Task Force for the Implementation of the GREEN Action Programme

Draft Summary Record: Inaugural meeting of the Task Force for the implementation of the GREEN Action Programme

24-25 November 2016
Paris, France

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Day 1

1. Joint Closing Session of the OECD Eurasia Week and Opening of the Inaugural Meeting of the GREEN Action Programme

1. The Task Force:
   • Welcomed the opening statement by Mr. Douglas Frantz, Deputy Secretary General, OECD. He highlighted the linkages between the OECD Eurasia and the GREEN Action programmes and underlined the importance of the projects on a wider application of economic instruments in environmental policies including water resources management, opening up new sources of financing for green investment, energy subsidies as well as strengthening economic regulation and institutions of water supply and sanitation;
   • Took note of remarks by Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst, Co-Chair of the EAP Task Force on the significance of the Inaugural Meeting of the GREEN Action Programme under the new name;
   • Noted the speech by Mr. Simon Upton, Environment Director, OECD on greening the economy in the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region. He stressed that the goal of the transition to a greener, resource-efficient and low-carbon economy needs to be accepted and mainstreamed into the policy settings of key Ministries;
   • Welcomed the adherence of Georgia to the OECD Declaration on Green Growth and noted the intervention by Ms. Irma Kavtaradze, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgia;

2. Election of the GREEN Action Programme Task Force Bureau


3. The Task Force:
   • Elected new co-Chairs: Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst of Germany and Mr. Gani Sadibekov of Kazakhstan.
   • Elected Bureau Members from the OECD and EECCA countries: Ms. Ann-Britt Ylinen of Finland, Ms. Irma Kavtaradze of Georgia, Ms. Maria Nagornii of Moldova, Mr. Norbert Kurilla of the Slovak Republic, Ms. Martine Rohn-Brossard of Switzerland and Mr. Mykola Kuzio of Ukraine.
   • Noted that as stated in the document ENV/EPOC/EAP(2016)5 the UNECE and UNEP became members of the Bureau ex officio.
   • Took note that European Commission will also continue to be a member of the Bureau ex officio.(tbc)
   • Expressed its appreciation for the leadership Mr. Teimuraz Murgulia (Georgia) had shown during his term as Co-Chair of the EAP Task Force, and for the work of the outgoing Bureau members: Mr. Martti Poutanen(Finland) Ms. Marianne Gjørv (Norway), Mr. Aleksandr Shekhovtsov (Russian Federation), Ms. Natalia Trofymenko (Ukraine) and Mr. Nodirjon Yunusov (Uzbekistan).
3. Outcome of the recent Ministerial Meetings

4. The UNECE and the European Union informed participants about the outcomes of the recent ministerial meetings.

5. The Task Force:

- Took note of the presentations by Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, UNECE and of Ms. Sylvie Motard, Deputy Director Regional Office for Europe, UNEP who informed the delegates about the outcomes of the Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference held on 8-10 June 2016 in Batumi, Georgia, where Ministers launched Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E) and reiterated their commitment to take the lead in the transition to a green economy, as a key path to sustainable development and poverty eradication and to direct investments and trade to support a green and inclusive economy;

- Noted the reporting by Mr. Norbert Kurilla, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic/EU presidency on the outcomes of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Environment Ministerial Meeting held on 18 October 2016 in Luxembourg, where Ministers confirmed their joint commitment to stepping up cooperation on environmental challenges and climate change, and promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development. He informed that Ministers have also agreed on the need to cooperate in key areas which have a positive impact on citizens' lives and health - reducing air and water pollution, and creating new jobs through a shift to a green economy.

4. Promoting green investment and finance - International and national efforts to finance low-carbon investments in EECCA

6. The Task Force:

- Reviewed experience and discussed priority actions to leverage and diversify financial resources for green investments in the EECCA countries;

- Took note of presentation by Mr. Mihai Roscovan, invited expert (former Deputy Minister of Economy and Reforms of Moldova) on the state of energy sector and issues related to the GHG emission in Moldova;

- Took note of presentation by Mr. Jernej Stritih, invited expert (former Deputy Minister of Environment of Slovenia) on the Slovenian experience of public and private funding of GHG emission reduction projects;

- Took note of presentation by Mr. Johannes Van de Ven, Head of Carbon Market Development, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), on the bank's financial operations and policy support in the light of green growth, such as on energy efficiency and renewable energy, highlighting also its Green Economy Transition approach;

- The presentations and the subsequent discussion highlighted the importance of removing environmentally harmful subsidies as a prerequisite of any actions on green finance. The discussion pointed out the need for further reform of the regulatory systems to be combined with the introduction of market-based instruments with the view of creating a stable, lower-risk and more transparent framework for green investment. The efforts should focus on stimulating greater engagement of the local and international private sector to show concrete results on the ground. The delegates called for accelerated efforts to strengthen capacities of in-country institutions involved in project preparation, implementation and financing and also those responsible for green public finance and public expenditure management. The discussion also highlighted some examples of national and international efforts to unlock the financial potential for green and low-carbon investment that already exists in countries of the region, such as a recently established Astana International Financial Centre which includes green finance as one of its priorities and support by the EBRD and the EU to mobilise funding, build capacities of local institutions and support policy dialogues. The participants suggested to build on these efforts and develop further investment strategies for implementing actions towards climate targets and broader green growth agenda in the region.
5. Integrating environmental, economic and sectoral policies for green growth

7. The Task Force:

- Noted the presentation by Ms. Irma Kavtaradze, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development on the Georgian experience in the preparation of the draft Policy Paper on Green Growth;
- Took note of presentation by Ms. Sylvie Motard, Deputy Director Regional Office for Europe of UNEP on their activities to integrate environmental, economic and sectoral policies for Green Economy in the EECCA region;
- Noted the presentations by Mr. Patrick Wegerdt, from DG Environment of European Commission on: (i) EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy and (ii) on EU Support for Greener Development in Eastern Partnership Countries;
- The presentations and the subsequent discussion showed important progress made in the region in developing Green Growth Strategies and Action Plans and establishing inter-ministerial working groups to discuss their design and implementation. The links with the structural economic adjustment and diversification as well as SDGs were highlighted. Several countries presented their specific priorities which included, for example, greening the SMEs, strengthening land management, utilising economic opportunities in waste and water management, increasing energy efficiency of industrial operations and energy production. The discussion also reiterated the need for strengthening the public administration, developing better and simpler regulations, strengthening enforcement and building monitoring system that will allow measuring and presenting progress. Several speakers highlighted a number of international initiatives that support the governments, businesses and the public and reiterated the need for strengthening the absorption capacity and link the regulatory reform with pilot and demonstration projects and investment. Delegates also stressed the importance of the sound statistical data and of Smart regulations along with environmental liability.

Day 2

6. Water-related innovations in support of green economic development in EECCA

8. The Task Force:

- Discussed the innovations in water sector reform in the European Union, the EECCA region and OECD member countries and reviewed ongoing and future projects and initiatives and the link between a well-managed water sector and green economic development;
- Took note of the presentation by Ms. Tatiana Efimova from Environment Directorate of the OECD on the newly launched Project of the European Union's Water Initiative (EUWI Plus Project). Ms. Efimova presented major features of the project including the reforms needed to support river basin management in Eastern Partnership countries;
- Noted the presentation by Mr. Yannick Pochon from the French International Office for Water on challenges with implementation of river basin management plans in EU-Member Countries and the link to economic growth;
- Took note of the presentation by Ms. Lena Zeiger from the Permanent Delegation of Israel to the OECD on the ways to stimulate water-related innovation and the role of technical and non-technical innovations for adequate water resources management;
- Noted the presentation by Mr. Erik Yakubayev, Deputy Director of KazWater, Committee of Water Resources of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan on how to facilitate transition to green economy in the water sector of Kazakhstan. Mr. Yakubayev has also described the role of multi-purpose water infrastructure (MPWI) and the cost effective state support in improving water use efficiency and water productivity;
- Generally supported the thematic areas of the OECD's programme of work for 2017-2018, recognising the move towards the EU's water acquis, promotion of water security and the need for national dialogue and regional exchange.
7. **Education, awareness raising and communications for sustainable development and green growth**

