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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
(Eleventh session, 13-15 October 2004)
(Item 4 of the provisional agenda)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE ELEVENTH SESSION
Addendum

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2005-2006

Introduction

1. The present note provides information to assist the Committee in discussing and establishing its programme of work, the duration of each activity, as well as its methods of work. The Committee's Bureau met three times between the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Committee to review the programme of work and its implementation.
2. The draft programme of work is set out below. When discussing its programme of work, the Committee may wish to keep in mind that the programme should reflect the real commitment of member countries and their willingness to contribute to its implementation in terms of expertise, human and financial resources.
3. At the Committee's session, under item 6, the secretariat will report on the Trust Fund's expenditures and balance in 2004. Through the Trust Fund, representatives from eligible countries can receive support to attend the Committee's session. The Trust Fund needs to be maintained at a level that allows high participation. It is, therefore, important that countries should continue to make general contributions to the Trust Fund.
4. The Committee's twelfth session is scheduled to take place in Geneva on 10-12 October 2005.

Proposed decisions by the Committee

5. In the light of the discussion, the Committee may wish to:

- (a) Take into account the outcome of the implementation of the strategic goals set in the “Future UNECE strategic directions for the environment” (CEP/2003/25) as well as of the first UNECE Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development and the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development;
- (b) Take note of the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work;
- (c) Discuss and adopt its programme of work for 2005-2006, as presented below;
- (d) Call upon Governments to make general contributions to the Trust Fund.

SUBPROGRAMME 01 - ENVIRONMENT

The Committee on Environmental Policy represents a consensus-based policy forum for discussing environmental issues and bringing forward regional priorities in the UNECE region, and carries out its work in accordance with its terms of reference as adopted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

At its tenth session (20-22 October 2003), the Committee adopted a series of strategic goals to help structure and adapt its programme of work for the next five to ten years (CEP/2003/25).

The specific activities in the draft programme of work for 2005-2006, submitted for adoption by the Committee at its eleventh session, relate to the following main processes and strategic goals:

1. Follow-up to the fifth “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference held in Kiev on 21-23 May 2003.
(Goal 1: Contributing to the “Environment for Europe” process)

2. Environmental performance reviews (EPRs) and environmental monitoring.
(Goal 2: Improving environmental governance)

3. Follow-up and support to the regional environmental conventions and protocols.
(Goal 3: Improving effectiveness of international legal instruments)

4. Regional follow-up to Agenda 21 as well as to the Johannesburg Plan of Action.
(Goal 5: Contributing to regional implementation of the environmental pillar of sustainable development).

5. In addition, within all its activities, including through cooperation with other ECE principal subsidiary bodies and international organizations, the Committee promotes cross-sectoral activities.
(Goal 4: Integrating environmental concerns into sectoral policies)

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 1

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The Ministers at the fifth “Environment for Europe” Conference reaffirmed their support for the EPR programme and agreed that the programme should continue to assist eligible countries in transition to assess progress, to promote policy dialogue through peer reviews, to help stimulate greater accountability and to offer the Governments concerned tailor-made recommendations on how to reduce the overall pollution burden. It was recommended furthermore that the first round of reviews should be completed and the second round proceed.

In addition, at its tenth session, the Committee decided to request reviewed countries, on a voluntary basis, to provide an interim report to it on the implementation of the first review’s recommendations within three years of the conclusion of that review.

Work accomplished:

With the exception of Turkmenistan, which has not requested a review, the first round of environmental performance reviews is being concluded and second reviews have been undertaken in Bulgaria (2000) and Estonia (2001).

UNECE carried out an environmental performance review of Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 2003 and of Tajikistan in March - April 2004. The EPR Expert Group is scheduled to carry out its expert review of both these countries in September 2004, and the reports will be provided to the Committee for its peer review in October 2004, at its eleventh session.

Work to be undertaken:

The EPR programme will continue on the basis of the recommendations adopted by the Kiev Conference and the Committee. All countries that are member States of UNECE but not members of OECD are eligible for reviews. The second reviews should take into account the particular needs of countries as decided in Kiev, emphasizing integration (sustainable development), implementation and financing. The second reviews are also being used as tools to support the implementation of the Environment Strategy for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). This is one reason why the secretariat of the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe has decided to participate in EPR reviews, to the extent possible.

