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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Thirteenth session  
Geneva, 9–11 October 2006  
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNECE REFORM AND  
MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF  
THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

Note by the secretariat

This document summarizes the main decisions taken by the Commission at its ad hoc session in December 2005, with the adoption of the Work Plan on ECE Reform (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1), as well as at its sixty-first session, held in Geneva on 21–23 February 2006 (E/2006/37 – E/ECE/1444), that are relevant to the Committee on Environmental Policy and its activities.

The Committee is invited to consider the follow-up to the decisions of the Commission on:

- UNECE reform – the way forward
- UNECE contribution to CSD cycles
- Follow-up to the development outcome of the 2005 World Summit, including the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals
- Technical cooperation activities in 2005.

## **UNECE reform – the way forward**

1. The UNECE reform consisted of the following stages: ascertainment of countries' views; preparation of findings by external evaluators; and adoption by the Commission of the work plan on the reform as contained in document E/ECE/1434/Rev.1.
2. The Commission noted that the General Assembly had “welcomed the work plan on the ECE reform adopted by the Commission and decided that UNECE should implement the adopted measures and to this end requested the Secretary-General to allocate the requisite resources for the biennium 2006–2007”. The Commission recommended to the Economic and Social Council that it endorse the UNECE reform.

### Governance structure

3. The Commission adopted the terms of reference and rules of procedure of a new body, the Executive Committee. This body will prepare the biennial sessions of the Commission and implement the overall guidance set by the Commission. In between the sessions of the Commission, it will act on behalf of the Commission and can seize itself of all matters related to UNECE activities.
4. The reference to “Principal Subsidiary Bodies” is discontinued and replaced by “Sectoral Committees”. The Sectoral Committees report once a year and on request to the Executive Committee, through a meeting with their chairs and vice-chairs.
5. The Executive Committee will:
  - (a) Review, evaluate and approve the programmes of work of the Sectoral Committees, including intersectoral activities and relations with other international organizations;
  - (b) Approve the set-up, renewal, discontinuance, terms of reference and work plans of groups under the Sectoral Committees;
  - (c) Examine with the chairs and vice-chairs of the Sectoral Committees their report on the implementation of their programme of work and other relevant issues;
  - (d) Ensure coherence between subprogrammes, *inter alia* by encouraging horizontal communication within the organization;
  - (e) Deal with all matters related to programme planning, administrative and budget issues, including extrabudgetary funding.
6. By the end of February 2007, all Sectoral Committees must review:
  - (a) Their subsidiary intergovernmental bodies in accordance with the Guidelines defined in E/ECE/1407/Add.1; and

- (b) Their conference servicing need

with a view to rationalizing them, and must submit proposals on possible streamlining to the Executive Committee.

Programme of work and terms of reference

7. The Commission requested the Sectoral Committees to review their terms of reference and programmes of work in order to respond to the priorities for each subprogramme that are outlined in the Work Plan on ECE Reform.

8. In accordance with the Work Plan on ECE reform (paras. 31–34), the Environment subprogramme should increase its focus on the following issues:

(a) It should focus more closely on Member States' implementation of their decisions and commonly agreed goals, including those established in the "Environment for Europe" process, the EECCA Strategy and the UNECE Environmental Conventions.

(b) It should strengthen work on the Environmental Performance Reviews and on environmental monitoring and assessment, which lay the necessary foundation for evaluating environmental protection and the implementation of these decisions.

(c) It should direct greater efforts towards implementing the UNECE environment programme, notably through further capacity-building and workshops at the subregional level.

(d) The Committee on Environmental Policy should study ways and means to strengthen cooperation with UNEP and all other relevant UN institutions and international organizations in order to optimize the implementation of the programme of work in the region and should submit related proposals to the Executive Committee.

(e) The Committee on Environmental Policy should, in cooperation with the Committee on Inland Transport and in consultation with the World Health Organization, strengthen activities relating to:

- (i) The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), including sustainable financing and staffing for the Clearing House;
- (ii) Environmental aspects of transportation

and should submit proposals in these areas to the Executive Committee.

9. Furthermore, in general terms, the Commission stressed the importance of intersectoral activities among the Sectoral Committees so as to promote a more coherent UNECE and requested the Committees to pursue and endeavour to strengthen such activities and approaches.

10. The Commission also requested the Sectoral Committees to implement the provisions of the Work Plan on ECE Reform on UNECE's cooperation with other organizations.

11. Comments: In taking into account the Work Plan on ECE Reform, and the priorities therein for the environment subprogramme (as outlined in para. 8 above), the Committee is invited to:

(a) Review its Programme of Work and take decisions on each programme element and related activities;

(b) Discuss and adopt its revised Terms of Reference under agenda item 5, on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat following consultation with the Bureau (June 2006);

(c) Review its subsidiary intergovernmental bodies and conference-servicing needs based on a document prepared by the secretariat.

