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## Economic Commission for Europe

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

#### Bureau

##### Fifty-second meeting

Geneva and online, 15 February 2023

### 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 the meeting: Torill Tandberg (Norway), Chair; Marie-Claire Lhenry (France), Vice-Chair; Martin Merkofer (Switzerland), Vice-Chair; Armine Hayrapetyan (Armenia); Michael Struckl (Austria); Camille Siefriidt (European Union); Wivi-Ann Wagello-Sjölund (Finland); Dragana Raonić Popović (Montenegro, online); and Suzana Milutinovic (Serbia). The Chair of the Working Group on Implementation, Helena Fridh (Sweden), attended the meeting. Ms. Smart (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) was not in a position to attend. The Chair welcomed the incumbents and new members (Ms. Hayrapetyan, Ms. Popović and Ms. Smart). The meeting was serviced by the ECE secretariat.

2. The Bureau adopted the agenda (CP.TEIA/2023/B.2/Agenda.Rev.1) without changes.

#### 2. Follow-up to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

##### (a) Representation

3. The secretariat presented the draft report of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) and its addendum, containing all decisions taken and the finalized workplan, which had been circulated to the Bureau members before the meeting. It informed the Bureau that all the decisions were taken by consensus, which had not been the case at recent meetings of governing bodies of other ECE multilateral environmental agreements. The Bureau members thanked the secretariat for preparing the report and addendum. It approved these drafts and requested the secretariat to proceed with their finalizing, incl. procedural review and editing.

4. The secretariat reported that 37 Parties to the Convention were present at the meeting and five were absent.<sup>1</sup> Four ECE member States that are not Parties and three member States from other United Nations regions also attended.<sup>2</sup> It recalled the process for Parties to submit credentials, including advance and original copies through their Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva. The advance submissions enabled the secretariat and the

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<sup>1</sup> The five Parties that were not present include: Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg, Monaco and Spain.

<sup>2</sup> Non-Party ECE member States that attended include: Georgia, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United States of America and Uzbekistan. Member States beyond the ECE region that attended include: Colombia, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Zambia.

Bureau to prepare for the meeting accordingly. The secretariat also recalled that originals of credentials were needed as per the rules of the United Nations. The secretariat reported that 34 Parties submitted advance copies of credentials and 34 submitted originals of credentials.<sup>3</sup> It reported that the 34 Parties present with originals of credentials enabled the Conference to take decisions, as per the Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (ECE/CP.TEIA/37). The secretariat also reported that the meeting had 223 participants, including online and in-person, making it the most attended meeting of the Conference in the Convention's history.

5. The Bureau welcomed the high representation at the meeting and noted the submission of credentials. The secretariat provided information that for future meetings of the Conference held in Geneva, the costs for enabling a hybrid meeting with remote simultaneous interpretation (RSI) needed to be covered by Parties in addition to the Convention's trust fund and that such costs would not be covered by UNOG from 2023 onwards.<sup>4</sup> The Bureau took note of this information and highlighted the benefits of meetings with remote connections and RSI, to enable also participants not able to travel, incl. from beyond the UNECE region, to take part and actively participate. It also requested the secretariat to enquire whether it would be possible to stream the meetings without interpretation, in case the additional costs for RSI would not be covered by Parties.

**(b) Evaluation of the meeting and lessons learned**

6. The secretariat presented a summary of the evaluation forms received for the twelfth meeting, including those received for the joint UNECE/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Seminar on effective management of technological risks of accidents triggered by natural hazards (Geneva and online, 29 November 2022), which is available online. It reported that the secretariat received positive feedback overall. Overall, the participants were highly satisfied or satisfied with the preparations, logistics, conduct and content of the twelfth meeting. In particular, participants found the twelfth meeting to be extremely well organized and appreciated the opportunity to participate remotely. The participants noted the efficient collaboration of the secretariat with the countries and Parties to the Convention and the national Focal Points. The participants rated the Conference as being well supported by the ECE secretariat before and during the Conference and were highly satisfied with the quality of the chairing of the meeting, decisions taken and structure of the meeting.

