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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Thirteenth session
Geneva, 9–11 October 2006

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE THIRTEENTH SESSION

To be held in the Palais des Nations
starting on Monday, 9 October 2006, at 10 a.m.*

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Implementation of the UNECE reform and matters arising from the sixty-first session of the Commission of concern to the Committee

* New accreditation procedures have been introduced for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to complete the registration form, which is available from the website of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (<http://www.unece.org/env/cep/welcome.html>), and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat *no later than two weeks prior to the meeting* – namely, by **25 September 2006** – either by fax (+41 22 917 0107) or by e-mail (evelina.rioukhina@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the Committee's website). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 1499.

3. Review of the programme of work for 2007–2008
 - (a) Environmental Performance Reviews
 - (i) Environmental Performance Review of Ukraine
 - (ii) Interim report on the implementation of Environmental Performance Reviews
 - (iii) Information about other activities conducted in the framework of the EPR programme
 - (b) Environmental monitoring
 - (c) UNECE multilateral environmental agreements
 - (i) Ongoing activities related to the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements which need special attention
 - (ii) Support to the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements
 - (d) Environment Strategy for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)
 - (e) Activities of the Regional Adviser and his contribution to the Committee's programme of work
 - (f) Environment, water and security partnership in Central Asia
 - (g) Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC)
 - (h) Other cross-sectoral activities
 - (i) Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme
 - (ii) Education for sustainable development
 - (iii) Environment and health
4. In-depth discussion on major policy issues: environmental policy and international competitiveness
5. Adoption of the Committee's Terms of Reference and its programme of work
6. Financial assistance to countries with economies in transition and countries' contributions to the UNECE trust funds
7. Any other business
8. Election of officers for the fourteenth session
9. Closing of the thirteenth session

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Monday, 9 October 2006

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda (10 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.)

1. The Committee is expected to adopt the agenda for its thirteenth session (ECE/CEP/131).

Item 2: Implementation of the UNECE reform and matters arising from the sixty-first session of the Commission of concern to the Committee (10.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.)

2. The Committee will be informed about the decisions taken by the Commission at its ad hoc session in December 2005, with the adoption of the Work Plan on ECE Reform (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1), as well as at its sixty-first session, held in Geneva from 21 to 23 February 2006 (E/2006/37- E/ECE/1444), that are relevant to the Committee (ECE/CEP/2006/1). The Committee will in particular be informed about (i) the UNECE reform and its implications for environmental activities and (ii) the outcome of the second Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development with regard to air pollution, climate change, energy and industrial development (15–16 December 2005) (ECE/AC.25/2005/3 and Add.1) and the regional input to the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (May 2006).

3. The Committee may wish to:

- (a) Discuss the issues addressed to the Committee by the Commission;
- (b) Discuss and adopt its revised terms of reference under agenda item 5;
- (c) Review its subsidiary intergovernmental bodies and conference-servicing needs based on the information provided by the secretariat;
- (d) Take note of the outcome of the Regional Implementation Forum and of the regional input to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Item 3: Review of the programme of work for 2007–2008

4. The Committee will consider the evaluation of the implementation of its programme of work for the biennium 2004–2005 (ECE/CEP/2006/7). The Committee will take into account, as appropriate, the results of this biennial evaluation when deciding on its future work.

5. The Committee will review its programme of work (ECE/CEP/131/Add.1) in the light of the recommendations set out in the Work Plan on ECE Reform (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1) and take decisions on each programme element and related activities, also on the basis of the outcome of the Bureau meeting held on 28 June 2006 (ECE/CEP/2006/3).

3(a) Environmental Performance Reviews (11.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

(i) Environmental Performance Review of Ukraine

6. The Committee will review the environmental performance of Ukraine by conducting a peer review (<http://www.unece.org/env/epr/countriesreviewed.htm>). To that end the outcome of the discussion on the draft report on the environmental performance of Ukraine, held during the meeting of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance (4–6 October 2006), will be presented. The Committee is expected to conclude the peer review by adopting the recommendations in the draft report.

(ii) Interim report on the implementation of Environmental Performance Reviews

7. At its tenth session the Committee requested eligible Member States to present voluntary interim reports for discussion by the Committee. Serbia and Montenegro will present their progress reports on the implementation of the recommendations that were addressed to them in the first environmental performance review.

(iii) Information about other activities conducted in the framework of the EPR programme

8. The Committee will be informed of the events relating to the launch of the EPR of the Republic of Moldova (July 2006) and that of Belarus (September 2006), and of the next countries to be reviewed.

Item 4: In-depth discussion on major policy issues: environmental policy and international competitiveness

9. The Bureau at its consultation on 27 June 2006 agreed, following the proposal put forward by the secretariat, to hold an in-depth discussion on the issue of environmental policy and international competitiveness.

10. Concerns by national companies and economic policymakers about international competitiveness have accompanied the process of environmental policymaking since its inception. This holds true not only for developed market economies but also, since the early 1990s, for those UNECE member countries that have moved from centrally planned to market-based economic systems.

11. Environmental policy measures, such as regulations, add to business costs, which may create a competitive disadvantage for domestic firms. But it has also been argued that well-designed regulations can create incentives for innovative activities, which may offset the costs of compliance with more stringent environmental requirements. These and related issues are discussed in a background paper (ECE/CEP/2006/4) prepared by the secretariat.

12. The Committee is invited to hold a discussion on the basis of the background paper focusing on approaches and instruments that help strike an appropriate balance between environmental and economic objectives and related main principles for the design of environmental policy.

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Item 3: Review of the programme of work for 2007–2008 (continued)

3(b) Environmental monitoring (10 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.)