9. The Task Force:

- Acknowledged that a successful transition towards a green economy will need raising awareness about the challenges and ongoing efforts to shift to a green economy;
- Took a note of the presentation by Mr. Mykola Kuzio, Vice Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine on Green Growth education and communication in his country, as well as on building trust among stakeholders;
- Noted the presentation by Mr. Bernard Combes, Information Officer, Education for sustainable Development and Global citizenship Section from UNESCO on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Mr. Combes emphasised that sustainable development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone. It can only be achieved if we change the way we think and act;
- Took a note of the presentation by Mr. Benjamin Simmons, Head, Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP) on generating, managing and sharing green growth knowledge and the role of the (GGKP) for sharing information on activities to support the Batumi Initiatives on Green Economy (BIG-E). Mr. Simmons informed the Task Force about the role of GGKP in helping its partners to identify knowledge gaps in green growth theory and practice, and to address these gaps by catalysing broader research agendas.

8. **Sharing information on planned activities**

10. The Task Force:

- Noted the presentation by Mr. Krzysztof Michalak and Mr. Matthew Griffiths from Environment Directorate of the OECD on the progress made in implementing the activities since November 2015 [ENV/EPOC/EAP(2016)3] and the proposed programme of work and budget for 2017 and 2018 of the Task Force for the implementation of the GREEN Action Programme reflected in the document ENV/EPOC/EAP(2016)4;
- In discussing the proposed activities the Task Force noted the extent of the proposed work programme and welcomed its adequate coverage. The participants remarked that the success of the Task Force over the years was the focus on practical implementation and demonstration projects. There was a strong desire that this remains a focus in future years which takes into account the diverse priorities of individual countries as well as human and financial resources. Some countries called for additional emphasis on capacity building and communication of the results to a wider audience. Several countries highlighted the importance of maintaining regional co-operation to exchange good practice and lessons learned. The Task Force also welcomed the decisions by the OECD, UNEP and UNECE to join forces which will enable better co-ordination, calibration of actions and utilisation of their leveraging effects at the policy-making level;
- Task Force asked the Secretariat to consider the comments made during the discussion and revise the proposed work programme on the basis of the discussion and identify specific activities in individual countries, where possible. They also welcomed the further discussions between OECD, UNECE and UNEP to identify synergies between their respective work;
- Asked the Secretariat to keep a balance between the number of projects reflected in the programme of work for 2017-18 and available resources, both human and financial;
- Noted the proposal of Norway, Moldova, Sweden and Switzerland to include the Air pollution, SME greening, Sustainable Development and Mining issues in the Programme of Work and Budget;
- Took a note of Turkeys proposal that transboundary water issues should be dealt on bilateral basis;
- Took a note of the presentation by Maria-Teresa Pisani from UNECE on mapping of the UN-led activities supporting greening of the implementation of the decisions of the Batumi Conference as well as the presentation of Ms. Mikaela Rambali, Environment Directorate of the OECD on mapping of
activities supporting greening of the economy in EECCA by development partners as reflected in the Room Document 2;

- Noted the proposal of Germany and Switzerland to cooperate with development agencies like GIZ and Swiss Cooperation in the framework of Mapping Exercise.

9. **Item 9. Other business and closing remarks**

11. The Task Force:

- Agreed to hold the next meeting of the Task Force in the second part of October 2017, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, back-to-back with the OECD Eurasia Week;
- Thanked Ms. Ann-Sofi Israelson from Sweden for her longstanding contribution to the Task Force activities and wish her happy retirement;
- Thanked the participants for their contribution to the discussion and the meeting organisers for hosting the meeting, as well as the interpreters for their work.