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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

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

Third meeting  
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Item 2 (a) of the provisional agenda

**REVISED POSSIBLE FRAMEWORK FOR THE AGENDA  
OF THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE**

Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson

**INTRODUCTION**

1. A possible framework for the Belgrade Conference was developed following the request from the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) for preparing the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, to be held in Belgrade, Serbia, on 10-12 October 2007, in order to facilitate discussion on the agenda of the Conference. Since the first meeting of the WGSO (12-13 October 2005) the document was revised several times to reflect the discussions by the WGSO and its Executive Committee. Several proposals for possible topics, as well as activities and documents for the Belgrade agenda, were submitted by some countries and partners in the “Environment for Europe” process and taken into account for developing this framework.

2. This revised version, in accordance with the draft outline of the Belgrade Agenda (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/2, annex 1) adopted by the second meeting of the WGSO (29-30 June 2006) and the recommendations by the third meeting of the Executive Committee (30 June 2006), is being submitted to the third meeting of the WGSO for consideration and, as appropriate, decision.

3. One of the most important criteria for any agenda item is that it should merit and warrant the attention of Ministers. Another criterion is that, like the previous “Environment for Europe” Conferences, the Belgrade Conference should be of importance to the whole UNECE region, even if some items may not be equally interesting for all parts of the region. The WGSO, at its meetings, expressed strong support for a focus on implementation. The Belgrade event should become a “conference of delivery”.
4. A large variety of assessments and analytical papers are being prepared for the Conference by the “Environment for Europe” partners (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/11). The WGSO may wish to consider how to transpose the key messages from these assessments into political decisions by Ministers.
5. The WGSO agreed at its last meeting to organize the agenda under the overall title “*Environment for Europe: building bridges to the future*” and with the three main themes for the 2.5 days of the Conference to reflect the potential topics for each day: “*Evaluation and Implementation*”, “*Capacity building and Partnerships*”, and “*The way forward*”.
6. On the basis of this document and the agreed draft outline of the Belgrade agenda, the WGSO is invited to discuss and decide on the substance and format for each of the five sessions of the Conference agenda, including its items and sub-items.

## **PROPOSED ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT BELGRADE AGENDA**

### I. “EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION”

#### **A. Assessment and Implementation**

##### *Kiev Commitments*

7. The Ministers in Kiev invited UNECE through its Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) and in consultation with other principal subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, and in cooperation with other relevant organisations and institutions, to monitor the outcomes of the Kiev Declaration, and to consider reflecting the relevant commitments of the Kiev Declaration in its work programme (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, para. 70).
8. Following this request, the CEP developed a *Table on the follow-up of the Kiev Conference* for its tenth session in October 2003 (CEP/2003/20). This table provides an overview of the main commitments that derive from the Kiev Declaration, including a description of the follow-up action required for each of these commitments, the identification of actor(s) responsible for undertaking the activity, the proposed method(s) of work, and whether additional financing is needed. The table was revised for the eleventh session of the CEP in October 2004 (CEP/2004/12) following the CEP request to quote the main contents from the Ministerial Declaration in the table on the follow-up to the Kiev Conference and, when

identifying actor(s) responsible for a particular activity, to take into account work carried out by all other international organizations and NGOs involved in particular follow-up actions.

9. The WGSO may wish to consider how to report at the Belgrade Conference on the implementation of the Kiev commitments.

#### *Monitoring and Assessment*

10. Ministers in Kiev called on the European Environment Agency (EEA) to prepare the fourth assessment report on the state of the environment for the Belgrade Conference, building on new partnerships, especially with UNECE and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, para. 30). They encouraged international cooperation to improve the comparability of information, data collection and monitoring capacities. EEA is preparing the Belgrade report on the basis of the report outline that was discussed at the fifth and sixth meetings of the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA). The WGEMA will consider the first draft of the report at its next meeting (27-29 November 2006).

