

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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26 February 2010

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEVENTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
“ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”

OTHER ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE CONFERENCE

DRAFT ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES FOR THE ASTANA CONFERENCE

Note by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson

Summary

Pursuant to a decision by Ministers at their Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 2007), the Seventh Ministerial Conference will be held in September/October 2011 in Astana (Kazakhstan).

The Reform Plan¹ of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process stipulates the parameters for organizing EfE Ministerial Conferences. Following these parameters, the present document summarizes the main organizational issues related to the Conference, such as those concerning participation in the Conference and documents, side-events and exhibitions, as well as a number of other issues.

The present draft document is put before the Extended Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy for consideration with a view to finalize it for approval by the Committee’s seventeenth session on 2-5 November 2010.

I. PARTICIPATION

Government delegations

1. The Astana Ministerial Conference is open to all 56 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Other interested member States of the United Nations may also participate. National delegations should include up to 10 people. Governments are invited to include representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and of the private sector in their national delegations, as appropriate.

¹ The Reform Plan of the “Environment for Europe” process was developed by the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy during 2008 and adopted on 29 January 2009; the Plan was subsequently endorsed by the Economic Commission for Europe at its 63rd session (Geneva, 30 March – 1 April 2009).

2. Governments should each designate a national focal point who will collect and consolidate all registration forms from national delegates and send them to the UNECE secretariat. The list of nominees should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat by email (efe@unece.org) together with their registration forms as soon as possible but not later than [13 June] 2011².

Intergovernmental organizations

3. Intergovernmental organizations and other international organizations that participate regularly in UNECE activities and in activities included in the “Environment for Europe” process are eligible to participate. Delegations from these organizations should include up to 10 people. Representatives of these organizations should submit a registration form to the UNECE secretariat (efe@unece.org) by [13 June] 2011.

Non-governmental organizations³

4. About 200 representatives of NGOs could be invited to attend a possible joint session with Ministers in Astana, and 75 people would be present at any given time at all official sessions. The total of 200 and 75 would include, respectively, 40 and 10 representatives of NGOs from Kazakhstan. European ECO-Forum will be invited to organize a nomination process and will form a delegation representing NGOs.

5. The delegation of 75 persons to be present (on a rotational basis) at the official sessions will include 65 representatives of international and national NGOs from the UNECE region (of which 54 seats will allow for participation by one NGO per UNECE Member State and 11 seats will be reserved for international NGOs, NGO networks and experts actively involved in the preparatory process), and another 10 representatives will be from national NGOs of Kazakhstan.

6. Selection and nomination of NGOs would be done according to the following criteria:

- (a) It should be an environmental NGO from the UNECE region.
- (b) It should have expertise in the subjects included in the Conference agenda.
- (c) It should have international experience and be actively involved in the “Environment for Europe” process.
- (d) The selection should ensure balanced representation of the different parts of the UNECE region.

² Most of the deadlines in this document were calculated on the assumption that the three-day Conference will take place from Wednesday to Friday on 5, 6 and 7 October 2011. These deadlines appear in square brackets and will be revised when the exact dates of the Conference have been agreed (in line with the host country proposal that the Extended Bureau decide on the exact dates for the Conference).

³ Following the experience from the previous Efe Ministerial Conferences the representatives of NGOs will be granted a maximum of 200 seats at a possible joint session with Ministers. At any other given official session NGOs are granted with a maximum of 75 seats (with NGOs attending on a rotational basis).

(e) Nominees should know at least one of the official UNECE languages.

7. The list of NGO delegates should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat by [**13 June**] **2011**. The UNECE secretariat in cooperation with the host country will complete the registration process.

Private sector

8. About 100 representatives of the private sector could be invited to attend a possible joint session with Ministers in Astana, and 50 people would be present at any given time at all official sessions. The total of 100 and 50 would include, respectively, 20 and 5 representatives of the private sector from Kazakhstan. Interested representatives of private sector should submit a registration form to the UNECE secretariat (efe@unece.org) by [**13 June**] **2011**.

Other major groups

9. Other major groups⁴ whose activities have direct relevance to the Conference agenda may also participate. Eligible major groups should submit their registration forms to the UNECE secretariat (efe@unece.org) by [**13 June**] **2011**.

Mass media

10. Representatives of mass media should submit an accreditation form directly to the host country secretariat in Astana by [**26 August**] **2011**.

11. Information on participation and registration will be available through the UNECE website dedicated to the “Environment for Europe” process (<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/welcome.html>) by 1 March 2011.

II. DOCUMENTS

12. The provisions of this section are based on the EfE Reform Plan, which states that in order to reduce the amount of documents produced for the Conference, only one official document per selected theme would be prepared by the UNECE or another EfE partner, in close cooperation with other EfE partners. The official substantive documentation would thus comprise the pan-European assessment and theme-specific⁵ reports. Documents on substantial themes of the Conference should be released 6 weeks before the Conference (i.e. by [24 August] 2011). The Reform Plan also states the interested UNECE member States, EfE partners and other stakeholders could produce other documents featuring their activities and initiatives related to the EfE process, which would be circulated as information documents.

