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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials
“Environment for Europe”

Second meeting
Geneva, 29–30 June 2006

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SECOND MEETING

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
starting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 29 June 2006*

Introduction

1. The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its eleventh session, established the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) for the preparation of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, to be held in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro, on 10–12 October 2007. The WGSO held its first meeting on 12–13 October 2005.

* New accreditation procedures have been introduced for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to complete the attached registration form, also available from the website of the UNECE’s ENHS Division (www.unece.org/env/cep/welcome.html), and to transmit or email it to the UNECE secretariat, *no later than two weeks prior to the meeting*, by fax (+41 22 917 0107). Before the meeting, delegates are requested to present themselves at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Villa Les Feuillantines, 13, Avenue de la Paix (see attached map), to pick up their identification badge. In case of difficulty, please telephone the UNECE secretariat (extension 71204).

2. Following requests from the first meetings of the WGSO and its Executive Committee, the secretariat in consultation with the Chairman of the WGSO prepared several papers for the second meeting of the WGSO. The draft papers were considered by the Executive Committee at its second meeting (24 February 2006). The outcomes of this meeting are included in the Executive Committee's report (ECE/CEP/AC.11/EXECOM/2006/1). The amended papers, which take into account the comments provided by the Executive Committee, will be submitted to the WGSO for discussion and approval, as appropriate.

3. These papers are meant to advance the discussions of the WGSO towards setting the agenda of the Belgrade Conference, its organizational arrangements and its the financing.

Item 1. Adoption of the agenda

4. The WGSO is invited to adopt the provisional agenda of its second meeting (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/1).

Item 2. The conceptual framework of the Belgrade Conference

(a) Possible themes

5. The WGSO is invited to consider the revised background paper on possible themes for the Conference agenda (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/3). The secretariat has amended this paper to reflect the comments provided by governments and other partners in the process. The comments provided by the Executive Committee at its second meeting are also reflected in the paper.

6. In addition, the WGSO has before it several proposals submitted by partners in the "Environment for Europe" process:

- a) The WGSO is invited to consider a proposal for a high-level segment on "Education for Sustainable Development" at the Conference (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/7).
- b) The WGSO is also invited to consider a proposal on "Sustainable Consumption and Production" (SCP) submitted by Sweden in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the European Environment Agency (EEA). When discussing this proposal, the WGSO may wish to consider how this proposal could usefully complement the Marrakech process and the follow-up conference on SCP to be held in Stockholm in June 2007. The WGSO may also wish to discuss whether this proposal should apply to the entire UNECE region or focus on specific subregions.
- c) Finally, the WGSO may wish to discuss a proposal on "Environment and Security" submitted by UNEP.

7. Additional proposals of themes for the agenda are expected to be submitted to the secretariat closer to the second meeting of the WGSO and will be circulated to the WGSO for consideration at the meeting.

8. When discussing possible themes for the Belgrade Conference, the WGSO may wish to take into account the overview of high-level and other relevant events scheduled to take place before the conference (Information Paper No. 2). This paper was prepared by the secretariat on

the basis of information available on the Internet and with input from partners in the “Environment for Europe” process. Comments by the Executive Committee were also taken into account.

(b) Overview of activities proposed by partners for the agenda of the Conference

9. The WGSO is invited to consider an overview of activities proposed by partners for the agenda of the Conference (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/4). This overview was prepared on the basis of the report of the first meeting of the WGSO, as well as the input provided by partners of the “Environment for Europe” process and the comments from the second meeting of the Executive Committee. It contains documents categorized as category I and II in accordance with the document on organizational issues for the Conference (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/5). All other activities submitted to the secretariat by partners were compiled in an informal document (Information Paper No. 1). While considering the relevant activities, the Working Group should ensure consistency between the possible Conference themes and the proposed activities.

(c) Major outcomes

10. The WGSO is also invited to discuss the major outcomes expected from the Conference. After the discussion at the first meeting of the WGSO, a short negotiated document providing strategic directions and a Chairperson’s summary were identified as two options. The Executive Committee at its second meeting concluded that the most appropriate option would be to have both a short Ministerial Declaration and a Chairperson’s summary. Should the WGSO decide on a negotiated document, which would preferably focus on a small number of specific items, the time schedule should be taken into account and a drafting group be established to start the work after the second meeting of the WGSO.

Item 3. Organizational issues for the Conference

11. The WGSO is invited to consider and approve the paper on organizational issues for the Conference (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/5). This paper was prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson of the WGSO and on the basis of a similar document approved by the WGSO for the Kiev Conference. The section “Documents” and its document submission deadlines reflect United Nations rules for processing documentation.

Item 4. The budget required for the Conference and the preparatory process

12. The WGSO is invited to consider the paper on the estimated budget for the Conference and the preparatory process (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/6). The secretariat has prepared this paper on the basis of input from partners and the host country, taking into account internal UNECE budget-related rules and the decision of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) (ECE/CEP/127, annex II) on the eligibility for financial support of countries with economies in transition.

13. The WGSO is also invited to give its views on the possible mechanisms for fund-raising to ensure a smooth and efficient preparatory process for the Conference, and in particular to enable participation by representatives from countries with economies in transition in the preparatory meetings and at the Conference itself.

Item 5. The status of host country preparations

14. The host country is invited to update the WGSO on the national preparatory process for the organization of the Conference.

15. In accordance with a request from the first meeting of the WGSO, the host country will make available a video presentation of the venue of the Conference at the second meeting of the WGSO. The video presentation is also available at http://www.unece.org/env/wgso/Belgrade/vid_presentation.htm.

Item 6. The third meeting of the WGSO and the fourth meeting of the Executive Committee

16. The WGSO is invited to consider the possible dates of its third meeting. It is proposed that the third meeting of the WGSO take place in Geneva on 12–13 October 2006, back-to-back with the thirteenth session of the CEP (9–11 October 2006). Furthermore, it is proposed that the fourth meeting of the Executive Committee take place back-to-back with the third meeting of the WGSO, either before or right after the WGSO meeting.

17. An updated schedule of preparatory meetings for the Belgrade Conference is available (ECE/CEP/AC.11/EXECOM/2006/1, annex I).

Item 7. The “Environment for Europe” communication strategy

18. At the first meeting of the WGSO, the chairperson informed delegations that the CEP had taken note of the draft strategy (CEP/2005/2) and passed it to the WGSO for further refinement. The Chairman asked delegations to submit their comments on the content of the strategy and on the further process by 15 January 2006. To date the secretariat has not received any comments.

19. The Executive Committee at its second meeting recommended to the WGSO the development of a communication plan for the Conference once the agenda of the Conference was better defined. The Committee also proposed that the secretariat prepare a paper outlining the communication plan for the third meeting of the WGSO. If resources are available, the secretariat may hire an expert on public relations to prepare the proposal for the WGSO.

20. The WGSO is invited to consider how to proceed regarding this issue.

Item 8. Other business

21. The WGSO is invited to discuss any other business that may be brought to its attention.