11. Ministers in Kiev expressed their support for the work of the WGEMA, particularly on strengthening environmental information and observation capacities in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). The WGEMA is preparing three sets of guidelines for EECCA Governments, i.e. (1) to help apply a core set of environmental indicators that are consistent with those applied internationally; (2) on improved environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises in EECCA; and (3) on indicator-based state-of-the-environment reporting. These sets of guidelines are planned to be finalised by the end of this year and will be presented, through the CEP and the WGSO, to the Conference for a possible adoption.

12. The WGSO is invited to consider a possible format for the Monitoring and Assessment agenda item, that could include a presentation of the Belgrade report and its key findings, as well as an introduction of the monitoring and assessment guidelines, followed by some key note speeches by a few Ministers and a possible adoption of the guidelines.

#### *Multilateral Environmental Agreements*

13. Strengthening the implementation of regional environmental conventions and protocols and encouraging efforts to improve their efficiency, effectiveness and coherence are major goals of the "Environment for Europe" process agreed upon by Ministers in Kiev.

14. The WGSO stressed that the implementation of the UNECE region's multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) should be addressed at the Belgrade Conference. The fifth informal meeting between the representatives of the Bureaux of the CEP and of the governing bodies of the ECE environmental conventions (27 June 2006) discussed how progress achieved and further strengthening of the implementation of the ECE MEAs might be addressed at the Belgrade Conference, and suggested looking at the cross-cutting issues including implementation, compliance and capacity building. The Ministerial Conference should give an

impetus to national governments to reinforce the implementation of these MEAs. Furthermore, the meeting recommended focusing the discussions not only on obligations arising from the MEAs but also on the incentives they provide for building capacity and for sharing good practice, in particular in EECCA and in SEE. The work carried out within the ECE MEAs includes several capacity building activities. Thus, an assessment providing an overview with a cross cutting approach, including progress achieved so far and lessons learnt would allow Ministers to identify further policy recommendations.

15. The UNECE secretariat will prepare an analytical paper for the Conference on this issue. More detailed information on this paper will be provided to the WGSO at its third meeting.

#### *Environmental Performance Reviews*

16. Ministers in Kiev supported the continuation of the environmental performance reviews (EPRs) programmes of UNECE and OECD. A report on the implementation of the EPRs' recommendations in the reviewed countries under the UNECE EPR programme could be envisaged for the Conference. Countries have taken up initiatives introducing innovative policy tools in a number of areas such as to further integrate environment with other sectors, in the financing sector and in the implementation of the legislation. An information note on the scope and content of such a report will be prepared for consideration by the third meeting of the WGSO.

#### PARALLEL PROCESSES

##### **B. Education for sustainable development**

17. Ministers in Kiev recognized the importance of integrating sustainable development into education systems at all levels and invited Ministers of Education and from other relevant government departments to take an active part in the development of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) by 2005 (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, para. 58). The High-level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries in Vilnius (on 17–18 March 2005) unanimously adopted the Strategy as well as the Vilnius Framework for its implementation.

18. The High-level Meeting discussed the coordination and review of the implementation of the Strategy and suggested that the “Environment for Europe” process could be used as a platform for high-level promotion of the implementation. A special joint segment on ESD between Education and Environment Ministers was proposed for the Belgrade Conference (CEP/AC.13/2005/2) by the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD.

19. The Bureau of the Steering Committee submitted a proposal for consideration to the WGSO through its Executive Committee (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/7). The segment would contribute to assessing the first phase of the implementation of the Strategy with a joint statement on ESD as the major outcome highlighting the progress made in the process and giving strategic guidance for its continuation. Following the agreement to include the ESD joint segment on the Belgrade agenda by the WGSO at its last meeting, the Bureau will further update the proposal and inform the WGSO at its third meeting.

### **C. Biodiversity**

20. Ministers in Kiev endorsed the Resolution on Biodiversity submitted by the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) Council and committed their governments to halting the loss of biodiversity by the year 2010 in the pan-European region through national efforts and regional cooperation.