7. Bureau members shared their positive evaluation on the conduct of the meeting in a consensus-oriented manner between all Parties, while giving space to Parties to share their views on the effects of war on industrial safety, following the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine. It then suggested actions to improve future meetings. The Vice-Chair from Switzerland suggested that more time be allotted for discussion of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme, so beneficiary countries can give presentations and activities can be discussed. He also emphasized that meetings of the Conference should be an arena for Parties and beneficiary countries to exchange and that they should have priority over partner organizations, if there is a tight agenda with prioritisation of contributions. In response to several comments received, the Bureau members also discussed that increasing the amount of time for breaks during sessions would be difficult with the United Nations interpretation schedule.

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<sup>3</sup> The following Parties did not submit credentials: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Luxembourg, Monaco and Spain.

<sup>4</sup> Until 2022, UNOG covered the costs for limited RSI of 30 minutes within each 3-hour slot. The costs for full RSI, e.g. during the first day of the meeting of the Conference were covered by Parties through the Convention's trust fund; Norway covered the full RSI for the first day of the meeting comprising the Natch seminar.

**(c) Membership of the Bureau**

8. The Bureau reviewed its new membership from the point of view of geographical representation and gender. It noted that all sub-regions were covered with the exception of Central Asia. The secretariat informed the Bureau it had reached out to Kazakhstan regarding membership and while interest was expressed, it proved difficult to find an English-speaking candidate. The Bureau was comprised of seventy percent women and thirty percent men. It also noted the balance of members from different types of national authorities, such as ministries of interior, environment, natural resources and beyond. The Bureau member from Serbia informed the Bureau that she would not be in a position to continue her membership after the biennium 2023-2024 and that Serbia would consider nominating the current JEG Co-Chair Mr. Bojan Srdic as a new member. The Bureau took note of the considerations of Bureau membership from 2025 onwards by Estonia and Germany, based on information shared by the secretariat.

**3. Workplan for 2023–2024**

9. The Bureau reviewed the workplan for 2023–2024, which had been finalized by the secretariat in cooperation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, and suggested how gaps could be filled in terms of leadership of activities and additional financing required to implement them.

**(a) Resource availability, requirements and staffing**

10. The secretariat presented the resource requirements for the implementation of the activities, including in view of the pledges and indications received at the twelfth meeting of the Conference and other available funding from past contributions. The total resources pledged and available for this biennium (approx. 1 million) were in stark contrast to the resources available for the last biennium (approx. 1.7 million); only 37% of the overall workplan budget of USD 3,064,518 was thus funded. Previous projects have come to an end at the end of 2022 or in early-2023 and several donors had indicated not being in a position to continue previous project financing, incl. Switzerland and the Russian Federation. The secretariat also presented the available and required staff resources needed to implement the planned activities. The secretariat informed the Bureau that the resources that had been pledged and available were by far not sufficient to ensure the required and stable staffing to implement activities throughout the entire biennium, in particular beyond 2023, and activities needed additional financing. There was thus an urgent need to attract additional contributions from the competent authorities or other government authorities. Given that the current financing available was mainly covering staff costs, active leadership of workplan item and additional financing for the activity costs was required. The secretariat indicated that it was actively seeking co-financing through in-kind contributions from partners, e.g. GIZ under the Green Central Asia Initiative, OSCE and the UN regular budget to cover activity costs for some of the upcoming assistance missions. The Bureau discussed and agreed to make further efforts to attract resources to enable the implementation of the workplan, in terms of activities and staff support, aiming for staff security and a healthy work-life balance of the secretariat team members.

**(b) Follow-up to key Conference decisions and strategic directions**

11. The Bureau reviewed key decisions and outcomes of the twelfth meeting of the Conference, and shared their views and agreed on the implementation of these decisions for the biennium and beyond. This included the following topics:

- (i) Natural hazards triggering technological disasters (Natech) risk management: The Chair, in cooperation with the secretariat, presented: the conclusions of the joint UNECE/OECD Seminar on effective management of technological risks of accidents triggered by natural hazards (Geneva and online, 29 November 2022); decision 2022/1 on strengthening Natech risk management in the UNECE region and beyond

(ECE/CP.TEIA/44.Add.1); and the status of the development of the joint OECD/United Nations/European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) Natech guidance. The Chair suggested that the secretariat, when circulating the report of the twelfth meeting, encourage Parties to share decision 2022/1 with their national disaster risk reduction platforms and focal points. She also informed the Bureau members that the reporting format for the tenth round of reporting on implementation of the Convention would contain questions on Natech. The secretariat, following the discussion on resource requirements, reported to the Bureau that it would only be in a position to develop a Natech roadmap over the biennium, as the Conference had requested, should additional dedicated funding be provided to cover for the required staff time, while such a roadmap would be important to provide countries with actions to guide their implementation of decision 2022/1 and the next steps for Parties to address Natech hazards and risks. The Chair also highlighted the importance of developing a Natech roadmap and the Bureau encouraged Parties to provide the required financing. The Bureau agreed with the Chair's proposal that should it not be feasible to develop a Natech roadmap, it would report back to the Conference accordingly, highlighting also that the OECD/UN guidance on Natech risk management which was currently under development would then be available for Parties' reference and implementation.

- (ii) Mine tailings safety: The secretariat recalled key aspects from the discussion on the 2030 Road map for action to strengthen mine tailings safety within and beyond the UNECE region (ECE/CP.TEIA/2022/7) at twelfth meeting and decision 2020/1 on strengthening mine tailings safety within and beyond the UNECE region (ECE/CP.TEIA/42/Add.1). It also presented information on the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) process on environmental aspects of minerals and metals management, as per resolution 5/12 on environmental aspects of minerals and metals management, which will take place at the regional and global levels over the course of 2023, and its recent related contacts with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Chair suggested that the secretariat, when circulating the report of the twelfth meeting, also highlight obligations under decision 2020/1 and share the roadmap as guidance for actions that need to be taken. She also pointed out that mine tailings safety was not relevant for all Parties. The Bureau suggested to continue outreach to Germany regarding work on mine tailings safety under the Convention and that this cooperation should be maintained. The Bureau also highlighted the importance of engaging with countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) on continuing to strengthen mine tailings safety nationally and in a transboundary context, through activities under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme.

**(c) Envisaged activities under the Convention in 2023–2024**

12. The secretariat presented an overview of the envisaged activities to be carried out under the Convention's workplan, with the exception of the activities that had been discussed in the preceding joint Bureau and Working Group meeting (Geneva and online, 14 February 2023). It indicated which activities could be pursued with the existing resources and which would need additional resources. The Bureau agreed with the proposed approach to allocating resources and prioritizing work at this stage in time, pending the availability of additional funds.

13. The secretariat planned to organize meetings of the Bureau and its small groups, Working Group, Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG) and the thirteenth meeting of the Conference (as a face-to-face meeting; with RSI as an option should the required funding be provided by Parties). However, more active engagement with and support on the work of these bodies, such as the preparation of a Road map on Natech risk management, active engagement in disaster risk-reduction-related issues, further engagement in the sixth session of UNEA and the development of a Guide of Good Practices for Implementation of the Convention, would require additional resources. Also, assistance

activities could only continue at previous scale should additional funding be provided by Parties for their implementation. All activities in table 3 of the workplan 2023-2024 (ECE/CP.TEIA/44/Add.1) were not financed while also activities and required staff resources included in table 1 required additional financing, not only for the respective activity costs, but also the staff resources to support their implementation.

