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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Fourteenth session
Geneva, 29 May 2007

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
ON ITS FOURTEENTH SESSION**

Executive Summary

The Committee:

- Noted the following Category I documents prepared by the secretariat and decided to transmit them through the Working Group of Senior Officials to the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”: (i) From intentions to actions: overcoming bottlenecks: critical issues in implementation of environmental policies highlighted by the UNECE Environmental Performance Reviews; (ii) Implementation of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements and environmental policy; (iii) International competitiveness in a globalizing world: challenges for low-income countries in the UNECE region; and (iv) Making monitoring and assessment an effective tool in environmental policy;
- Agreed on the recommendations to Governments of Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian (EECCA) countries for the application of environmental indicators and the preparation of indicator-based environmental assessment reports, as well as on the guidelines for strengthening environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises in EECCA;
- Reviewed the environmental performance of Montenegro and Serbia, adopting the related recommendations, and welcomed the beginning of the second reviews of Kazakhstan, to start in 2007, and Kyrgyzstan in 2008;
- Noted that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe at its sixty-second session in April 2007 had agreed to hold a Regional Implementation Forum on 28 and 29 January 2008 focusing on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa; and had approved the Committee’s Terms of Reference;
- Entrusted its Bureau to review and endorse, for each cluster of activities, an expected accomplishment together with related indicators of achievement and measurement methodologies at its next meeting in January 2008;
- Noted the information on regular and extrabudgetary resources for all activities related to the environment and endorsed the updated criteria for financial assistance.

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Introduction

1. The fourteenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy took place in Geneva on 29 May 2007. Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia) chaired the session.

2. The session was attended by delegates from 38 UNECE member countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian

Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States of America and Uzbekistan.

3. Representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also took part.

4. The following regional environmental centres and non-governmental organizations were also represented: European Environment Bureau and European ECO-Forum, the Regional Environmental Centers for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), for Central Asia (CAREC) and Youth and Environment Europe (YEE) as well as CINTECH, Ltd. and Russian "Mezregionteploenergo" JSC.

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Committee adopted the agenda for its fourteenth session, including a new agenda item II (b) on the UNECE contribution to the fifteenth Economic and Environmental Forum of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

II. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SIXTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE COMMISSION OF CONCERN TO THE COMMITTEE

A. The decisions taken by the Commission at its sixty-second session

6. Mr. Patrice Robineau, Senior Advisor to the Executive Secretary informed the Committee about the sixtieth anniversary session of the Commission in April 2007. He noted the UNECE reform was being implemented and that the Commission had approved the Committee's Terms of Reference (see annex I). The Commission had agreed to hold a third Regional Implementation Forum (RIF) on Sustainable Development on 28 and 29 January 2008. The Commission called on member States to make financial contributions to prepare for this meeting, and also to cover the costs of travel and accommodation for eligible delegations.

7. He informed the Committee about the request of the Commission to the Sectoral Committees to conduct biennial evaluations related to their subprogrammes' performance.

8. The Committee entrusted its Bureau to review and endorse, for each cluster of activities, an expected accomplishment together with related indicators of achievement and measurement methodologies at its next meeting in January 2008.

9. He emphasized the importance of inter-sectoral activities such as the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) and the Commission's request for new impetus into cross-cutting issues, noting that the UNECE had expertise in energy, environment and transport and that it should take advantage of synergies between sectors.

B. The UNECE contribution to the fifteenth Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Economic and Environmental Forum

10. The Committee took note of the UNECE report prepared for the fifteenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (Prague, 21–22 May 2007) with the review of the implementation of OSCE commitments on the environment. The report was prepared as a team effort within the secretariat and highlighted three areas: strengthening environment governance, environmental monitoring and education for sustainable development. The report included recommendations and conclusions for further cooperation with OSCE, including concrete project proposals. Concern was expressed that OSCE was developing an environmental strategy that may overlap with the UNECE environment programme. Committee members were urged to consult their OSCE ambassadors on this issue.

III. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ECE REGION

11. The Committee took note of the outcome of the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (New York, May 2007). Following the custom of alternating between review and policy sessions in two-year cycles, this session focused on air pollution, atmosphere, climate change, energy for sustainable development and industrial development. The UNECE contribution highlighted the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution as an effective model of multilateral cooperation that could be useful in other regions, the liberalization of energy markets in the UNECE region, and public-private partnerships. The fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development concluded with a chair's summary only.

12. Due to the fact that the next session will focus on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa, UNECE will request input for the next RIF mainly from outside organizations (e.g. from the World Bank, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) as UNECE does not have sufficient expertise in most of these areas.

IV. REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2007-2008

13. The Committee took note of the information on regular and extrabudgetary resources for all activities related to the environment and endorsed the updated criteria for financial assistance (see annex II).

A. Environmental Performance Reviews

Environmental Performance Review of Montenegro and of Serbia

14. Mr. Adriaan Oudeman (the Netherlands), the rapporteur designated by the Environmental Performance Review (EPR) Expert Group, presented an overview of the results of the second EPR of Montenegro conducted by the Expert Group (14 May 2007). Mr. Stankovic, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Environment and head of delegation of Montenegro, presented his views about the situation in his country, as well as progress made and measures undertaken since

the time of the mission. He stressed the engagement of his country to implement the recommendations contained in the report.

15. Delegations commended Montenegro for its progress made in particular regarding policies, strategies and legislation, and encouraged the country to engage further in sustainable tourism and to avoid the mistakes made by others. The Committee concluded the peer review by adopting the recommendations in the second EPR of Montenegro. The report is available at: http://www.unece.org/env/epr/studies/Montenegro_2/welcome.htm.

16. Mr. Harry Liiv (Estonia), the rapporteur nominated by the EPR Expert Group, presented an overview of the discussions on the EPR report of Serbia conducted by the Expert Group (15 May 2007), including on recommendations.

17. Mr. Sasa Dragin, Minister of Environmental Protection and head of delegation of Serbia, presented his views on the situation in his country, as well as progress made and measures undertaken since the time of the mission. He underlined the emphasis on environmental protection and its integration into sectoral policies, which was considered an important step toward accession to the European Union (EU). He noted that laws on environmental protection were fully harmonized with relevant legislation of the EU. The Committee concluded the peer review by adopting the recommendations in the second EPR of Serbia.

Information about other activities conducted in the framework of the EPR programme

18. The Committee took note of the publication of the second EPR of Ukraine and was informed about the upcoming second reviews of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan submitted an interim report on the implementation of the recommendations of the first EPR. The countries that were being considered for next second EPRs were Armenia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uzbekistan.

19. The Committee thanked Austria, Estonia, Hungary, the Netherlands and Switzerland for their financial support in 2006, noting that the EPR programme would need further support in 2008 due to the high costs to be borne for the coming reviews in Central Asia. Countries having contributed in kind by sending international experts for carrying out reviews in 2006, such as the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy and Switzerland, were also thanked, as was the European Environmental Agency.

20. The Committee recalled the suggestion to allocate more time to the discussions of EPR peer reviews at its annual session and agreed that this issue would be considered at the Committee's next session in April 2008, based on proposals put forward by the EPR Expert Group and the Bureau.

B. The Committee's contribution to the "Environment for Europe" Conference

21. Following the changes requested by the Committee and the Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) in February 2007, the Committee took note of the revised Category I documents and decided to submit them, through the WGSO, to the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007), as follows: From intentions to

actions: overcoming bottlenecks: critical issues in implementation of environmental policies highlighted by the UNECE Environmental Performance Reviews (ECE/CEP/2007/4); Implementation of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements (ECE/CEP/2007/5); Environmental policy and international competitiveness in a globalizing world: challenges for low-income countries in the UNECE region (ECE/CEP/2007/6); and Making monitoring and assessment an effective tool in environmental policy (ECE/CEP/2007/7).

22. The Committee agreed on the recommendations to Governments of Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian (EECCA) countries for the application of environmental indicators and the preparation of indicator-based environmental assessment reports (ECE/CEP/2007/8) and on the guidelines for strengthening environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises in EECCA (ECE/CEP/2007/9) prepared by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) and decided to transmit these two documents through the WGSO to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference under Category I, for possible action.