Should the Committee decide to renew the mandate of the EPR Expert Group at its eleventh session, the Expert Group will continue to offer advice and support to the preparations for, and conduct of, EPRs. It will also carry out a detailed expert review of each EPR prior to the Committee’s peer review and report on it to the Committee.

Armenia, Belarus and the Republic of Moldova will provide interim reports to the Committee at its eleventh session on the implementation of the first report.

Second reviews are currently planned for Belarus (2004-2005) and the Republic of Moldova (2005). Additional requests for second reviews during 2005 are expected.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 2

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

At the Kiev Conference, the Ministers decided on the development and finalization of a UNECE strategy for education for sustainable development, and invited UNECE to work with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe on a regional strategy for education for sustainable development.

Pursuant to the decision taken in Kiev, the Committee on Environmental Policy, at its tenth session, set up an open-ended task force to develop such a strategy. The preparatory process is chaired by Sweden with the Russian Federation as vice-chair and serviced by the UNECE secretariat. Representatives from both the environment and education administrations were invited to participate in the work of the task force.

Work accomplished:

At its first meeting in February 2004, the task force adopted its terms of reference and its work programme. It also provided comments on the draft strategy that had been prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the lead countries. The task force set up a drafting group to assist in preparing the final draft. The task force held its second meeting in July to discuss, amend and approve the draft strategy for submission to the Committee on Environmental Policy at its eleventh session.

The drafting group met three times and prepared a draft strategy taking into account the comments provided by member States and international and non-governmental organizations. The drafting group also prepared two background documents: one providing an overview of past and ongoing international processes on education for sustainable development, and another clarifying the terminology used in the strategy. These documents are for information only. The strategy aims at providing a flexible framework for action in education for sustainable development. Its implementation can be adapted to each country's priorities, specific needs and circumstances.

Work to be undertaken:

The Committee is expected to comment on the strategy and endorse it at its eleventh session and submit it for adoption to a joint high-level meeting of Environment Ministries and Education Ministries or equivalent State bodies responsible for education in the UNECE member States tentatively scheduled for February 2005. To facilitate the Committee's discussion, the secretariat will prepare two documents: a note on a joint high-level meeting and a framework for the implementation of the strategy. Both documents will take the comments provided by the task force into account.

The Committee may wish to provide its view on its role in the implementation of the strategy once it has been adopted at the high-level meeting.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 3

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

The Kiev Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” supported the Ad Hoc Working Group on Environmental Monitoring, particularly its activities on strengthening the environmental information and observation capacity in the 12 countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Ministers requested that the cooperation framework provided by the Working Group should be further developed and they invited donors to support the Working Group.

The Working Group will contribute to the fourth assessment report on the state of the environment for the next “Environment for Europe” Conference in Belgrade. It will continue strengthening environmental information and observation capacities in EECCA focusing on areas that were emphasized by Ministers in Kiev, in particular the monitoring component of the Environment Strategy for EECCA.

Work accomplished:

A workshop was organized in Geneva in November 2003 jointly by the Working Group and the European Environment Agency (EEA) to evaluate the results of the Tacis project on strengthening environmental information and observation capacity in EECCA and to consider a follow-up. Recommendations were prepared on: (a) air emissions inventories and atmospheric air pollution monitoring and modelling for the new Parties to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia; and (b) improving waste classification and inventory systems in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. A trial compendium was prepared on environmental indicators from the core set selected by EECCA countries. The Working Group supported the publication of a trilingual (Armenian, English and Russian) state-of-the-environment report of Armenia as a case study for the application of the Guidelines for the preparation of governmental reports on the state and protection of the environment (ECE/CEP/113) endorsed in Kiev. A bilingual (English-Russian) compact disc, Environmental monitoring and assessment: Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, was produced. It combined the main analytical reports and recommendations developed by the Working Group since its inception.

A workshop was organized in May 2004 in Moscow to evaluate and to consider a follow-up to two electronic databases on the Working Group’s web site, one on officials responsible for the main environmental data flows in EECCA, and the other on environmental data sources in EECCA. Another workshop, held in Chisinau in July 2004, developed a draft manual for the application of a core set of environmental indicators in EECCA.