14. The Bureau reviewed and approved the planning of activities and provided advice on the following areas of work:

- (i) Outreach, communication, awareness-raising and strategic partnerships: The activities planned with existing resources entailed: maintaining basic cooperation with key strategic partners, such as UNEP, OECD, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), UNEP/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Joint Environment Unit, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO); participation in meetings of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Chemical and Industrial Accidents (IACG) and contributing to the update of its brochure; contribution to partners' events at a limited capacity, such as the OECD Working Party on Chemical Accidents, Issue-based Coalition (IBC) on Environment and Climate Change and engaging in webinars e.g. on DRR under the auspices of its Task Team on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation; working visits and missions to Parties; and engaging with EECCA countries for the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) Seminar on lessons learned from industrial accidents (Marseille, France, 23–24 May 2023). Additional resources would enable more active cooperation with strategic partners, and in events organized by them, including by UNDRR and under the framework of the IBC; more speaking engagements at meetings of partner organizations, more positive responses to requests for partnerships; monitoring and taking part regularly in the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and the Inter-agency coordination group on sound chemicals management, among others.
- (ii) Facilitation of implementation; notably:

*Item 2.1 Risk assessment:*

The Bureau recalled work done on the preparation of the risk assessment reports in the biennium 2021–2022. The secretariat reported on work underway to publish these as a single United Nations publication in English, French and Russian by the end of 2023 which the Bureau welcomed, appreciating the financing provided to that effect by Switzerland. The Bureau advised on ways to promote the publication, once available, with Focal Points and counterparts.

*Item 2.2 Linkages with Sendai Framework, SDGs and policy/governance integration:*

The activities planned with existing resources entailed: further cooperation with UNDRR, including to build on previous projects, promote their results, promote the chapter on technological disaster risk reduction (drafted by UNECE in cooperation with the EU JRC) within the forthcoming UNDRR Regional Assessment Report for Disaster Risk Reduction in Europe and Central Asia; and regular contributions to United Nations Common Country Assessments for EECCA and South Eastern Europe (SEE) countries and their Cooperation Frameworks. Additional resources would be required to enable the secretariat to organize separate side events or thematic sessions at meetings of UNDRR and other partners, to draft chapters of future issues of the UNDRR global and regional assessment reports, to peer review national disaster risk reduction strategies, as requested by UNDRR, and to develop guidance on integrating technological disaster risk reduction and industrial accidents into national disaster risk reduction strategies. The Bureau members also discussed the importance of attending the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in New York in May 2023, including to share information on the

Convention as a legal instrument to address technological disaster risk reduction and the importance of integrating technological disaster risk reduction into national disaster risk reduction strategies and platforms. The Bureau member from Armenia who is also the national focal point for the implementation of the Sendai Framework emphasized the importance of sharing these messages with high-level politicians. She mentioned that while the Sendai Framework provided an overarching umbrella and UNDRR platforms to raise visibility, the Convention offered concrete tools and guidance. Bureau members agreed to reach out to their national focal points preparing the respective national inputs to the High-level meeting to highlight the Convention's work accordingly.

*Item 2.3 Natech risk management:*

The activities planned with existing resources include contributions to the development of the OECD/UN/JRC Guidance on Natech risk management, including through the secretariat's participation in the drafting and steering groups, and the finalization of the conclusions of the UNECE/OECD Seminar on effective management of technological risks of accidents triggered by natural hazards held at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The secretariat invited the Bureau members to review and make inputs into the draft OECD/UN/JRC guidance, which would be circulated to them in the coming months. As reported above, additional resources would enable the secretariat, in cooperation with the small group on disaster risk reduction and Natech, to prepare a roadmap on Natech risk management in 2024, which the Conference had requested in Decision 2022/1, and to more extensively engage in the Natech work, in cooperation with partners.

*Item 2.4 Land-use planning, siting and TMF Safety:*

The activities planned with existing resources involve maintaining the Information Repository of Good Practices and Lessons Learned in Land-Use Planning and Industrial Safety, including posting any additional information received from Parties, and the Online Toolkit and Training for Strengthening Mine Tailings Safety. Additional resources would enable more substantive updates of the online toolkit, including with more information on the risks of TMFs, and for more active engagement to ensure implementation of Decision 2020/1 and the Road map for action to strengthen mine tailings safety within and beyond the UNECE region.

