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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials
“Environment for Europe”
Executive Committee

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Geneva, 14-15 February 2007
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR THE DRAFT DECLARATION
OF THE BELGRADE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

Submitted by the secretariat¹

Introduction

1. We, the Environment Ministers and Heads of delegation from ... countries in the UNECE region and the Representative of the European Commission, met at Belgrade, Serbia, from 10 to 12 October 2007, in the sixth of a series of Ministerial Conferences held as part of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process.
2. The role of the EfE process in promoting environmental protection and sustainable development in the region. Commitment to cooperation on environmental protection among countries in Europe, North America, the Caucasus and Central Asia.
3. Global environmental challenges and the responsibility of our region to improve the global environment and to promote sustainable development (referring e.g. to the regional contribution to CSD-cycle since Kiev). Cooperation with other regions.

¹ Prepared in consultation with the Chairman in the light of comments received by members of and observers to the Executive Committee (Kyrgyzstan, Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland, EECCA RECs, ECO-Forum and PPC). It is expected that the Declaration would focus on a limited number of issues (not exceeding 4-5 pages) and remaining issues would be covered by the Chairperson’s summary and separate ministerial statements on specific issues (e.g. biodiversity and education).

I. EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

4. The fourth assessment report on the state of the environment (Belgrade Assessment) prepared by the European Environment Agency (EEA) with the support of countries and UNECE, and in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other international organizations. Main features of the state of the European environment and the positive and/or negative tendencies highlighted therein. Progress (or the lack of it) in the development of environmental legislation, policies, mechanisms, instruments, institutions, capacities and performance. Response measures needed in relation to the state of the environment. Decision on the next report.
5. Action on the UNECE Recommendations to Governments of Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian Countries for the Application of Environmental Indicators and the Preparation of Indicator-Based Environmental Assessment Reports, and the Guidelines for Strengthening Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises. Need for further capacity building on environmental monitoring and assessment.
6. Major challenges with the implementation of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), in particular in some subregions. Capacity-building activities developed within the framework of regional conventions. Need for accelerating the ratification of regional environmental conventions and protocols, further strengthening compliance with them, expanding capacity-building activities, and developing more secure funding mechanisms.
7. Need for EECCA and SEE countries to implement recommendations of the UNECE environmental performance reviews (EPRs) and to overcome current barriers to progress in environmental performance.

II. CAPACITY-BUILDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

8. Environmental policy and international competitiveness.
9. Progress made in the implementation of “Environmental Partnerships in the UNECE Region: Environmental Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Strategic framework” (EECCA Strategy) and perspectives.
10. Initiatives of South Eastern Europe’s (SEE) Environment Ministers.
11. Need for additional national, subregional and regional efforts to promote sustainable use of resources and changing production and consumption patterns.
12. Need for further integrating environmental aspects and sustainable development into energy policy in the region, improving energy efficiency and promoting renewable energy sources as a means of meeting environmental objectives.
13. Challenges in and recommendations for, environmental financing in countries in the EECCA and SEE regions.
14. Success in developing partnerships on environment with the non-governmental sector in the region.

III. THE WAY FORWARD²

15. Continuation of the EfE process, its goals and focus for the future. Roles and responsibilities of its major driving forces (Committee on Environmental Policy, EAP Task Force, PPC and EECCA RECs). Cooperation with other processes.

16. Next Conference.

² This section might also include commitments on actions that are not covered by preceding sections.