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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials

"Environment for Europe"

Executive Committee

Seventh meeting, 4 November 2002

REPORT OF THE SEVENTH SESSION¹

1. The Executive Committee (ExeCom) of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) held its seventh meeting on 4 November 2002 (morning) in Geneva, Switzerland. Members present at the meeting were Denmark (Mr. Henrik G. Lund), Georgia (Zaal Lomtadze), Germany (Mr. Bert-Axel Szelinski), Italy (Mr. Massimo Cozzone), Norway (Mr. Richard Fort) and Ukraine (Ms. Anna Golubovska-Onisimova, Mr. Stepan Lyzun, Mr. Andriy Demydenko). The representatives of Bulgaria and Poland were not present.
2. Official observers included representatives from the Committee on Environmental Policy (Mr. Hugo Von Meijenfeldt, Chair), Pan-European Biological And Landscape Diversity Strategy (Mr. Frits Schlingemann), and EcoForum (Ms. Victoria Elias). Others who participated as observers in the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee included representatives from the Czech Republic (Ms. Helena Cižková), the Republic of Moldova (Mr. Andrei Isac), the Russian Federation (Mr. Sergey Tveritinov, Mr. Eugeny Bessonov, and Mr. Alexander Pankin), Sweden (Mr. Jon Kahn), and the UNDP office in Ukraine (Ms. Oksana Volosko-Demkiv). The list of participants is included in the Annex.
3. The Session was opened by the Chair, Ms. Anna Golubovska-Onisimova. She welcomed the participants and expressed her hope that the Executive Committee would continue to work effectively and efficiently.
4. The Executive Committee had before it the following documents: the Provisional Agenda (WGSO/EXECOM-7/2002/1); Documentation: the Fifth Ministerial conference "Environment for Europe" (WGSO/EXECOM-6/2002/3/Rev.2); a document on Procedures for participation (WGSO/EXECOM-6/2002/4/Rev.2); a document on the Process of drafting the

¹ This document was not formally edited.

Ministerial Declaration (WGSO/EXECOM-6/2002/5/Rev.2); a document on Screening of Side events (WGSO/EXECOM-6/2002/6/Rev.1); a document on Calendar and time line

(WGSO/EXECOM-6/2002/7/Rev.1); a Proposal for the organisation of work during the Kiev conference, prepared by the Kiev Secretariat and the revised budget of the National Organising Committee of Ukraine. The document on the future of “Environment for Europe” process (CEP/2002/9; CEP/AC.11/2002/26); the fifth draft of a Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (CEP/AC.11/2002/39); the document on water issues in Central Asia (CEP/AC.11/2002/37); the minutes of the third meeting of the Steering Group and Expert meeting for elaboration of EECCA Environmental Strategy and the Draft proposals for statements on energy efficiency were also available for the participants.

Agenda Item 1: Brief update on issues to be discussed at the ninth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy and fourth session of the Working Group of Senior Officials

(a) Future of the Environment for Europe process (EfE)

5. Mr. Von Meijenfeldt, Chair of the drafting group for the Future of the “Environment for Europe” process, reported on the work of the drafting group, which had met twice in Geneva, on 12 September 2002 and on 2 October 2002, respectively. The next step in the process is the convening of the third meeting of the drafting group on 3 December 2002, and, taking into account the comments by the fourth session of WGSO, the preparation of a paper for submission to its February meeting.

6. He noted that the drafting group had agreed on the scope of the process and confirmed that it should apply to the ECE region as a whole, and he informed the Working Group that the revised draft currently consists of four chapters: achievements, challenges, goals and recommendations for improving the process.

7. The next step in the process is the convening of the third meeting of the drafting group on 3 December 2002, and, taking into account the comments by the fourth session of WGSO, the preparation of a paper for submission to its February meeting.

(b) East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) Environment Strategy: update

8. The representative of Georgia reported on the main outcomes of the third meeting of the Steering Group and Expert meetings for elaboration of the EECCA Environmental Strategy held in Tbilisi on 13-17 October 2002. Members were informed that all countries of EECCA, except Turkmenistan, have provided political support for the process (Russian Federation and Azerbaijan were not present due to technical reasons). The concept and the structure of the Strategy were agreed. The Strategy concept was transformed into an “East-West” environmental partnership for sustainable development (EWEP) as it was launched in Johannesburg, and it will use the mandate from Johannesburg accordingly. Therefore, the membership of the Steering Group created by Ministers for development of the Strategy was enlarged to include new partners from among UNECE member States, international organizations and civil society. It is open to participation from all UNECE member States.