⁴ Women’s, children’s and youth organizations; indigenous people’s groups; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological societies; farmers’ unions as defined by Agenda 21 (United Nations, Rio de Janeiro, 1992).

⁵ In accordance with the EfE Reform Plan, the Committee on Environmental Policy has decided on the following two themes for the Astana Ministerial Conference: (a) sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems; and (b) greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development.

13. Furthermore, the EfE Reform Plan states that Conference outcomes might include: (a) a chair's summary; (b) statements, initiatives, agreements, pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions; (c) an agreed outcome of two pages on follow up and further actions strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference; (d) policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that are presented to the Conference by interested countries of the UNECE region and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues, and that were not negotiated within the preparatory process for the Conference; and (e) assessment reports used in preparation of or presented to the Conference that are important for the implementation of the Conference's outcomes.

14. Accordingly, the Conference documents will be divided into: (a) official substantive documents (OSD); and (b) information documents. The outcome documents will be processed either as OSD or as information documents, depending on their nature.

15. During the preparatory process, in order to save paper and make the process of distributing documentation more efficient, the UNECE secretariat will not provide hard copies of meeting documents in the meeting room (exceptions will be made for meeting discussion documents prepared during or shortly before meetings). All relevant documents prepared by or submitted to the UNECE secretariat are posted on the UNECE website. In addition, the Committee on Environmental Policy official documents are available at the UNECE documents distribution centre (room 337, 3rd floor of the Palais des Nations, near the Delegates' Lounge). Therefore, the delegates are kindly asked to bring with them all documents that they need for work during meetings, including reference documents and documents circulated specifically for meetings of the CEP and its Bureau. Participants wishing to distribute papers relevant to meetings are requested to bring the needed number of copies.

A. Official substantive documents: for possible action by Ministers (e.g. signature, endorsement, approval, adoption, discussion) submitted through and endorsed by the Committee on Environmental Policy⁶

16. The submission of official substantive documents (OSD) to the Conference has to be approved by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its special session on [24-27 May]⁷ 2011. Therefore, taking into account the requirements of the Conference Services Division of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), the deadlines for submitting these documents to the UNECE secretariat are as follows:

(a) Documents prepared directly under the auspices of the Committee on Environmental Policy and the UNECE Executive Bodies will be translated and reproduced by

⁶ According to the EfE Reform Plan, the annotated provisional agenda for the Conference should be approved by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its seventeenth session (2-5 November 2010). Drafts of other official substantive documents should be available for comments at the seventeenth session of the Committee.

⁷ These dates have been provisionally booked for the Committee's special session in May 2011 and are pending approval of the Committee at its Extended Bureau meeting in March 2010. The dates of 24-27 May 2011 take into account the CSD-19 taking place during the first two weeks of May 2011.

the Conference Services Division of UNOG. The deadline for their submission is [28 February]⁸ 2011. These documents may not exceed a length of 8,500 words.

(b) Documents prepared by other EfE partners should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat in three languages (English, French and Russian) in electronic form by [8 April] 2011 for posting on the official website of the Committee on Environmental Policy and reproduction by UNOG.

17. Organizations that wish to reproduce the documents themselves should submit the documents in electronic form (or the web reference where these documents can be viewed) to the UNECE secretariat in three languages (English, French and Russian) for posting on the official website of the Committee on Environmental Policy by [15 April] 2011.

18. OSD documents approved by the May 2011 special session of the Committee on Environmental Policy and processed by UNOG will be distributed prior to the Conference according to the UNECE distribution list (which includes national and international delegations, permanent missions and intergovernmental organizations) and the provisional list of Conference participants. Organizations that wish to reproduce the documents themselves should ensure the distribution of a sufficient number of copies no later than [24 August] 2011 (the UNECE secretariat will provide the distribution list upon request). Additional reproduction of these documents will be done by the host country in Astana as required.

19. OSD documents will have ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/... symbols. The only exceptions might be the Europe's Environment Assessment of Assessments and — pending decision by the Committee on Environmental Policy — the second assessment of transboundary waters in the UNECE region, given that water is one of the Conference main themes. The UNECE secretariat would issue a uniform cover page (to be used for finalizing the documents) by [20 June] 2011.

20. The Astana Conference secretariat may wish to translate the documents into the Kazakh language.

B. Information documents: background, informational and analytical documents of direct relevance to the Conference agenda submitted by the EfE partners and other interested stakeholders

21. The list of these documents will be made available for information to the special session of the Committee on Environmental Policy [24-27 May] 2011. The final titles of these documents, as well as a reference to the website where they can be viewed, should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat by [1 April] 2011. Alternatively, the electronic version of these documents can be posted on the official website of the Committee on Environmental Policy.

22. Translation and reproduction of these documents and delivery of hard copies in sufficient quantities to Astana will be the responsibility of the submitting organizations. The documents have to reach their destinations no later than [19 September] 2011.