*Item 2.5 Fostering exchange of information and sharing of experiences:*

The activity planned with existing resources entails the establishment of an interactive network for exchanging information and sharing of experiences on the Convention's implementation. The Chair of the Working Group informed the Bureau that the network, which would be developed under the purview of the Working Group, would span competent authorities and focal points through a new e-group, and that Sweden, with the support of the Working Group and secretariat, would lead this activity. She encouraged more activity between countries. She also informed the Bureau that Estonia, after having joined the Working Group, contacted Sweden to arrange a site visit.

*Item 2.6 Risk management in relation to the storage, handling and transport of hazardous substances, such as ammonium nitrate, and related accident prevention, preparedness and response:*

The activities planned with existing resources involve: support to Ukraine through a consultancy of the European Investment Bank (EIB); the participation in and contribution to the OECD Seminar on storing and handling hazardous substances in port areas, which is planned for June 2023; and highlighting the conclusions and recommendations from the UN/OECD Seminar in follow-up to the 2020 Beirut port explosion (online, 14 December 2021) and its preceding survey. Additional resources, which were currently being considered under a funding mechanism of the European

Union, would enable the development of an online information repository showcasing relevant international instruments to address the risks of hazardous substances and the prevention and mitigation of related industrial accidents, the production of a video for raising awareness of the risks of managing hazardous substances and the organization of follow-up events to the UN/OECD seminar through engagements with key partners, namely the ECE Sustainable Transport Division, International Labour Organization (ILO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), OECD, UNDRR and UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit. The EIB had also pledged to support some of this additional work through in-kind contributions.

*Item 2.7 Preventing accidental water pollution:*

The activities planned with existing resources entail the JEG teleconference in 2023 and a seminar on accidental water pollution, including early warning and alert systems, the identification and exchange of good practices and collection of examples of Natch accidents affected transboundary waters, in spring 2024. The secretariat informed the Bureau that Slovakia would be the lead country, with the support of JEG, in cooperation with the Water Convention and river basin commissions, including International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, and that Hungary, Finland, Republic of Moldova and Romania would be supporting countries, providing in-kind contributions, while the provision of some financing was envisaged by Germany. At the same time, additional financing for cover the participation of EECCA and SEE experts, in addition to consultancy and staff support.

- (iii) Industrial Accidents Notification (IAN) System: The activities planned with existing resources include one connectivity test and one consultation with the Points of Contact. Additional resources would enable the IAN System to be upgraded and maintained. The Bureau recalled the needs for the IAN System to be upgraded to meet United Nations cybersecurity standards, fix glitches and make it a more user-friendly platform. The secretariat informed the Bureau that the United Nations has strict cybersecurity rules to which the IAN System must adhere. In case of major security issues, the IAN System could be temporarily shut down until security patches can be put in place; however, such an act would not be a long-term solution. The Vice-Chair from Switzerland, recalling a statement at the twelfth meeting of the Conference, informed the Bureau that Switzerland was considering a contribution for upgrading the IAN System, under the condition that Parties have an interest for the continued use of the System and co-financing is made available. The Bureau member from the European Union expressed the importance of Parties regularly using the IAN System, that the European Union was keen on testing the System and that the System needed to be updated to ensure effectiveness.