21. The Belgrade Conference could provide a forum for discussing the activities to date in the pan-European region to address the Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity. The achievements, challenges and needs of the region could be assessed and recommendations made to support the follow-up to the Kiev Resolution and attainment of the 2010 target by Europe. UNEP and the Council of Europe, which jointly provide the secretariat of PEBLDS, are willing to prepare and service a session on biodiversity and ecosystems during the Conference.

22. The European ECO-Forum has proposed that a round-table discussion between Ministers and NGOs on biodiversity issues in UNECE be held at the Conference, with a special focus on the Countdown 2010 initiative, the role and status of PEBLDS and further actions and partnerships in this area. UNEP, as one of the hosts of the joint secretariat for PEBLDS, is currently preparing jointly with the European ECO-Forum and other stakeholders a more detailed proposal for this item for consideration by the WGSO.

## II. "CAPACITY BUILDING AND PARTNERSHIPS"

### **D. Capacity Building**

#### EECCA PERSPECTIVES

#### *Progress and perspectives in the implementation of the Environment Strategy for EECCA*

23. Ministers in Kiev adopted the Environment Strategy for EECCA<sup>1</sup>. They decided to review the implementation of the Strategy at the Belgrade Conference (ECE/CEP/105/Rev.1, para. 19).

24. The Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme (EAP Task Force), in cooperation with other relevant international bodies and regional environmental centres, was invited to lead efforts to facilitate and support the implementation of the Environment Strategy for EECCA. The EAP Task Force was requested to present an assessment of progress in implementing the Strategy to the Conference. The Task Force is preparing an analytical report on progress in environmental management in EECCA countries to support the assessment of progress in implementing the Strategy. The WGSO suggested that a deeper analysis of both the progress achieved and causes of failure in the implementation of commitments by EECCA countries be undertaken. Moreover, a realistic road map on how to overcome these problems, including policies for capacity building, should be prepared as a next step.

25. In Kiev, Ministers decided that the Central and East European sub-programme of the EAP Task Force as well as the work of the Project Preparation Committee in the accession countries should be phased out by 2004. They agreed to consider at the Belgrade Conference the relocation of the secretariat functions, currently with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), to the EECCA subregion.

#### *Central Asian Initiative on Sustainable Development*

26. At the first meeting of the WGSO, the Central Asian States drew attention to the Central Asian Initiative on Sustainable Development, which was developed as a so-called type 2 partnership for the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, with the main goal being to build favourable political, institutional, economic, information and other conditions for achieving sustainable development goals in Central Asia. In the Kiev Ministerial Declaration, a special sub-item (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, para. 63) had been devoted to this initiative. The partners of the initiative suggested preparing a special report on progress in its implementation and addressing the development and prospects of the Central Asian Initiative at the Conference.

#### *Other related issues*

27. A number of countries supported the proposal for a *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Initiative* with a focus on capacity building to be included in the Belgrade agenda. The Initiative will be presented in a short, concise and targeted document to provide background to and a recommendation for a text to be adopted by the Ministers. The paper will describe national strategies, and ongoing activities, for implementation of the UNECE Protocol on SEA in EECCA countries and how these strategies may be supported by the initiative.

#### SOUTH EASTERN EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

28. Issues of interest for the SEE subregion to be addressed at the Conference were identified by the SEE Joint Ministerial Consultation that took place in Belgrade on 16 June 2006. The priority issues identified for the SEE subregion included: strengthening of capacity and cooperation for sustainable development; environmental infrastructure investments on the municipal level; capacity-building for implementing the MEAs; environmental regulatory enforcement and compliance; environmental education and awareness; and enhancement of SEE sub-regional cooperation on in the field of climate change (education, research and development, public awareness, adaptation/mitigation, etc.). Out of these issues, participants had proposed three “Belgrade initiatives” for discussion at the Conference: (1) environmental investments, (2) climate change and (3) environmental enforcement and compliance. For other identified issues it was agreed to provide input from the SEE subregion to the respective items of the Belgrade agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> Environment Strategy for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (ECE/CEP/105/Rev.1).

29. The WGSO recommended choosing only those issues for which the EfE process was the appropriate mechanism. The SEE governments will inform WGSO on further details for this agenda item.

## **E. Partnerships**

### *Energy Efficiency*

30. Ministers in Kiev recognized the variety of initiatives undertaken to integrate environmental aspects and sustainable development into energy policy in the region. They welcomed and supported global and regional efforts to improve energy efficiency and increase the share of renewable energy sources. They specifically invited the Energy Charter Secretariat, in cooperation with other relevant international organizations, to report on progress in energy efficiency efforts at the Belgrade Conference.

31. The Energy Charter Working Group on Energy Efficiency and Related Environmental Aspects at its meeting in November 2005 confirmed its intention to prepare a progress report on energy efficiency for the Conference and asked the Energy Charter Secretariat to develop the format of the report in close cooperation with other relevant international organizations. In addition, following the discussion by the WGSO at its second meeting, the Energy Charter secretariat suggested to prepare a short and concise category I document (e.g. in the form of a statement) on integration of energy efficiency into environmental policies to facilitate Ministers' discussion at the Conference. This document would take up the findings from the progress report prepared by the secretariat, as well as from other reports delivered under this issue. The Energy Charter secretariat will report to the WGSO at its third meeting on the progress in developing the report and present a draft outline of the statement.

32. The UNECE Sustainable Energy Programme was requested by the Executive Committee at its second meeting to report to the Belgrade Conference on the progress in activities since the Kiev Conference. The Programme will prepare an analytical report on financing energy efficiency and climate change mitigation investments in selected countries with economies in transition of the UNECE region as a background paper for the Conference. Some countries requested that, in addition, a category I document be developed on this issue. Furthermore, a new background paper on the issue of coal mine methane was requested by some member States at the second WGSO meeting.

33. The WGSO might wish to consider how to further proceed with these various background reports on energy. WGSO might also wish to examine if the two proposed category I documents could be merged.

### *Environment and Security*

34. UNEP in cooperation with other partners of the ENVSEC Initiative has proposed to prepare for the Conference a short, concise and targeted document to facilitate the Ministers' discussions and provide recommendations for a text to be adopted by the Ministers. ENVSEC would help countries share their overall vision and understanding of the security aspects and

political relevance of European environmental concerns and trends. UNEP made the background information for this document available to the WGSO at its second meeting for consideration and will provide further information on this proposal at its third meeting.

#### *Mountains Initiatives*

35. Ministers in Kiev welcomed the progress made in the protection, sustainable development and management of mountain regions, and the strengthening of cooperation among transboundary mountain regions, such as the Alps, the Carpathians, the Caucasus and Tianshan, through the sharing of experience and technical cooperation. They emphasised the importance of implementing partnerships for the sustainable development of mountain regions in order to effectively address imminent challenges in biodiversity conservation, sustainable local development, water management and flood prevention and control in mountains and adjacent lowlands (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, para. 64).

36. A number of countries proposed to include the mountains initiatives on the agenda of the Belgrade Conference. UNEP, as one of the leading UN programmes supporting diverse mountain initiatives, would assist interested countries in developing a background paper on mountain initiatives for the Conference.

37. More detailed information on the proposed paper will be provided for consideration by the WGSO at its third meeting. The WGSO may wish to consider how best to integrate this proposed topic into the agenda of the Conference.

#### *Sustainable Consumption and Production*

38. Ministers in Kiev underlined the importance of the shift towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns and encouraged regions, subregions and countries to devise, as appropriate, programmes to accelerate this shift. They referred to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which calls for the “development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns that will promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems”. Ministers pledged to encourage and promote the development of such a framework of programmes, “taking them to our next conference” (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, para. 28).

39. In the Belgrade assessment, EEA will analyze developments in the region towards SCP patterns. Salient issues such as cleaner production, food, housing, mobility, labelling and procurement will be analysed across the whole UNECE region. The draft chapter will be available prior to the third meeting of the WGSO in October 2006.