### **UNECE contribution to CSD cycles**

12. The Commission noted the success of the Second UNECE Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development held in December 2005. It found that the assessment of the region's progress in implementing sustainable development commitments in the areas of energy for sustainable development, atmosphere/air pollution, climate change, industrial development and cross-cutting issues had clearly shown the various challenges and experiences of countries in the region. Due to the interlinkages between the issues, the Commission considered that intersectoral cooperation at the national and international levels was vital to achieving further progress in these areas.

13. The Commission welcomed the Chairperson's summary of the Regional Implementation Forum (E/ECE/1442), which was submitted to the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14) in May 2006. It hoped that the outcomes of this and other regional implementation forums would be taken into account at the global level, and it encouraged UNECE Member States to be active at the CSD.

14. Comments: The Committee will be informed on the outcome of the Regional Implementation Forum and on UNECE's input to CSD-14. An account of the main discussions held at the CSD-14 appears in the annex.

### **Follow-up to the development outcome of the 2005 World Summit, including the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals**

15. Under the item on linkages between the UNECE reform and the global United Nations reform, a representative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA) briefed the Commission on UN reform, focusing on four areas: strengthening ECOSOC; establishing a Peace-building Commission; creating a Human Rights Council; and promoting system-wide coherence in normative, operational, humanitarian and environmental activities.

16. The Commission noted that Member States in New York were negotiating two resolutions on "Economic and Social Council reform" and "Follow-up to the development outcome of the 2005 World Summit, including the Millennium Development Goals and other

internationally agreed development goals". These resolutions may have an impact on the work of UNECE.

17. The Commission requested the secretariat to keep the Executive Committee informed of developments regarding the above reform process and the inputs to be requested of regional commissions.

18. Comments: The Committee may wish to note that the second round of the Environmental Performance Reviews report, when appropriate, on progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

### **Technical cooperation activities in 2005**

19. The Commission:

(a) Emphasized the importance of technical cooperation for implementing UNECE's core activities and noted that the General Assembly had underlined the need to strengthen the links between the normative and operational work of the United Nations;

(b) Stressed the need to seek interlinkages between the Technical Cooperation Unit and the new subprogramme and to discuss this issue together with the UNECE Technical Cooperation Strategy at the meeting of Executive Committee;

(c) Expressed its appreciation for the work of the regional advisers and recalled that the Executive Committee would discuss their future allocation among the programmes;

(d) Took note of the technical cooperation being carried out with subregional country groupings, in keeping with previous recommendations of the Commission. It urged the secretariat to continue to reinforce such cooperation;

(e) Welcomed the approval of concrete projects and project proposals by the special session of the SPECA regional advisory committee held after the international conference on subregional economic cooperation in Central Asia and the future role of SPECA;

(f) Welcomed the increased cooperation with other organizations;

(g) With regard to the next updating of the OECD Development Assistance Committee's list of main international organizations, urged its members who are also members of the DAC to support the inclusion of UNECE. The Commission encouraged the DAC to favourably consider the inclusion of UNECE on its list of main international organizations.

20. Comments: The Committee will be informed about and discuss the technical cooperation activities of the Regional Adviser under item 3(e) of the provisional agenda.

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## Annex

### **MAIN DISCUSSIONS AT THE CSD-14**

1. The fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) (New York, 1–12 May 2006) addressed a particularly important thematic cluster for achieving sustainable development goals: energy for sustainable development, industrial development, atmosphere/air pollution and climate change.
2. CSD-14 exchanged ideas on barriers and constraints to as well as progress made in the implementation of sustainable development goals in these areas. The findings will serve as a basis for developing and negotiating policy recommendations at the fifteenth session of the CSD (CSD-15) next year.
3. The UN regional commissions organized a series of discussions to exchange regional experiences. The discussion for the UNECE region began with the presentation of the outcomes of the Second UNECE Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Geneva in December 2005.
4. The CSD emphasized the need for integrated approaches to combating air pollution and climate change. Air pollution problems were far from solved, even in developed countries, and greenhouse gas targets were often difficult to achieve. Some pollution sources, such as ship and aircraft emissions, and in many countries motor vehicle emissions, needed future attention.
5. In the main sessions, and in more depth at side events, attention was drawn to the importance of the various regional air pollution control agreements and initiatives in operation or under development. UNECE's Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution is the oldest such regional agreement and was described by the Secretary-General as "a model for reducing transboundary air pollution" in his report to the CSD. The need was stressed for continued outreach activities by the Convention and for collaboration between regions to promote progress on a more global scale.
6. It was consistently noted that energy for sustainable development was the issue binding together the thematic clusters for CSD-14 and CSD-15. Key challenges for the UNECE region specifically were to increase the availability of energy services and reduce energy-related environmental and health problems, in particular those related to air pollution and climate change.
7. In the margins of the CSD discussions, UNECE together with UNESCO held a side event on education for sustainable development, which is one of the cross-cutting issues on the CSD's agenda. The presentation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development received positive feedback from participants as a regional model for implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.