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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

(Eleventh session, 13-15 October 2004)

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PREPARATORY GROUP FOR THE SIXTH
“ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” CONFERENCE**

Summary

1 The sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” will take place in Belgrade in the autumn of 2007. For preparations for the Conference to begin in 2005, as agreed, the Committee on Environmental Policy may wish to establish a preparatory group and adopt its mandate.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PREPARATORY GROUP

2 The Environment Ministers at the Kiev Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe,” in their Declaration (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1), strongly supported the continuation of the “Environment for Europe” process and decided that its future ministerial conferences should be held on a regular and predictable basis every four or five years, preferably in a host country.

3 The Ministers also reaffirmed the importance of the “Environment for Europe” process in bringing together a wide range of international organizations, with an effective division of labour and channels of communication and collaboration among them. For this purpose, the Ministers decided that an open-ended preparatory group should be convened to coordinate the preparations not more than two years before the next conference, with the UNECE serving as secretariat.

4 Subsequently, at its special session on 22 October 2003, the Working Group of Senior Officials decided that the sixth Conference would be held in Belgrade in September or October 2007. It, therefore, also decided that the first meeting of the open-ended “Environment for Europe” preparatory group would convene in the autumn of 2005, back to back with a session of the Committee on Environmental Policy.

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| 5 | The Committee on Environmental Policy may, therefore, decide at its eleventh session: |
| (a) | To establish an open-ended preparatory group for the sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Belgrade; |
| (b) | Consistent with previous preparatory groups, to designate it the Working Group of Senior Officials; |
| (c) | To adopt its mandate as set out below. |

DRAFT MANDATE

6 Pursuant to the Declaration by the Ministers of the Environment of the UNECE region at Kiev on 23 May 2003, the "Environment for Europe" process remains essential as a political framework for cooperation in environmental protection in Europe. It was agreed that it should continue to promote the achievement of policy objectives through regional and subregional cooperation; to strengthen the implementation of environmental instruments; to improve cooperation among regional programmes; to mobilize financial resources to support the implementation of regional environmental instruments and subregional initiatives; to support interregional cooperation; to contribute to the UNECE regional implementation of the global sustainable development process; and to improve and strengthen monitoring and assessment in the region.

7 For the preparation of the next Ministerial Conference, which will take place in Serbia and Montenegro in September or October 2007, and as agreed at Kiev, the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy has established the open-ended Working Group of Senior Officials, under the chairmanship of the host country.

8 The Executive Committee, which will be established by the Working Group of Senior Officials at its first session, will be composed of two senior officials from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), one from South-Eastern Europe, one from Central Europe, four from Western countries and a representative of the Presidency of the European Union. The Chairpersons of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme (EAP) for Central and Eastern Europe, and the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, and a senior representative from the European Commission and from EcoForum will also be invited. The Executive Committee will be chaired by the host country, and the secretariat services will be provided by UNECE.

9 The Working Group will hold its first session in October 2005 in conjunction with the twelfth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy. Thereafter, the Working Group will meet as often as necessary and keep the Committee on Environmental Policy informed of its progress.

10 The Working Group is responsible for the substantive preparations for the 2007 Ministerial Conference, including its agenda, and, in the run-up to the Conference, will serve as the central coordinating body for the further development of the "Environment for Europe" process. The Working Group will consider work undertaken to implement the recommendations and the decisions of the Kiev Conference. Proposals for the work of the Working Group, including time schedules, will be presented at its first session.

11 Considering the large amount of substantive work to be done, the Working Group will work in close cooperation with the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme (EAP) for Central and Eastern Europe, the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, and the European Environment Agency. The Working Group will also cooperate with the Council of Europe, the Commission of the European Communities, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO), and other international organizations and institutions, international non-governmental and private sector organizations which will be involved in the preparation of the 2007 Ministerial Conference.

12 The Working Group will submit the documents prepared under its auspices or in cooperation with other international organizations and institutions, including the draft ministerial declaration, to the 2007 Ministerial Conference in Serbia and Montenegro for consideration and possible adoption. The Working Group will keep the Committee on Environmental Policy informed of the preparation of the documents for the Conference.

13 The Working Group may set up expert groups to elaborate specific issues, when necessary.

14 The UNECE secretariat will provide the necessary secretariat assistance and conference facilities to the Working Group at the United Nations Office at Geneva, in accordance with UNECE rules and practices.