Work to be undertaken:

The Working Group will build on the results achieved so far and will give priority to the specific areas listed in its terms of reference. Subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, it will:

(a) Contribute to the new assessment report to be prepared by EEA for the next “Environment for Europe” Conference. This will include, in particular, reviewing a draft outline of the report, assisting in data collection in EECCA countries and reviewing the report’s draft chapters and executive summary;

(b) Promote the establishment, on its web site, of an online catalogue of national periodicals on the environment (state-of-the-environment reports, environmental statistics bulletins, etc.) and environmental reports submitted to international bodies like governing bodies of multilateral environmental conventions. It will follow the ReportNet system of EEA and ensure access online to the publications and reports referred to in the catalogue;

(c) Finalize and test the manual on the application of the core set of environmental indicators in EECCA with recommendations on data collection, measurement and calculation methods and with references to relevant international standards, policy targets and methodologies. The manual should assist in improving environmental reporting in EECCA countries and harmonizing their environmental assessments with those of EEA countries as well as facilitate data gathering for future regional environmental assessment reports to be prepared for the “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conferences;

(d) Prepare guidelines for EECCA on integrated environmental monitoring and assessments including requirements for monitoring networks, standards and formats, inter-agency cooperation, information management and reporting.

The Working Group will report to the Committee, at its sessions, on the progress in implementing its activities.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 4

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

To comply with the mandate given by Ministers in Kiev, the Committee is developing a communication strategy to raise awareness of the environmental problems in the UNECE region and to increase the visibility of the “Environment for Europe” process in setting a policy framework for the environment-related initiatives in the region. The communication strategy will be prepared in consultation with all major stakeholders.

Work accomplished:

Taking into account the discussions held by the Committee at its tenth session, a consultant was appointed to prepare a draft extended outline with the assistance of the secretariat and in consultation with relevant NGOs and international organizations. The Bureau considered the draft outline at its meeting in June 2004 and provided feedback.

Work to be undertaken:

At its eleventh session, the Committee is invited to consider and discuss the extended draft outline for the communication strategy, and provide further input so that the consultant can finalize the draft strategy. The draft strategy will be presented to the Bureau at its meetings in 2005 and subsequently to the Committee in October 2005 for adoption.

The Committee could consider organizing a consultation in early spring 2005 with major stakeholders and substantive experts and communication professionals nominated by member countries to receive their input on the strategy, and discuss how the strategy could best be implemented to promote understanding of the achievements of the “Environment for Europe” process.

The secretariat will continue to post documents for the Committee’s sessions and related to the “Environment for Europe” process on the web site and update its media contact points.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 5

FOLLOW-UP AND SUPPORT TO THE UNECE ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS AND PROTOCOLS

Since the 1970s, five regional environmental conventions have been negotiated and adopted within the framework of UNECE.

All five have entered into force and their governing bodies carry responsibility for the work. Seven of the eight protocols to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution are currently in force. The Protocol on Water and Health and the three protocols adopted at the Kiev Ministerial Conference have not yet entered into force.

The Committee’s role is to offer a catalysing forum in which all government representatives, including the governing bodies of the conventions, can share their experience in promoting and assessing the implementation of these regional environmental instruments, and identify means of improving compliance with them. Furthermore, the Committee provides support, as appropriate, to make the implementation of the conventions and their protocols more effective.

Work accomplished:

A third informal meeting between the Bureaux of the Committee on Environmental Policy and of the governing bodies of the UNECE environmental conventions was held in June 2004, at the invitation of the Chairman of the Committee on Environmental Policy, to continue sharing experiences and finding synergies and areas of cooperation to assess and promote the implementation of the environmental legal instruments in the region.

