

**UNITED
NATIONS**

ADVANCE COPY

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**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

I. OVERVIEW

1. In preparation for the eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States and representatives of major groups, United Nations agencies and other international bodies met in Geneva to review the ECE region's progress in implementing sustainable development commitments and goals. The regional implementation meeting examined the following thematic clusters: transport, chemicals management, waste management, mining, and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.
2. The meeting focused on evaluating the progress achieved and the obstacles and constraints remaining in each area, the priorities for future activities and strategies, and the interlinkages between the thematic areas as well as with cross-cutting issues.
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the sector also had significant adverse effects on the environment, including through the level of carbon dioxide emissions, the consumption of fossil fuels, air and noise pollution, and the loss of land and biodiversity. The sector's impacts on the social aspects of the region's development, including health and safety, were also considerable.

10. Over the past several decades, significant efforts had been made to promote the sustainability of transport sector policy and investment both in economic and environmental terms. Participants exchanged information on a number of legal, policy and practical measures at the national and local levels aimed at increasing transport sustainability.

11. The importance of developing transport infrastructure and services conducive to sustainable development was highlighted. There was a disparity in the success of transport sustainability efforts between the subregions, with countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and in South-Eastern Europe facing major infrastructure, management and funding challenges. Participants noted that with respect to the development and application of global and regional policies and programmes, the specifics of individual subregions should be taken into account through a differentiated approach.

12. There was general agreement that all modes of transport—including motorized vehicles, rail networks, shipping and aviation—should be considered for improved sustainability. A multimodal approach to transport was key to increasing the sector's sustainability. However, this would require further investment in infrastructure, for instance the modernization of ports, freight container standardization and improved links between various modes of transport. The advantages of speed-rail transport development were also underlined.

13. Many interventions noted that a reduction in the use of unsustainable modes of transport, particularly private vehicles, was required to reduce the sector's environmental impacts. A number of examples were provided of efforts to achieve such reduction. Better use of spatial planning, to reduce mobility needs and to facilitate sustainable transport, was seen as a strategic approach. Participants called for strategies combining different policies and measures, for avoiding transport where possible (e.g. through using teleconferencing and other technical solutions, and better urban design), and for better coherence between infrastructure investment and spatial planning.

14. A shift to cleaner transport modes was needed. Amon
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vehicles). However, some participants raised concerns regarding the production and use of biofuels, due to their impact on land use and the small quantities produced.

16. Voluntary initiatives of the private sector could also contribute to progress. One example was the voluntary commitment of the road transport industry to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30 per cent by 2030, through investments in vehicle technology, driver training and innovative logistic concepts. The greater involvement of ECE countries in global initiatives such as the Partnership for Cleaner Fuels and Vehicles and the Global Fuel Economy Initiative, which promoted technology and knowledge exchange, was seen as beneficial in this regard.

17. While the development and market introduction of alternative fuel vehicles helped to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from transport, the availability of no-carbon electricity was one of the areas where policy action was called for. In this connection, the ways in which energy was produced and the efficiency of its use for transport needed to be considered alongside improvements in vehicle technology and infrastructure management.

18. Several interventions noted that sustainable transport solutions should be tied to the opportunities afforded by the current economic crisis, for example by orienting stimulus packages towards the development of sustainable public transport infrastructure. Economic tools such as stimulus packages and business incentives, as well as disincentives (e.g. kilometre charges for vehicles) and the internalization of external costs needed to be applied to promote sustainable transport models.

19. Participants noted that subregional and regional cooperation was important for building sustainable transport infrastructure, for promoting multi-country infrastructure planning and for developing common infrastructure standards. Exchange of experience and technology transfer to less developed countries in the region with respect to issues such as sustainable transport infrastructure was also necessary, in particular for areas with specific transport challenges, such as mountainous regions.

20. Participants voiced their support for the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), as it was addressing the key challenges to achieving sustainable transport

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adverse effects of chemical production on human health and the environment by 2020 therefore had particular significance for the region.

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30. The meeting reiterated the importance of furthering implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), an important framework for strengthening capacity for sound chemicals management that narrowed the capacity gap between the developing and the developed worlds. The meeting recognized that the SAICM process had made significant progress vis-à-vis the 2020 goal. SAICM objectives should be attained through partnerships between Governments and major groups, including the private sector, labour, the academic community and non-governmental organizations. A major remaining challenge for SAICM implementation was the need to secure sustainable long-term financial resources. Regional meetings and coordination mechanisms had and would continue to play an important role in helping regional stakeholders advance SAICM. Participants highlighted the linkages between SAICM and the Commission, pointing out that the two processes could mutually reinforce each other in efforts to achieve the 2020 goal.

31. To achieve the 2020 goal, including through implementing global chemicals agreements,

36. The meeting emphasized the importance of the precautionary approach in reducing chemical risk. In particular, the need for a continuous reassessment and risk management of currently registered pesticides (i.e. the storage and disposal of pesticides), as well as the review of new pesticides, was highlighted. Managing and reducing the risk of industrial chemicals could be achieved by setting strict conditions on the production, processing, use, import or disposal of a new chemical before it entered into commerce, and also on the “significant new use” of an existing chemical. A comprehensive set of data and information about a chemical should be

42. Participants underlined the importance of promoting a clear waste hierarchy with the following features:

(a) Prevention should be the first and optimal solution. Prevention strategies should be based on the polluter pays principle, should include extended producer responsibility and should be addressed through life-cycle product management beginning at the design phase;

(b) Waste that was unpreventable should be recycled. To facilitate this approach, separation as well as separate collection of waste should be put into practice;

(c) Energy recovery in the waste recycling process could be another means of

(c) Plastic waste disposal, including in the oceans, posed a very significant problem not only for human health but also for the food chain and wildlife. There was a need to address the issue at the global level;

(d) Likewise, the issue of organic waste reuse had not been sufficiently addressed in international forums. Failure to separate biodegradable waste had led to greenhouse gas emissions from landfills. Experience in some of the region's countries demonstrated that organic waste collected separately at the source could be used to produce high-quality compost or energy through fermentation with continued composting. The latter could contribute to soil fertility and could reduce climate impacts by averting methane emissions and sequestering carbon in soil.