15. The Bureau reviewed and provided guidance to the activities under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme, which it had also discussed within the context of the joint meeting with the Working Group. The activities planned with the existing resources entailed:

- (a) A mission to Georgia in 2023, pending confirmation by Georgia (while the need was raised during and in the margins of the meeting of the Conference) and of financing;
- (b) A mission to another beneficiary country in 2024, pending confirmation of financing;
- (c) Review of the integration of the Convention's self-assessment indicators into the Industrial Safety Measurement Index (ISMI) tool – pending receipt of the pilot from the EU JRC ;
- (d) Continuing work under the National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) for Industrial Safety in Serbia, namely supporting the continued development of a National Programme on industrial safety, supporting the work of the NPD Steering Committee and co-organizing a stakeholder consultation meeting in cooperation with OECD. Here, the Bureau advised that Serbia itself, notably the Ministry of Environment, should take more ownership and step up its leadership of the conduct of the NPD Steering

Committee – as countries should in general build their ownership in processes launched with the support of the Convention ;<sup>5</sup>

- (e) Continuing work under the UNECE project to strengthen industrial safety in Central Asia, namely organizing and servicing Inter-Institutional Working Group (IIWG) meetings in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, organizing an on-site training in Uzbekistan, organizing a sub-regional workshop on tailings safety for Central Asia, promoting the report and results of phase I of the Syr Darya project, facilitating the uptake of recommendations for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on integrating technological disaster risk reduction and industrial accident risks, including Natech risks and transboundary considerations, into their national disaster risk reduction strategies and raising awareness and facilitating uptake of recommendations on aligning national legislation to address tailings safety for all five Central Asian countries;
- (f) Continuing to liaise with beneficiary countries to support the implementation of the Strategic Approach and to prepare project proposals in line with beneficiary countries' needs expressed; and
- (g) Contributing to speaking points for Regional Advisors and high-level UNECE officials in support of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme and implementation of and accession to the Convention by beneficiary countries.

16. The Bureau took note that additional resources would enable the Assistance and Cooperation Programme activities to be pursued more comprehensively, including through: the development a roadmap for accession for Georgia; additional missions to countries that have requested support from UNECE; study visits for countries to learn about NPDs, as requested by, e.g. Montenegro and North Macedonia ; the development of a brochure on the Assistance and Cooperation Programme for its 20th anniversary; further engagement in the development and deployment of the ISMI tool; support for the development of an action plan to further support the NPD programme in Serbia; improvement of the understanding and governance of technological risks in SEE; strengthening policies and governance of tailings safety, including Natech, in Central Asia; phase II of the Syr Darya project through the uptake of the recommendations from phase I and the development of a joint contingency plan; support for the countries to integrate technological disaster risk management into their national disaster risk reduction strategies; implementation of the Danube-Delta II Project; strengthening of industrial safety and disaster risk governance and management in Ukraine to support its implementation of the Convention; NPDs for Industrial Safety in EECCA and SEE countries; a sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety in Central Asia; and support for EECCA countries in preventing and mitigating accidental water pollution.

17. The Bureau further discussed the financing of these activities. The Chair informed the Bureau of the request by DSB to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whether funding to support Ukraine could be redirected to activities under the Convention, and encouraged other Bureau members to follow similar approaches. Bureau members agreed to pursue possible financing opportunities for assistance activities, noting opportunities in relation to the current focus on support Ukraine and its recent accession, and outreach to Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation agencies. They noted the importance of encouraging other Parties to also consider providing related support, through the official letters sent on the funding shortfalls.

18. In relation to Ukraine, the secretariat reported on the invitation for UNECE to contribute to the update of the Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment for Ukraine (RDNA2), prepared under with the Ministry of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of the Government of Ukraine, the World Bank, the European Commission, and the United Nations, and the plan to

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<sup>5</sup> Following the Bureau meeting, the Serbian Ministry of Environment organized the second NPD Steering Committee meeting on its own.



contribute a paragraph to highlight the needs of Ukraine and its recent accession to the Convention.

19. In addition, the secretariat presented activities under its general programme management for the Convention. The activities planned with existing resources included human resources (i.e. continuing to recruit, liaising with internal services, preparing and issuing staff and consultant contracts), financing management (i.e. managing the Convention's financing, tracking income and onboarding financial contributions) and reporting (i.e. programme planning, budgeting and evaluating, planning for publications, Umoja reporting on implementation of the workplan, donor reporting).