⁸ Pending approval of the dates for the Committee's special session in May 2011, the deadline might be revised.

23. For ease of reference, the information documents will have ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/INF/... symbols. The UNECE secretariat will assign appropriate symbols to documents and issue a uniform cover page (to be used for finalizing the documents) by [20 June] 2011. The electronic versions (or the web reference where these documents can be viewed) of the information documents can also be posted on the UNECE website dedicated to the Astana Ministerial Conference, size permitting.

C. Conference outcomes

24. The Committee on Environmental Policy should be informed in advance of the Conference on any possible: (i) statements, initiatives, agreements, pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions; and (ii) policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that are intended to be presented to the Conference by interested countries of the UNECE region and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues.⁹

25. If it is decided to produce an agreed outcome of two pages on follow up and further actions strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference, such document would have to be prepared by the Committee on Environmental Policy in advance of the Conference.

26. A chair's summary will be produced during the Conference by the UNECE secretariat in close collaboration with the host country secretariat and the relevant EfE partners. The chair's summary will be made available in English at the end of the Conference and the final edited version will be processed in English, French and Russian after the Conference.

III. SIDE EVENTS AND EXHIBITION

27. An organizer of a side event may be a Government, an intergovernmental, international or non-governmental organization, the private sector or another major group. Organizers from the UNECE region should be given preference.

28. Official delegates may not be invited to side events organized during the plenary sessions of the Conference or during official social events.

29. The theme and content of a side event should be a subject of direct relevance to the Conference agenda. The language of the event should be at least one of the official UNECE languages (English, French or Russian).

30. Completed registration forms for side events should be submitted to the host country secretariat in Astana by [29 April] 2011. All practical arrangements for side events are subject

⁹ Interested EfE actors should inform the Committee at its seventeenth session (2-5 November 2010) of such envisaged documents, as well as make available the electronic version of the final drafts of these documents in three languages (English, French and Russian) for Committee's information at its special session in May 2011. The electronic versions (or the web reference where these documents can be viewed) of such documents should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat for posting on the official website of the Committee on Environmental Policy by [15 April] 2011.

to the agreement made between the host country and the organizer.

31. The final list of side events should be available for information by the special session of the Committee on Environmental Policy on [24–27 May] 2011.

32. Materials for exhibitions and side events should be shipped to the venue by the delegations themselves and should reach Astana by [**19 September**] 2011. Alternatively, delegations may bring them to the Conference venue upon their arrival (subject to the arrangements made between the host country and delegations).

IV. ACCOMMODATION

33. The designated national focal point may wish to assume the responsibility of hotel booking. Information on hotel booking will be available through the official site of the EfE process and the host country secretariat by 31 January 2011.

V. FURTHER INFORMATION

34. For information on documents, participation and registration:

UNECE secretariat:

Ms. Angela Sochirca
Environmental Affairs Officer
UNECE/EHLM, Palais des Nations, room S.348
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Phone: +41 22 917 2064
Fax: +41 22 917 0107
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35. The host country will nominate in due time a focal point (responsible to provide information on press accreditation, meeting venue, local transport, hotel booking, exhibition, side events and other questions related to local logistics) from the host country secretariat, as well as the address of the Conference venue and useful links to information on local transportation, hotels and maps.

Annex**Summary of major deadlines**

Registration	Deadline for submission
Government delegations (<i>to the UNECE secretariat</i>)	[13 June] 2011
Intergovernmental organizations (<i>to the UNECE secretariat</i>)	[13 June] 2011
Non-governmental organizations (<i>European ECO-Forum will submit the list of NGO delegations to the UNECE secretariat</i>)	[13 June] 2011
Private sector (<i>to the UNECE secretariat</i>)	[13 June] 2011
Other major groups (<i>to the UNECE secretariat</i>)	[13 June] 2011
Mass media (<i>to the host country secretariat</i>)	[26 August] 2011

Official Substantive Documents	Deadlines for submission to the UNECE secretariat
Prepared directly under the auspices of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) and UNECE Executive Bodies (<i>for CEP approval at its special session in May 2011</i>)	[28 February] 2011
Prepared in English, French and Russian by other bodies (<i>for reproduction and dissemination, including, posting on the Web for CEP approval at its special session in May 2011</i>)	[8 April] 2011
Prepared and reproduced in English, French and Russian by other bodies (<i>for posting on the Web for CEP approval at its session in May 2011</i>)	[15 April] 2011
Translation, reproduction and dissemination for the Conference (<i>through the Web and by post</i>)	[24 August] 2011
Delivery of sufficient numbers of copies to Astana	[19 September] 2011
Information documents	
Final title and electronic versions (<i>for compiling the list of information documents and posting on the web for CEP's information at its special session in May 2011</i>)	[1 April] 2011
Translation, reproduction and delivery of sufficient numbers of copies to Astana	[19 September] 2011

Side events and exhibition	Deadline for submission to the host country secretariat
Completed registration forms for side events	[29 April] 2011