9. The Tbilisi meeting also decided on the next steps to be taken. The first draft of the Strategy would be sent out to the countries of EECCA and to other partners of EWEP for comments by 10 December 2002. Thereafter, the broad discussion will be organised at the national level within the EECCA countries, and the second draft (including English translation)

is expected to be ready by 1 February 2003. The fourth meeting of the Steering Group (8-9 February 2002, Tbilisi) will work on the finalisation of the Strategy for its following submission

to the session of WGSO in February 2003. A ministerial meeting might be organised by the EECCA countries for consideration of the Strategy in February-March 2003. The Kyiv Secretariat would play a coordinating role and would prepare the first draft.

10. Georgia stressed that the paper is based on the “needs of EECCA countries” and is being developed by the experts from EECCA countries with contributions by international organisations. Ukraine noted that the Kyiv Secretariat will do its best to support the preparation of materials for the Kyiv Conference. It also indicated its support to the EWEP partnership approach developed at WSSD, and proposed that it would prepare a national strategy, as well, in parallel to the regional strategy, taking into account national circumstances.

11. Members welcomed the progress made in the development of the Strategy. Many members stressed the importance of support from all sectors of government on the national level and identification of indicators of the success of implementation. In addition, implementation was emphasized as the most crucial part of the Strategy. In this regard, a representative of the Kiev Secretariat (Mr. Demydenko) proposed that discussion of the Strategy should include consideration of establishing a Secretariat to implement it, similar to or as a reorganization of the EAP Task Force.

12. EcoForum informed the Executive Committee that it had become more actively involved in the process and that, with support received from the United Kingdom, it planned to organise a meeting to discuss the Strategy among the NGO community and to prepare a publication accordingly.

(c) Environmental education: update work of the drafting group

13. Sweden reported to the Executive Committee on progress in the development of a Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development. It informed members that the final draft of the paper is expected to be ready for submission to the meeting of WGSO in February 2003. It also stressed the importance of cooperation with the Council of Europe, which is working closely with the Ministries of Education in Europe. The Russian Federation informed participants about the second meeting of the Drafting group to be held in Moscow on 22 November 2002 and welcomed all interested parties to participate.

14. The ECE secretariat noted that, at the request of the sixth session of the Executive Committee, it had sent a letter to the Ambassadors of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva, drawing their attention to the work of the Working Group on education and asking them to communicate this to all relevant partners at the national level, including the Ministry of Education. The letter was copied, by email, to the members of WGSO.

(d) Environment, water and Security in Central Asia

15. The Secretariat reported to the Executive Committee on the High-level meeting of the representatives from the Ministries of Environment of countries of Central Asia (Khoudjand, Tajikistan; 1-2 October 2002). The meeting was funded by a grant from the Norwegian government. OSCE co-funded and participated in the meeting. Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan did

not participate due to technical reasons, but have provided organisers with written statements as their input to the meeting

16. According to the minutes of the Kjoujdjand meeting, countries of Central Asia proposed to include the item on “Environment, water and security – basis for the sustainable development” in the Kyiv Agenda. This item should be based on the Central Asian initiative on sustainable development launched in the Johannesburg Summit. The process on development of a legal document on regional cooperation could be started after the Conference.

17. However, there are two issues that need to be addressed in the further development of this initiative: Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan will have to agree on their participation; the authorities responsible for the water sectors must be involved in further development.

18. Some of the participants mentioned the possible combination with or inclusion of this initiative into the EECCA Strategy and suggested that it be considered as a part of the overall East-West partnership.

19. Due to time constraints, it was suggested to have a document on commitment, possibly a Regional Declaration or Charter for the adoption at the Kyiv Conference. This would be the basis for a process on the development of stronger instrument.

20. The representative of PEBLDS informed members about the proposal of Tajikistan to organise a Global Forum on Water. It also announced a joint initiative of UNEP, OSCE, NATO and other organisations on environment and security issues linked to the region of South Europe. Possibly, this initiative could be presented during the Kiev Conference as a side event.