23. In addition, the Committee adopted the guidelines for the application of environmental indicators in EECCA and for the preparation of indicator-based environmental assessment reports in EECCA prepared by the WGEMA, and decided to transmit them through the WGSO to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference under Category II.

24. The Committee also took note of a table on the follow-up to the 2003 Kiev Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2007/10). This was prepared to assess the progress made in the implementation since the Kiev Declaration and to reflect preparations for Belgrade.

C. Environment strategy for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)

25. Mr. Brendan Gillespie, representative of the OECD Environmental Action Programme (EAP) Task Force, provided information on the contents of the draft report on the implementation of the EECCA Strategy prepared for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference by the EAP Task Force. The report had been discussed at the last EAP Task Force/Project Preparation Committee meeting in Brussels and endorsed by the Task Force for submission to the WGSO. The report was produced through a collaborative process involving EECCA countries and other organizations, beginning with a questionnaire, followed by workshops and country input. The report noted progress on waste management, biodiversity, transport and energy (efficiency), and policy integration. It aimed to map a post-Belgrade agenda with a stronger focus on implementation, an improved institutional framework, a comprehensive approach to environmental financing, strategic investment in skills, and a more supportive international cooperation framework. The Committee took note of the report.

D. Environment, water and security partnership in Central Asia

26. Ms. Baglan Salykmambetova, head of delegation of Kyrgyzstan, provided information on activities undertaken to support and strengthen the partnership on environment, water and security in Central Asia. It was designed to ensure multi-sectoral partnerships with other international organizations in overcoming poverty and achieving balanced economic development. A document on the Central Asian initiative had been updated and would be

presented to the Belgrade Conference during a specific session on Central Asian countries, supported by CAREC. The Committee took note of this information.

E. Environment and Security Initiative

27. Mr. Nickolai Denisov (UNEP) provided information on the joint United Nations Development Programme-UNEP-OSCE-UNECE-REC Initiative on Environment and Security (ENVSEC). He said the ENVSEC Initiative was fully operational and the project portfolio is increasing. Interaction between countries are coordinated through national focal points. Assessments have been carried out and work programmes established for Central Asia (in particular the Fergana valley), South-Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus. An assessment on Eastern Europe (Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus) is being finalized. He noted that the UNECE multilateral environment conventions were particularly relevant to ENVSEC. The Committee took note of this information.

F. Other cross-sectoral activities

Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme

28. Ms. Brinda Wachs (UNECE secretariat) informed the Committee about the preparations for the third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment to be held in autumn 2008 (ECE/AC.21/SC/2007/3-EUR/07/5068055/3) to ensure a renewed political commitment from Governments to THE PEP process and more stable funding in order to attain wider support and a more engaged and active implementation on the part of member States. The Committee took note of this information.

Education for sustainable development (ESD)

29. Ms. Ella Behlyarova (UNECE secretariat) provided information on the outcome of the second meeting of the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Steering Committee (CEP/AC.13/2006/3), held in Geneva on 4 and 5 December 2006. She noted that many countries had integrated ESD into their environmental strategies, but that the lack of resources remained an obstacle for countries with economies in transition. The Committee took note of this information.

Environment and health

30. The Committee was informed about the preparations for the Intergovernmental Midterm Review on Environment and Health, to be held from 13 to 15 June 2007 in Vienna, including its agenda and possible outcome.

31. The Committee elected five members to represent the environment sector on the European Environment and Health Committee for a period of two and a half years, i.e. until the next Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 2009, which will be held in Italy, as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Mr. Robert Thaler | Austria |
|-------------------|---------|

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Ms. Lea Kauppi | Finland |
| Mr. Corrado Clini | Italy |
| Ms. Julie Tham | Netherlands |
| Mr. Sergey Samoylov | Uzbekistan |

V. OTHER BUSINESS

32. The Committee was informed about the next CEP session and other related meetings in 2008: (i) the CEP Bureau meeting on 30 January 2008, to be held back to back with the Regional Implementation Forum on 28 and 29 January; the CEP session to be held from 21 to 23 April 2008; (iii) the Joint CEP and Conventions' Bureaux meeting to be held on 24 April 2008 back to back with the CEP session; and the EPR Expert Group to be held on 17 and 18 April 2008.

VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE FIFTEENTH SESSION AND CLOSING OF THE FOURTEENTH SESSION

33. The Committee re-elected the following members to its Bureau: Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia), as Chair; and Ms. Narin Panariti (Albania), Ms. Ruzanna Davtyan (Armenia), Mr. Bert-Axel Szelinski (Germany), Mr. Czeslaw Wieckowski (Poland), Mr. Jon Kahn (Sweden), Ms. Eldrid Nordbo (Norway) and Mr. John Matuszak (United States), as Vice-Chairs.

34. The decision of the Committee at its fourteenth session were summarized by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair.

Annex I

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

**as approved by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
at its sixty-second session**

The Committee on Environmental Policy concentrates its efforts on preventing environmental damage, promoting sustainable management of environmental resources and, to contribute towards the convergence of countries of the UNECE region, hence lead to improvements in the region's environment conditions primarily by implementing the goals set out in the document "Future strategic directions for the environment", adopted in 2003 (CEP/2004/2), and the workplan on UNECE reform adopted in 2005 (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1).

In particular, the Committee, as a multilateral forum for cooperation in the area of environment in the UNECE region, will:

1. Serve as an instrument for UNECE member States to provide policy direction and to launch international initiatives, including the preparation of ministerial meetings in the region to review environmental priorities and adopt a strategic environmental policy;
2. Strengthen environmental information and observation capacity, particularly in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE), in order to provide reliable and relevant information on the state of the environment as a basis for improved policymaking and public awareness, and use indicators to assess progress as appropriate;
3. Consider the need for and develop, as appropriate, legally binding instruments, recommendations, methodologies and guidelines for improving environmental management in member countries.
4. Conduct and support international activities which promote environmental protection and sustainable development in the region at the subregional and transboundary levels; promote cooperation among all parties concerned in order to make action effective and cost-efficient, as well as to encourage public participation in environmental decision-making with the involvement of civil society organizations, including the private sector;
5. Promote cooperation and share experience among the UNECE environmental conventions by providing support for effective implementation of these instruments and to improve compliance with their cross-cutting provisions;

6. Promote implementation of policy instruments and tools for strengthening the capabilities of countries in EECCA and SEE through technical assistance, advisory missions and capacity-building, including the legally binding instruments of the UNECE, to prevent and reverse environmental degradation;
7. Assist Member States as necessary to integrate environmental considerations into other policies and to use indicators to assess progress as appropriate;
8. Contribute to the UNECE region's implementation of the environmental pillar of sustainable development and support the regional implementation meetings organized in preparation for the sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development;
9. Regularly review its programme of work to ensure the coherence of its activities with the overall objectives of UNECE; develop synergies and propose to the UNECE Commission modalities for cooperation with other sectoral committees on issues of common concern;
10. Facilitate coordination between environment-related programmes initiated by Governments and the European Union; cooperate with other United Nations Regional Commissions, with international organizations and with other relevant bodies, including financing institutions, to avoid duplication of work and enhance synergies;
11. Promote and support Member States' efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Annex II
CRITERIA FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Approved by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its fourteenth session, 29 May 2007

| Country | GDP per Capita (\$) | Eligibility note: threshold set for financial support for 2007–2008 = US\$ 3000; countries with GDP per capita below \$2500 are eligible for financial support (travel expenses and DSA <u>1</u>); countries with GDP per capita between \$2500 and \$3000 are eligible for financial support (DSA only) | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
| The FYR of Macedonia | 2855 | | | | |
| Albania | 2619 | | | | |
| Turkmenistan | 2584 | | | | |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 2322 | | | | |
| Ukraine | 1836 | | | | |
| Georgia | 1470 | | | | |
| Armenia | 1626 | | | | |
| Azerbaijan | 1578 | | | | |
| Moldova | 831 | | | | |
| Uzbekistan | 513 | | | | |
| Kyrgyzstan | 481 | | | | |
| Tajikistan | 338 | | | | |
| COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE | | 12 | | | |
| COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR DSA ONLY | | 3 | | | |
| COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES + DSA | | 9 | | | |
| <u>1</u> / DSA - daily subsistence allowance. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |