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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials
“Environment for Europe”(First session, Geneva, 12-13 October 2005)
(Item 4 of the provisional agenda)**PREPARATIONS FOR THE SIXTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
“ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”****Terms of reference****Background of the Working Group of Senior Officials**

1. The Fifth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” closed on 23 May 2003, in Kiev, Ukraine, with the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration which underlined the importance of the “Environment for Europe” process as a tool to promote environmental protection and sustainable development in the region. Ministers affirmed ‘that the Environment for Europe process should continue as a broad framework bringing together a wide range of international organizations, with an effective division of labour and channels of communication and collaboration among them’. They also asked for the establishment of an open-ended Preparatory Group ‘to coordinate the preparations not more than two years before the next conference, with the UNECE serving as secretariat’¹.

2. Following the Kiev Ministerial Conference, and in accordance with established practice in the Environment for Europe process, the Committee on Environmental Policy, at its eleventh session, set up the open-ended Working Group of Senior Officials to prepare for the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, to be held in 2007. The Committee adopted a new mandate for the Working Group specific to preparations for the Belgrade Conference (see annex) and decided that the ECE secretariat would provide the necessary assistance and conference facilities, in accordance with ECE rules and practices.

¹ Paragraph 69 of the Kiev Declaration.

Composition of the Working Group and its Executive Committee

3. The Working Group of Senior Officials is open to participation of all member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The Working Group will, in addition, establish an Executive Committee, consisting of representatives of eight UNECE member States, including one from South-Eastern Europe (the host country); two from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, one from North America and four from other UNECE member States. Also invited as observers will be:

- (a) The Chair of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy;
- (b) One of the co-Chairs of the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe;
- (c) The Chair of the Project Preparation Committee ;
- (d) The Chair of the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy;
- (e) A Representative of the Presidency of the European Union,
- (f) A senior representative of the European Commission;
- (g) A senior representative of EcoForum; and
- (h) One senior representative from the regional environmental centres.

The Executive Committee will be chaired by Serbia and Montenegro, as host country.

Meetings of the Working Group and its Executive Committee

4. The Committee on Environmental Policy at its eleventh session, decided that the Working Group would hold its first meeting in 2005 in conjunction with the twelfth session of the Committee. The date has been set for 12-13 October 2005. Thereafter, the Working Group will meet as often as necessary, subject to the availability of budgetary resources, and keep the Committee on Environmental Policy informed of its progress. Proposals for the activities of the Working Group, including time-schedules, are to be presented at its first session. (See documents CEP/AC.11/2005/3 and CEP/AC.11/2005/4).

Partners

5. In accordance with previous practice in Conference preparations, the Committee at its eleventh session decided that the Working Group would work in close cooperation with all international organizations and institutions, international financial institutions, international non-governmental and private sector organizations that will be involved in or contribute to the preparations for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference.

6. It is the role of the ECE secretariat to provide secretariat services and to oversee the entire process. ECE will, therefore, assist the Working Group in its coordination functions.

Budget

7. In providing secretariat support, including conference servicing, ECE and the United Nations Organization in Geneva (UNOG) will provide more than US\$ 1 million for

the preparation of the Belgrade Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe". Additional funds, namely for travel by experts from countries in transition and the secretariat and for consultancies, will need to be provided. The ECE Secretariat, in order to provide adequate secretariat assistance, will need one additional resource person to be financed from extra-budgetary resources. It is suggested that funds should be deposited into the United Nations Trust Fund "Environment for Europe". Donors are invited to make pledges as soon as possible to facilitate a smooth preparatory process.

Agenda

8. The Working Group, supported by its Executive Committee, will set the agenda for the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe". Topics may be derived from decisions taken at the Fifth Ministerial Conference, suggestions from member States and partners in the preparatory process, and other major events, such as the Millennium Summit+5 Review in September 2005. Document CEP/AC.11/2005/5 summarizes some of the possible topics derived from the Fifth Ministerial Conference. Particular emphasis should be given to items of great political importance to the region.

Annex

**MANDATE FOR THE WORKING GROUP OF SENIOR OFFICIALS FOR
THE SIXTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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, subject to the availability of budgetary resources, and keep the Committee on Environmental Policy informed of its progress.
4. The Executive Committee, which will be established by the Working Group of Senior Officials at its first session, will consist of representatives of eight UNECE member States, including one from South-Eastern Europe (the host country); two from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia², one from North America and four from other UNECE member States.
5. The Working Group also invites the following to participate in the Executive Committee: the Chair of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy; one of the co-Chairs of the OECD Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme (EAP Task Force); the Chair of the Project Preparation Committee (PPC); the Chair of the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy; a representative of the Presidency of the European Union; a senior representative of the European Commission; a senior representative of EcoForum; and one senior representative from the regional environmental centres.
6. The Executive Committee will be chaired by the host country and the secretariat services will be provided by UNECE. The Executive Committee may invite other organizations to participate in the preparations pending a decision on the theme of the Belgrade Conference.

² As identified in paragraph 15 of the Kiev Declaration.

7. 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 activities of the Working Group, including time schedules, will be presented at its first session.
8. Considering the large amount of substantive work to be done, as discussed in chapter IV of the Kiev Declaration on the future of the process, the Working Group will work in close cooperation with all international organizations and institutions, international financial institutions, international non-governmental and private sector organizations that will be involved in, or contribute to, the preparations for the 2007 Ministerial Conference. The Working Group invites all organizations to participate actively.
9. 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 about the preparation of the documents for the Conference.
10. The Working Group may set up expert groups to elaborate specific issues, when necessary.
11. The UNECE secretariat will provide the necessary secretariat assistance and conference facilities to the Working Group at the United Nations Office in Geneva, in accordance with UNECE rules and practices.