Agenda Item 2: Process for drafting the Ministerial declaration

21. It was proposed that the Executive Committee would be responsible for drafting the Ministerial Declaration. It was also agreed that the Chair would prepare the first draft of elements that might be included in the ministerial declaration in consultation with a small drafting group on 4 December, in Geneva. The draft would be submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Committee, in January 2003, revised and then provided to the February meeting of WGSO for its consideration.

22. Ukraine and Norway asked to be included in the Drafting Group. It was also decided to invite the United States to join the drafting exercise at the next session of the Executive Committee.

23. The Working Group agreed on the following deadlines: the first draft of the declaration would be available by 15 December 2002 and the revised version would be circulated for comments by 24 January 2003.

24. Members were requested to provide comments on the issues to be included in the Ministerial Declaration within two weeks.

Agenda Item 3: Organization of the Kiev Conference

(a) Kiev Agenda and organization of work in Kiev

25. The Chair introduced the revised document on the draft organisation of work during the Conference, prepared by the Kiev Secretariat. It suggested that the Conference duration be two and one-half days and the general theme would be “Environment and security”. The document was prepared on the basis of the comments provided by the sixth session of the Executive Committee.
26. On the issue of the theme, some of the members preferred that the concept of “sustainable development” be included. Other suggestions offered by the members of the Executive Committee were the following: (1) to hold one session per day, respectively, on the three UNECE Protocols; (2) to allow more time for the session on a Strategy for Education and Sustainable Development, the session on the “future” of the EfE process and the Ministerial Declaration, and the joint session with NGOs; and (3) to hold a separate session on biodiversity matters. In addition, the representative of the Netherlands noted that “strengthening compliance with and enforcement of implementation of multilateral environmental agreements in the ECE region” needed to be added under the most suitable Agenda item. The Executive Committee also discussed the possible involvement of the private sector.
27. The representative of PEBLDS informed the Executive Committee that the Central Asian Mountain Chapter had not been signed during the Global Mountain Forum (Bishkek, 2002) and therefore might be opened for signature at the Kiev Conference.
28. It was noted that the Dniester Convention might not be completed before May 2003, and the Secretariat confirmed that the Protocol to the Air Convention would not be ready for the Conference.
29. The Chair requested members to provide written comments on the both Agenda and Organisation of work for the Kiev Conference within the week.
30. It was decided that the Kiev Secretariat would prepare a new draft of the Kiev Agenda and Organization of work on the basis of the comments given.

(b) Documentation for the Conference

31. Members welcomed the revised paper prepared by the ECE Secretariat.
- (c) Participation and registration matters; screening of side events for the Conference
32. Members welcomed the revised papers prepared by the ECE Secretariat.
33. Eco-Forum asked to make corrections in Para 4 of the document on participation matters (WGSO/EXECOM-6/2002/4/Rev.2). It will provide the Secretariat with the written comments.

Agenda Item 4: Host country preparations

(a) Outcome of meetings of the National Organizing Committee

34. The Chair informed members that the Kiev Secretariat had been established and had begun working at full capacity. She also confirmed that the Action plan on national preparations was discussed at the second meeting of the Organising Committee and approved by the Prime Minister.

35. The representative of the Kiev Secretariat notified the Executive Committee that it is issuing a bulletin on the preparatory process for the Kiev Conference in three languages: Russian, Ukrainian and English.

(b) National budget

36. The Kiev Secretariat introduced the national budget, which had been approved by the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine. The budget consists of two parts: contributions of Ukraine and support from donors. The representative noted that there remains a deficit of 250-30000,000 USD. The money is needed for national consultations of EECCA countries on the EECCA Environmental Strategy, publications, organizing the computer and copy centers, and internal TV for the Conference. Ukraine is also seeking the support of the local business community.

37. Among other items, the national budget of Ukraine includes support for accommodation and meals for the respective heads of national delegations of all UNECE members States and some Ukrainian NGOs. The Kiev Secretariat noted that it would not be able to provide support for NGOs outside of Ukraine.

Agenda Item 5: Proposed calendar for the meetings of Working Group of Senior Officials and its Executive Committee.

38. The following calendar for the meetings of the Executive Committee was agreed upon:

Eighth session: 17-18 January 2003 (Kiev)

Ninth session: 11 April 2003 (Geneva)

Agenda Item 6: Other business

39. The Chair asked that a representative of UNDP be included as an observer in the Executive Committee for all meetings leading up to the Kiev Conference. It was agreed.

ANNEX
List of Participants

Executive Committee 4 November 2002 (morning)

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