Work to be undertaken:

It is envisaged that informal meetings between the Bureaux of the Committee and of the governing bodies of the conventions will continue to be organized on a regular basis. The next informal meeting is tentatively scheduled for 6 June 2005 and will focus primarily on financial

and human resources available for the implementation of the UNECE environmental legal instruments. The Committee will be informed about the outcome of the meeting.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 6

ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY FOR EASTERN EUROPE, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA (EECCA)

The Ministers in Kiev adopted the Environment Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) - Strategic framework - to contribute to improving environmental conditions and to implementing the World Summit's Plan of Implementation in the subregion, by strengthening the efforts of the EECCA countries in environmental protection and by facilitating partnership and cooperation between these countries and other countries of the UNECE region, including all stakeholders.

The Ministers invited the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe (EAP Task Force) to lead efforts to facilitate and support the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy in cooperation with other relevant international bodies and Regional Environmental Centres (RECs). The Strategy should be implemented in close cooperation with the secretariats of regional environmental agreements and the environmental performance review (EPR) programme. The EAP Task Force, in cooperation with relevant international bodies, and on the basis of information provided by the EECCA countries, was requested to keep the Committee on Environmental Policy informed on progress in achieving the objectives of the Strategy.

Work accomplished:

On 6-7 October 2003 a joint meeting of the EAP Task Force and the Project Preparation Committee was held to discuss the role of the EAP Task Force in facilitating the achievement of the EECCA Strategy's objectives. For this meeting and subsequent work of the EAP Task Force, UNECE prepared background papers on planned and potential activities related to the EECCA objectives (monitoring, education, public participation, transport, water management and energy). UNECE also participated in a meeting with supporting organizations and the EAP Task Force in Paris in April 2004.

Work to be undertaken:

EECCA countries are now in the focus of most technical assistance provided by the UNECE regional adviser and the UNECE conventions, and most, if not all, ongoing and planned activities in the subregion can be linked to the implementation of the EECCA Strategy. For example, an action programme for the development of transboundary water cooperation in the EECCA region has been developed in the working programme of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and the Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The EAP Task Force will report to the Committee on progress in the implementation of the Strategy and on the outcome of the meeting of EECCA ministers and partners in October 2004 back to back with the joint meeting of the EAP Task Force and the Project Preparation Committee. The

UNECE conventions' secretariats will also report on their activities related to the EECCA Strategy.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 7

ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND SECURITY INITIATIVE IN CENTRAL ASIA

Central Asian countries launched the Initiative on Environment, Water and Security at the Kiev Conference. The Ministers in Kiev recommended starting preparations for a partnership agreement on transboundary water problems, environment and security in Central Asia, as part of the follow-up to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and as a contribution to the EU Water Initiative and other water initiatives in the region. The Committee will provide a forum for exchanging information and discussing progress.

Work accomplished:

At its tenth session, the Committee was informed about the steps taken by the Central Asian countries to develop the Initiative as a type II partnership agreement as defined at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to develop activities contributing to reaching the objectives outlined in the Initiative, such as : strengthening cooperation to protect water-basin ecosystems, using water rationally and improving governance to ensure this subregion's sustainable development and its security. Donor countries and international organizations were requested to support the Central Asian countries to fund activities to reach these objectives.

Since the Kiev Conference, the countries in the region and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) have worked to ensure political support for the Initiative. For example, a memorandum of understanding has been signed with the European Union on cooperation with the EU Water Initiative. A few activities led by CAREC have also been initiated to this end.

Work to be undertaken:

UNECE will continue to support the development of the Central Asian Initiative, in particular with technical assistance in the water and other sectors. Examples of activities developed by UNECE in collaboration with partner organizations are work on dam safety, projects on the implementation of the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, support to the development of transboundary water cooperation in the Chu-Talas water basin, and a project on air quality management and clean coal technology. As to the development of a partnership agreement as outlined in the Initiative, the further work to build a sound basis for such an agreement should be followed and, if possible, supported.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 8

INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SECTORAL POLICIES

Integrating environmental concerns into the activities of other sectors, whether economic or social, is one of the key challenges for the effective implementation of environmentally sound and sustainable development principles. Since the Rio Conference, actions and programmes in the UNECE region have moved towards that goal, but significant efforts are still needed through a wide range of policy, legal, institutional and financial measures and incentives.