40. A proposal for preparing a background report on mapping sustainable consumption and production in EECCA and SEE countries has been developed by UNEP in cooperation with Sweden and the EEA and will be available at the WGSO meeting for consideration. This report will attempt to provide an overview of consumption and production patterns with case studies in

EECCA and SEE countries and, together with the SCP material from the EEA's fourth assessment report, could constitute a basis for discussion of the possible development of SCP programmes for the pan-European region. UNEP also proposed to prepare a draft Category I document on SCP patterns in the UNECE region, based on the findings of the background report and of the EEA's fourth assessment, with a view to submitting the final document by February 2007.

41. When discussing this proposal, the WGSO may wish to consider how it could usefully complement the Marrakech Process and the follow-up conference on SCP to be held in Stockholm in June 2007.

*Other issues within this context*

42. Other issues suggested at the WGSO meeting for further consideration by the WGSO were *Water and Sanitation*, and *Partnerships with the Private Sector*.

43. Due to the limited time available to cover the issues under the Partnerships agenda item, WGSO might wish to consider how to cluster some of these issues. The ongoing and planned activities in these areas should be kept in mind in order to avoid duplication.

III. "THE WAY FORWARD"

**F. The future of the EfE process**

*The future of the EfE process*

44. The "Environment for Europe" process is a unique partnership of the member States within the UNECE region, organizations of the United Nations system represented in the region, other intergovernmental organizations, regional environmental centres, NGOs and other major groups.

45. Ministers at the Kiev Conference (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, para. 66) strongly supported the continuation of the "Environment for Europe" process and agreed on goals for the future of the process as follows:

- a) To promote the achievement of policy objectives through regional and subregional cooperation on policy responses based on environmental monitoring and assessments, integration with sectoral policies, and governance, including the involvement of civil society, business and industry, and other major groups;
- b) To strengthen the implementation of environmental instruments to which countries are party, including regional conventions and protocols, and to encourage efforts to improve their efficiency, effectiveness and coherence;
- c) To improve cooperation between the regional programmes of United Nations bodies and organizations and other international organizations and institutions;

- d) To mobilize financial resources from all sources, inter alia, from governments, international financial institutions, donors and the private sector, to support the implementation of regional environmental instruments and subregional initiatives including capacity building;
- e) To support interregional cooperation and links with the global environmental governance structure, where this adds value;
- f) To contribute to UNECE regional implementation of global sustainable development processes;
- g) To improve and strengthen monitoring and assessment in the region.

46. The Belgrade Conference will take stock of agreed commitments and tools within the “Environment for Europe” process and assess their effectiveness, analysing problems in their implementation and sharing success stories and good practices to build on for further progress in capacity-building and the implementation of existing commitments. The future of the “Environment for Europe” process could be discussed as part of the negotiations for the Ministerial Declaration. The document on the *Future of the “Environment for Europe” process* (ECE/CEP/95) developed by the WGSO for the Kiev Conference that sets the goals for the continuation of the process could be used as a background paper for the discussions.

47. The WGSO may wish to consider how to address this issue in the further preparatory process and at the Conference itself.

#### *Expected outcomes of the Belgrade Conference*

48. At the first meeting of the WGSO, a short negotiated document providing strategic directions and a chairperson’s summary were identified as two options for the expected outcomes of the Conference. The Executive Committee at its second meeting concluded that the most appropriate option would be to have both a short Ministerial Declaration, which would preferably focus on a small number of specific items with the main political messages for the future, and a chairperson’s summary.

49. The WGSO agreed with the Committee’s recommendations and strongly emphasised that the Declaration should include a limited number of issues. The Chairperson would hold consultations and put forward a proposal for possible elements of the Declaration for the consideration by the WGSO at its third meeting. The WGSO may wish to discuss the proposed elements and also consider establishing a drafting group to start the work on the Declaration.