46. Many interventions addressed life-cycle product management. Participants noted that at the international level synergies should be strengthened between the ongoing work on chemicals management under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. SAICM work on life-cycle chemicals management was considered to be of particular relevance.

47. Participants from some countries with economies in transition reported particular challenges with waste management. Production of waste was on the increase due to improving economic conditions in these countries and their reliance on natural resource extraction. These countries were also suffering from the accumulation of hazardous waste (e.g. radioactive, military and industrial waste as well as obsolete pesticides) generated in the past. Specific programmes and technologies were needed to safely treat and finally dispose of this waste. Legal ownership of the stockpiles could not be clearly established, and many of the countries did not have the financial or technical capacity to address the issue.

48. Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia also faced particular difficulties in ensuring separation of waste, in particular municipal and hazardous waste and the separation of packaging waste. Countries did not have access to modern recycling and reuse technology and to equipment for waste collection and transportation, or for treatment of electronic or other specialized waste. In this regard, they required assistance to improve national legislation and to develop national hazardous waste minimization and management plans. Technical assistance, particularly in the form of experience-sharing and the transfer of up-to-date technology for waste management, was of special importance for the subregion.

V. MINING

49. The meeting acknowledged the important contribution of mining to society, as it provided the essential materials and was the source of all raw materials. The importance of mining varied across the ECE region, with the sector being of great importance to the economies of several ECE countries. Participants noted that the region's mines in the region were among the deepest and most efficient in the world, and that it was a leading global supplier of mining technology.

50. At the same time, mining had considerable adverse effects on the environment and on society. The main environmental concerns were related to water use and quality, waste rock

51. The principal challenge of more sustainable mining was to transform mineral resource potential while at the same time creating sustainable benefits, addressing social needs and protecting the environment. Mining could and should contribute to sustainable development, but it needed to address environmental and social concerns as well as promote measures to create lasting benefits. Among the main environmental considerations were land use planning, waste management, ecosystem risk management, and mine closure and rehabilitation. In addition, good governance, with transparency and accountability, was an essential prerequisite for sustainable mining practices as well as for the adoption of corporate social and environmental responsibility approaches.

52. Opportunities for sustainable mining were growing in the region, with increased exploration, better available data, newer technologies and changed economic conditions. The meeting noted the intention of one ECE country to develop a policy proposal for the Commission's nineteenth session on the contribution of mining to sustainable development. In the ECE region, countries in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia faced the greatest challenges in terms of sustainable mining.

53. The meeting agreed that good practices in mining required multi-stakeholder consultation and dialogue. This necessitated greater transparency and making information accessible to decision makers and the broader public, as well as committing to corporate social responsibility and embracing environmental stewardship. With respe

74. Education for sustainable consumption, as part of education for sustainable development, was also recognized as a key objective that should be supported by the future 10-Year Framework of Programmes. Participants also recommended using the Roadmap on Education for Sustainable Consumption developed by that Marrakech Task Force, to guide implementation of education programmes.

VII. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES, INTERLINKAGES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION'S SEVENTEENTH SESSION

A. Progress in implementing the decisions of the Commission's seventeenth session

75. The meeting noted the importance not only of focusing on the upcoming Commission session, but also of tracking the progress vis-à-vis implementation of policy-related decisions of the Commission's seventeenth session. Consequently, participants exchanged information on the national and international activities in the current cycle. Successful examples were presented, such as: (a) the Sustainability and Stewardship Programmes; (b) research in the area of agricultural systems and sustainability; (c) programmes aimed at the strengthening of urban-rural linkages; and (d) national-level sustainable development work with key stakeholders such as farmers, forest managers, non-governmental organizations and local governments.

76. A number of international initiatives were mentioned that supported implementation of Commission's decisions. These included the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management and the World Food Summit in Rome. An intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services had been set up to address desertification and biodiversity loss. With regard to Africa, concrete partnerships between regional organizations and the African Union were focusing on

targets to tackle these issues of concern, and had made some progress in their direct management. While some participants were of the view that sustainable, “green” growth was a driving force of sustainable development, others saw the concept of “sustainable growth” as incompatible with the objective of reducing overall resource use.

80. Participants also emphasized the importance of improving education, especially given its cross-cutting nature. They also noted the important role of the ongoing national and regional work on education for sustainable development in addressing the issues under the thematic clusters. This meant covering the formal education of youth as well as influencing adults and communities through informal education and non-formal means such as vocational training and capacity-building, education for sustainable development was a key instrument for empowering sustainable societies. A number of participants stressed the important role of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development. The meeting took note of successful examples in application of education for sustainable development to promote sustainable consumption and production.

81. Participants underlined the importance of policy coherence and of incorporating the cross-cutting themes into national and regional sus