13. The Committee will consider the outcome of the sixth session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA), held on 12–14 June 2006, in particular as regards the preparation of the Belgrade Assessment report and of the three sets of Guidelines to EECCA Governments for the sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, scheduled for 10–12 October 2007 (the Belgrade Conference) (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2006/2) (on the application of environmental indicators, on strengthening environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises, and on indicator-based state-of-the-environment reporting, including at the territorial level).

14. The Committee may wish to discuss the above documents and provide guidance for their further elaboration and finalization. It is foreseen that these Guidelines will be prepared for the extraordinary session of the Committee for endorsement in June 2007 and submitted through the Working Group of Senior Officials to the Belgrade Conference for adoption.

15. It may also wish to discuss options for further donor support to improve monitoring and assessment capacities in EECCA countries.

3(c) UNECE multilateral environmental agreements (11.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

- (i) Ongoing activities related to the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements which need special attention

16. The secretariat will inform the Committee of key developments and activities under the UNECE conventions, highlighting the major achievements and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the conventions and their protocols.

(ii) Support to the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements

17. The Committee is expected to discuss the outcome of the informal consultation between the representatives of the Bureaux of the Committee and the governing bodies of the UNECE environmental conventions (ECE/CEP/2006/2), held on 27 June 2006, which focused on (a) preparations for the Belgrade Conference; (b) the outcome of the second Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development; (c) the online questionnaire for reporting on the implementation of the air pollution convention as an example for the other UNECE conventions to follow; and (d) information on the outcome of the consultative process regarding public participation in international forums.

18. The Committee may wish to agree on the issues to be discussed at the next informal consultation, to be held in 2007.

**3(d) Environment Strategy for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)
(3 p.m. – 4 p.m.)**

19. The Committee will be informed on the preparations for a review of the Strategy's implementation conducted by the EAP Task Force.¹

20. The Committee may wish to discuss the contents of the review.

3(e) Activities of the Regional Adviser and his contribution to the Committee's programme of work (4 p.m. – 5 p.m.)

21. Following a decision taken by the Committee in 2005, the UNECE Regional Adviser prepared a background paper on the activities carried out and their impact on the EECCA countries (ECE/CEP/2006/6) as the basis for an in-depth discussion.

22. The Committee may wish to discuss the issues presented and make proposals related to the work of the Regional Adviser.

3(f) Environment, water and security partnership in Central Asia (5 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.)

23. The Committee will be informed about the activities undertaken to support the partnership with the aim of strengthening the initiative.

24. The Committee may wish to provide comments on actions taken so far and discuss possible input to the Belgrade Conference.

¹ Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for EECCA Countries.

3(g) Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) (5.30 p.m. – 6 p.m.)

25. The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) is a joint UNDP-UNEP-OSCE-UNECE initiative that builds on the combined strengths and field presence of the lead organizations to perform three key functions: assessment and monitoring of environment and security linkages; capacity-building and institutional development; and integration of environmental and security concerns and priorities in international and national policymaking. The secretariat will provide information on the contribution of UNECE to the Initiative, which is mainly aimed at strengthening the implementation of the UNECE regional environmental conventions.

26. The Committee may wish to provide comments on actions taken so far.

Wednesday, 11 October 2006

3(h) Other cross-sectoral activities (10 a.m. – 11 a.m.)**(i) Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme**

27. The secretariat will briefly inform the Committee about the outcome of the fourth session of the Steering Committee of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), held in April 2006. It will report, in particular, on the discussions concerning the preparations for the third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment to be held in 2008 (ECE/AC.21/2006/2).

28. The Committee may wish to discuss how to attract high-level participation and enhance the political impetus and impacts of the process on Transport, Health and Environment.

(ii) Education for sustainable development

29. The Committee will be informed about the outcome of the first meeting of the Steering Committee (CEP/AC.13/2005/7), held in Geneva on 13–14 December 2005.

(iii) Environment and health

30. The Committee will be informed about the outcome of the European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) meetings, held in December 2005 and May 2006 (<http://www.euro.who.int/eehc>), and in particular about the fulfilment of the commitments made at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Health and Environment (Budapest, June 2004), related notably to the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) adopted by the Conference.

31. The Committee will also be informed about preparations for the intergovernmental midterm review on environment and health in 2007, including its scope and agenda.

32. The Committee may wish to discuss ways to facilitate the interlinkage with the health sector in relation to the above meeting.

Item 5: Adoption of the Committee's Terms of Reference and its programme of work (11 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.)

33. The Committee is invited to consider its programme of work for 2007–2008.

34. The Committee is invited to consider its revised Terms of Reference (ECE/CEP/2006/5), following the request by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, within the framework of the UNECE reform.

35. The Committee is expected to adopt its programme of work for 2007–2008 and its Terms of Reference.

Item 6: Financial assistance to countries with economies in transition and countries' contributions to the UNECE trust funds (11.30 a.m. – 11.45 a.m.)

36. The Committee will be informed about the current status of the trust funds. Donor countries are invited to pledge further contributions to the trust funds and agree on the updated criteria for financial assistance (informal document no. 1).

Item 7: Any other business (11.45 a.m. – 12 noon)

37. Delegations may wish to raise any other point relevant to the meeting.

Item 8: Election of officers for the fourteenth session (12 noon – 12.30 p.m.)

38. The Committee is expected to elect a chairperson and other members of its Bureau.

Item 9: Closing of the thirteenth session (12.30 p.m. – 1 p.m.)

39. The Chairperson, with the assistance of the secretariat, will sum up the Committee's conclusions and decisions. In consultation with the Bureau, the secretariat will finalize the report of the thirteenth session for circulation to the Member countries.

For advance copies, please visit the Committee's website <http://www.unece.org/env/cep/>.