**(d) Envisaged activities of the Bureau in 2023–2024 and organization of work**

20. The Bureau reviewed the tasks assigned to it by the Conference, through decisions taken at the twelfth meeting. It decided on the organization of its work through the continuation of the following small groups:

- (i) Small group on financing: This group would continue discussion on fostering opportunities for additional resources to be provided to finance the workplan, including with outreach to countries. It comprised the following Bureau members: Torill Tandberg (Chair, Norway, lead), Marie-Claire Lhenry (France, Vice-Chair) and Wivi-Ann Wagello-Sjölund (Finland).
- (ii) Small group on disaster risk reduction and natural hazards triggering technological disasters (Natech): This group would discuss, as necessary, the draft joint OECD/UN/JRC Natech guidance and suggest ways how to promote and mainstream its findings, develop the roadmap on Natech in case sufficient funding is provided for this activity and engage in and support work on technological disaster risk reduction under the umbrella of the Convention and UNDRR, to the extent that capacities and financing allow. It comprised the following Bureau members: Torill Tandberg (Chair, Norway, lead), Armine Hayrapetyan (Armenia) and Gill Smart (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).
- (iii) Small group on mine tailings safety: This group, with support of the secretariat, would: discuss the consideration of an update to the Guidelines to facilitate the identification of hazardous activities for the purposes of the Convention (ECE/CP.TEIA/38/Add.1); foster implementation of the Road map for action to strengthen mine tailings safety within and beyond the UNECE region (ECE/CP.TEIA/2022/7) and Decision 2020/1 on strengthening mine tailings safety in the UNECE region and beyond (ECE/CP.TEIA/42/Add.1); and engage, as necessary, under the auspices of the UNEP sub-regional and global consultations on UNEA resolution 5/12 on environmental aspects of minerals and metals management. It comprised the following Bureau members: Martin Merkofer (Switzerland, Vice-Chair, lead; Laura Platchkov would be involved from the side of Switzerland for discussions on mineral resource governance) and Michael Struckl (Austria). In line with the Conference's mandate for the consideration of an update to the guidelines, it also comprised the following Working Group member: Sanja Stamenkovic (Serbia); and JEG members: Bojan Srdic (Serbia, Co-Chair) and Gerd Winkelmann-Oei (Germany).

**(e) Prioritization of activities under the Convention in 2023-2024 and outlook until 2030**

21. Throughout the meeting, the Bureau members exchanged their views on the prioritization of work in the biennium, also aware of a related request at the twelfth Conference of the Parties by the European Union and the Convention's long-term strategy until 2030 (ECE/CP.TEIA/38/Add.1). They discussed the importance of prioritizing activities to build on achievements and progress made towards the implementation of the long-term strategy and how to ensure active engagement of all Parties to ensure the financing for the workplan's implementation. They agreed to come back to discussing the prioritization of activities when preparing the draft 2025-26 workplan for the Convention's implementation.

#### **4. Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties**

22. The Bureau agreed that the thirteenth meeting of the Conference would be held at the end of November 2024 for full three days and noted that it marked twenty years of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme. It also agreed to take steps to identify a host country for the meeting and, should a host country not be identified, to hold the meeting at the United Nations Office at Geneva.<sup>6</sup>

#### **5. Proposed schedule of meetings for 2023–2024**

23. The Bureau agreed to hold its subsequent next meetings on 11-12 October 2023 in either Helsinki, following a related consideration by the Bureau member from Finland, or Geneva. It also agreed on meetings to review the preparations for the thirteenth meeting of the Conference, namely on 12-13 June 2024 and 25 November 2024 if held in Geneva. The members of the small groups agreed to independently schedule their upcoming meetings.

#### **6. Other business**

24. No other business was discussed.

#### **7. Closure of the meeting**

25. The Chair closed the meeting on 15 February 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

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<sup>6</sup> Should the meeting be held in Geneva, the following dates have been reserved: 26 to 28 November 2024.