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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Seventh session

Geneva, 27–29 November 2006

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**PROPOSED COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS
OF THE WORKING GROUP'S BUREAU**

Note by the secretariat¹

The present proposals follow the Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Teams of Specialists within the UNECE (ECE/EX/2006/L.3), adopted by the UNECE Executive Committee at its meeting of 14 July 2006; decisions taken by the Committee on Environmental Policy with regard to the Working Group, especially its terms of reference as updated and adopted by the Committee at its tenth session (ECE/CEP/116, annex I); applicable examples from the work of similar bodies in the UNECE; and the working modalities of the Working Group. They take note of the views circulated by the Chairperson of the Working Group jointly with a representative of the Russian Federation in the Working Group. The Working Group is expected to agree on or amend the present proposals, and to elect the Bureau accordingly.

¹ Prepared pursuant to a decision taken by the Working Group at its sixth session (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2006, para. 8). This document is being submitted on the above date because of processing delays.

Composition of the Bureau

1. According to its terms of reference, the Working Group is comprised of governmental experts from UNECE member States and the European Environment Agency (EEA), with representatives of international organizations, environmental NGOs active in the UNECE region, and the private sector also participating in the Working Group following normal UNECE procedures. To reflect the interests of the various stakeholders, the Bureau of the Working Group shall be composed of the Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons. The Chairperson shall be elected from among the governmental experts; one Vice-Chairperson shall be elected either from among the governmental or EEA experts; and the other Vice-Chairperson shall be elected from among the representatives of participating environmental NGOs and business and industrial entities. This group (environmental NGOs and the private sector) shall itself propose a candidate for second Vice-Chairperson.

2. Bureau members shall be experts with background and experience in environmental monitoring and assessment who hold senior positions in their institutions and are familiar with the Working Group's mandate, work programme, working methods and operational procedures. To the extent possible, the Working Group shall ensure balanced geographical representation in the Bureau, with at least one member being from the subregion of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA).

II. Functions of the Bureau

3. The Bureau shall:

- (a) Promote and encourage the implementation of the Working Group's recommendations and guidelines, and other results of its work, in UNECE member countries, especially in EECCA;
- (b) Encourage competent institutions to provide comments regarding, and inputs to, assessment reports and other substantive documentation of the Working Group;
- (c) Help invite eminent specialists to take part in Working Group meetings as roundtable speakers and rapporteurs;
- (d) Help raise funds and solicit in-kind contributions for the Working Group's capacity-building activities in EECCA;
- (e) Develop proposals to the Working Group regarding its future activities;
- (f) Network and develop partnerships on environmental monitoring and assessment with other UNECE bodies and other international networks and forums, environmental NGOs, business and industry;
- (g) Disseminate widely information about the Working Group and its activities at the national and international levels; and,
- (h) At the end of the period for which the Working Group has been established, prepare, in cooperation with the secretariat, a report on the Working Group's accomplishments to the Committee on Environmental Policy, with recommendations for extension or discontinuation of its activities, or proposals to transform the Working Group into a standing body, if appropriate.

4. In addition to the foregoing collective responsibilities, the Chairperson shall be responsible for:

- (a) Directing, in close cooperation with the secretariat, the discussions at the Working Group's sessions according to the UNECE rules of procedure, and empowering Vice-Chairpersons to do so during specific working sessions and to lead drafting groups;
- (b) Working with all delegations and the secretariat to ensure, in an impartial and consensual manner, effective decision-making by the Working Group at its sessions;
- (c) Managing time effectively at working sessions of the Working Group; and
- (d) Commenting on draft agendas and reports of the Working Group's sessions prepared by the secretariat.

III. Term in office and election procedure

5. Bureau members shall be elected for a term of two sessions of the Working Group. The Working Group shall strive to give opportunities to as many eligible experts as possible to serve as elected officers, taking into account gender considerations. To help ensure consistency and continuity in the work of the Bureau, individual officers may be re-elected for one additional term, when appropriate. Should a Bureau member resign, a replacement shall be elected at the upcoming Working Group session to serve for the remaining portion of the departing Bureau member's term. Bureau members shall be mindful of and respect the resource commitments associated with holding elected positions.

6. The Working Group shall make all reasonable efforts to achieve the election of its officers by consensus, but shall decide the matter by formal vote if consensus cannot be achieved. In the latter case, decisions of the Working Group shall be made by a majority of the UNECE countries present and voting by secret ballot.
