

## ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

### COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

#### Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Seventh session

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Item 5(a) of the provisional agenda

### REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON THE APPLICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS AND INDICATOR BASED REPORTING

Note by the secretariat<sup>1</sup>

#### SUMMARY

This note presents the results of the Workshop on the Application of Environmental Indicators and Indicator Based Environmental Reporting convened by the Working Group in Donetsk (Ukraine) on 31 October – 2 November 2006 pursuant to a decision taken at its sixth session (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2006/2, para 14). Workshop documentation and the list of participants are available at [http://www.unece.org/env/europe/monitoring/landRPr3\\_en.html](http://www.unece.org/env/europe/monitoring/landRPr3_en.html). The Working Group is expected to take note of this report and to agree on the documents prepared by the Workshop, namely the revised *Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*, the *Guidelines on the preparation of Indicator-based Assessment Reports on the Environment* and proposals for modifications in the recommendations on the adaptation of national systems of environmental monitoring and data collection in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

#### Introduction

1. The Workshop on the Application of Environmental Indicators and Indicator-based Environmental Reporting was held on 31 October – 2 November in Donetsk (Ukraine) at the invitation of the State Administration of Ecology and Natural Resources in Donetsk Oblast of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine.
2. The Workshop was attended by experts from national and sub-national governmental bodies responsible for environmental protection and environmental monitoring, statistical agencies and other governmental institutions from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
3. Representatives of the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) attended the meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was not formally edited.

4. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended: All-the Ukrainian Ecological League (Ukraine), the Donetsk Regional Public Interest Environmental Group “Do Chystykh Jerel” (Ukraine), the Public Council at the Ministry of Environmental Protection (Ukraine), the Russian Cleaner Production and Sustainable Development Centre (Russian Federation) and the Volgograd-Ecopress Information Centre (Russian Federation). The Heat Power Station of Zuevka (Ukraine) represented industry.

5. Welcome addresses were presented by Anatoly Bliznjuk, Chairman of the Donetsk Regional Council, Sergey Dergunov, Vice-Chairman of the Donetsk Regional Public Administration and Svyatoslav Kurulenko, First Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine. All three speakers stressed the importance of the Workshop’s topic for environmental protection in Ukraine and especially for the highly industrialized Donetsk Oblast.

## **I. ORGANIZATION OF THE DISCUSSION**

6. The UNECE Secretariat presented the programme of the Workshop together with expected outputs. The task of the Workshop was to complete the revised Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), and to prepare draft guidelines on indicator-based environmental reporting for use at both central and territorial levels in EECCA.

7. The first plenary session, Importance of Guidelines on Environmental Indicators within the Preparatory Process of the Belgrade Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” included four presentations:

- (a) Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in the Preparations for the Belgrade Conference, by UNECE;
- (b) Kiev and Belgrade Environmental Assessment Reports and Indicators Applied Therein, by EEA;
- (c) Introduction to the Revised Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in EECCA, by UNECE;
- (d) Lessons learnt from the three training workshops to apply the Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in EECCA, by UNEP.

8. The second plenary session, Finalization of the Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators was divided into 7 subsequent sub-sessions. Sub-sessions focused on groups of indicators and teams composed of two experts moderated deliberations. During sub-sessions, particular chapters of the revised Guidelines were discussed in detail to clarify the texts and to discuss and incorporate comments (both those sent to the secretariat before the workshop and those raised by the Workshop participants during the sub-sessions).

9. The third plenary session discussed the draft guidelines on the preparation of indicator-based assessment reports on the environment. After the brief presentation of the draft document by UNECE, the text was discussed paragraph-by-paragraph to clarify it and to discuss and reflect in the text comments raised by Workshop participants.

## II. THE DISCUSSION AND ITS OUTCOME

10. Several participants proposed that the relation of the indicators to the D-P-S-I-R (driving forces, pressure, state, impact, response) analytical scheme should be more stressed and made more visible in the guidelines.

11. Many experts recommended to emphasize the relevance of indicator guidelines for the EECCA Environmental Strategy, approved by the 2003 Kiev Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”. International references (targets, conventions, policy documents) were recommended to be structured from geographical point of view into global and regional (UN, UNECE, WHO Europe etc.), and sub-regional (EECCA, European Union etc.) levels.

12. In the case of certain indicators (especially those on transport), many experts indicated problems with data availability in their countries as well as differences in data format and data collection cycle (e.g. age categories of vehicles).

13. Origin and relevance of certain data included into international databases (e.g. the International Energy Agency) were discussed, as in some cases these seemed to be estimates rather than official data from EECCA countries.

14. Preparation of the list of symbols, abbreviations and measurement units was recommended strongly by many participants.

15. In several cases, participants proposed to change names of indicators, sometimes in Russian only. This related to indicators of trends in number and abundance of species, waste reuse and recycling, reuse and recycling of freshwater, polluted waste waters, uptake of productive land, energy intensity, passenger transport demand, and freight transport demand. In other cases (Waste reuse and recycling, Reuse and recycling of freshwater), the descriptions of indicators were proposed to be changed to cover a broader scope of activities.

16. It was emphasized that the indicators guidelines should show the way how to transform the information presented by environmental indicators into a clear policy message through proper formats of indicator’s presentation or through the addition of supplementary information which would facilitate the understanding of the full meaning of a particular indicator.

17. Many delegations underlined the relevance of indicator-based environmental reports for the formulation of environmental policy and other relevant policies in their countries. In this respect the participants appreciated the draft guidelines prepared by consultants to the UNECE secretariat as a helpful practical tool for the preparation of environmental reports in the EECCA countries.

18. A thorough discussion was held on additional country-specific indicators in the reporting guidelines. Many experts, for instance, suggested to add “radioactive pollution” which represented serious problem for certain EECCA countries.

19. Some common problems of both guidelines lied in the translation of certain English words into the Russian language. Words like “guidelines” or “national” seemed ambiguous

for some experts as these words might be of different meaning for public authorities in the EECCA countries.

20. Titles of both guidelines in the Russian language were discussed thoroughly. The final agreement was to use the Russian word that would be close in English to “Manual”.

21. All amendments agreed by workshop participants were incorporated into the guidelines. Both documents in question, the *Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia* and the *Guidelines for Indicator-based Assessment Reports on the Environment* were approved by the Workshop.

22. Participants stressed the importance of both guidelines, once adopted by the relevant UNECE intergovernmental body and endorsed by the Belgrade Conference, for the adaptation of national systems of monitoring and data collection to reflect international reporting requirements, for harmonization of these systems with those of other members of the United Nations, and for inter-country comparisons. It was emphasized that indicators in the revised guidelines should serve as a policy tool to help the EECCA countries in establishing national environmental targets and monitoring their implementation as well as in measuring overall progress in environmental conditions.

23. To this end the participants prepared proposals to the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment for modifications in the recommendations on the adaptation of national systems of environmental monitoring and data collection that the Working Group prepared at its sixth session (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2006/2, annex). The intention was primarily to reflect in these recommendations specific measures to implement the second set of guidelines developed by the Workshop, namely the Guidelines for Indicator-based Assessment Reports on the Environment.

24. The Workshop thanked the host authorities for the excellent arrangements made for the workshop and the hospitality offered to all participants.