The Committee on Environmental Policy has established cross-sectoral linkages, activities and cooperation with other UNECE committees (e.g. human settlements, transport, and sustainable energy) and between it and the conventions' governing bodies, as well as with other international organizations, such as the World Health Organization's Office for Europe (WHO/EURO). UNECE environmental cross-sectoral programmes should be further encouraged to ensure effective support for national and regional initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production to promote social and economic development.

8.1. TRANSPORT, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

The WHO/UNECE Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) aims at promoting sustainable transport in the region through specific activities in selected priority areas. In implementing its work plan, THE PEP Steering Committee pays special attention to the needs of the countries in EECCA and South-East Europe as well as to ecologically particularly sensitive areas of the region. The Committee on Environmental Policy provides a forum for exchanging information and discussing progress in promoting sustainable transport. In addition, it can, through its delegations, further encourage coordinated efforts from the transport, environment and health sectors for the implementation of THE PEP.

Work accomplished:

The Steering Committee held its second session on 29-30 March 2004 to assess the progress made and to provide guidance in the implementation of its work programme for 2003-2005. The Steering Committee endorsed new project proposals and reviewed the resources available for the programme's implementation.

THE PEP was represented at the fourth Environment and Health Ministerial Conference in Budapest, through a ministerial round table on transport, environment and health, a side event on transport-related health impact and an exhibition stand with online demonstrations of its clearing house.

Work to be undertaken:

The current work programme will be implemented in particular to:

- (a) Launch the pilot version of the clearing house by the end of 2004;

(b) Organize a joint workshop with the European Conference of Ministers of Transport in Moscow (30 September to 1 October 2004) on sustainable and healthy urban transport and planning in EECCA;

(c) Carry out a study on the institutional aspects of integration.

The progress achieved in the implementation of the programme of work will be reassessed by THE PEP Steering Committee at its third session scheduled for 11-12 April 2005.

The Committee on Environmental Policy is invited to further encourage support and coordinated efforts from the transport, environment and health sectors for the implementation of THE PEP.

8.2. ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

WHO/EURO Ministerial Conferences have been organized since 1989 and bring together Ministers of Health and Environment and other stakeholders, to reach consensus and make political commitments to promoting a safe and healthy environment.

The fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health took place in Budapest from 23 to 25 June 2004. The next one will be held in Italy in 2009.

At the Conference, Ministers adopted the Conference Declaration, summarizing commitments by member States to specific environment and health issues across Europe, and the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe as a framework for developing member States' plans and policies on health and the environment.

Close contacts were established between the European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) and the Working Group of Senior Officials "Environment for Europe".

At the Budapest Conference, Ministers entrusted EEHC to follow up their decisions and to serve as steering committee for the preparations of the next Conference.

Work to be undertaken:

The Committee on Environmental Policy will continue to contribute to the European Environment and Health Committee by electing its representatives from the environment sector at its eleventh session, as decided by Ministers in Budapest. Following the Budapest Declaration, EEHC should continue its activities in accordance with an output-based work plan and report annually to the WHO Regional Committee for Europe and the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy on progress made.

Furthermore, Ministers invited both Committees and their respective secretariats to consider the Declaration and its recommendations, and to give priority to activities and programmes in the area of health and the environment.

8.3. ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The UNECE Environment Ministers at Kiev endorsed the Guidelines on Reforming Energy Pricing and Subsidies (ECE/CEP/103) prepared jointly by the UNECE Committees on Environmental Policy and on Sustainable Energy as a means of promoting action to progressively reduce and, where possible, remove energy price subsidies which counteract the efficient use of energy and/or have harmful effects on the environment. Furthermore, both Committees were invited to examine the role of economic instruments in promoting the use of renewable energy taking into account the work of OECD and other international organizations.

Work accomplished:

As a follow-up to decisions at the Kiev Ministerial Conference calling for further efforts to improve energy efficiency and promote renewable energy sources as a means of meeting environmental objectives, the Committee on Sustainable Energy recommended, at its thirteenth session in 2004, to include renewable energies in the Energy Efficiency 21 Project Programme.

Work to be undertaken:

The Committee on Environmental Policy may consider contributing to the work on renewable energy of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, particularly by nominating environmental experts to participate in this work and by staying informed on the follow-up to this activity.