of the Conference of the Parties." (Decision 2018/1, last para.).

39. The Bureau discussed the proposal by Germany and the closely linked request by the Conference of the Parties, stressing that such decision would need to be well-prepared due its political nature, especially if an extension of the location criterion for the air path to 50 km or more would be considered. In this regard, the Chair of the small group on risk assessment considered that the issue could be further considered within the Group, in the context of and in follow-up to the preparation of the reports on risk assessment methodologies, for presentation at CoP-12. The Chair of the Working Group on Implementation highlighted that an update of the location criteria could have larger, political consequences. **The Bureau requested the small steering group on risk assessment to review this matter in more detail, based on the discussions at the present meeting, and to make a recommendation at the Bureau's next meeting for whether and, if so, how and when to address a possible update of the location criteria.**

4. **Implementation of the long-term strategy for the Convention until 2030: Considerations of gender, age and disability**

40. The secretariat presented a background note on moving towards more inclusive policy and governance of industrial accident prevention, preparedness and response, particularly with regards to gender, age and disability aspects. The note outlined the Convention's long-term strategy objective of applying article 9, regardless of age and gender (ECE/CP.TEIA/42, p. 11), and United Nations and UNECE mandates and strategies, including the UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the related UNECE action plan, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the United Nations Disability Strategy, and the UNECE Strategy on Mainstreaming Ageing. On this basis, the note brought awareness to aspects of gender, age and disability to the Bureau and provided discussion questions.

41. The Chair stated the importance of considering aspects of gender, age and disability under the Convention. She referred to certain scenarios where people in vulnerable situations should be considered within public information and participation, contingency planning and trainings for emergency responders. In addition, she mentioned that Norway developed a guideline for cooperation between municipal service providers on fire safety for vulnerable groups and for other at-risk groups (like the elderly and persons with disabilities). In this regard, the member of the Bureau from Serbia reported that some of these aspects were being discussed within the development of a national strategy for gender equality in Serbia, and suggested that related aspects could be taken up during National Policy Dialogues on Industrial Safety. Moreover, the Chair of the Working Group on Implementation informed the Bureau that the Group had decided to consider adding a question on inclusivity (gender, age, and disability) in the updated reporting template.

42. **Bureau members agreed that it was important to make Parties aware of the importance of inclusion in the implementation of the Convention and its provisions, and to promote, to the extent feasible, respective considerations within their authorities.** However, they considered that it was important to ensure that considerations of gender, age and disability would not become priority work under the Convention, which should continue to focus on technical aspects and supporting the implementation of the treaty. They also stressed that the secretariat should not duplicate work that has already been done on gender and inclusions at other levels within the United Nations or the respective governments, e.g. to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. **Bureau members agreed to report on their discussions to the Conference of the Parties at the twelfth meeting.**

5. **Other business**

43. No other business was discussed.

6. **Closure of the meeting**

44. The Chair closed the meeting on 15 October at 13:00.
