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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

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

Third meeting
Geneva, 12–13 October 2006
Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda

**PREPARATION OF THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION
OF THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE**

Proposal by the Chairperson*

1. At the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) for preparing the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, which is to be held in Belgrade on 10–12 October 2007 (the Belgrade Conference), a short negotiated document providing strategic direction and a chairperson’s summary were identified as two major desired outcomes of the Belgrade Conference. The Executive Committee at its second meeting concluded that a short Ministerial Declaration would preferably focus on a limited number of specific items with key political messages for the future. The WGSO at its second meeting agreed with the Executive Committee’s recommendations and strongly emphasized that the Declaration should include a limited number of issues.

* This document was submitted on the above date because of processing delays.

2. A draft framework for the Ministerial Declaration was developed on the basis of the draft outline of the Belgrade Conference agenda adopted by the second meeting of the WGSO (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/2, annex 1), the Executive Committee's recommendations and the WGSO's decisions taken thus far with regard to the expected outcomes of the conference.

3. The framework presented in the annex to this proposal is put before the WGSO for discussion and approval, and is intended to serve as guidance for the further development of the Declaration.

4. The WGSO may wish to decide on the structure of the Ministerial Declaration in accordance with the three main themes for the Belgrade Conference agreed on by the WGSO at its second meeting and included in the draft outline of the conference agenda. The declaration could also include an introductory part.

5. To facilitate the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration, the WGSO may wish to consider establishing a drafting group and decide on its work schedule. The need for financial resources to support participation by representatives from countries with economies in transition should be taken into account.

6. Should the WGSO decide to establish such a drafting group, and taking into account the scarce financial resources currently available, it is proposed to schedule three meetings, all of which would take place back-to-back with the meetings of the WGSO and its Executive Committee, as follows:

- First meeting (back-to-back with the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee):
Geneva, 15–16 February 2007
- Second meeting (back-to-back with the fourth meeting of the WGSO and the sixth meeting of the Executive Committee): Geneva, 4–5 June 2007
- Third meeting (as part of the fifth meeting of the WGSO): Belgrade, 6–8 October 2007

Annex

Possible framework for the Ministerial Declaration

Introduction

The Declaration could start with a short introduction.

I. Evaluation and Implementation

Progress in implementing the Kiev commitments; major findings of the Belgrade Assessment and of the two reports on multilateral environmental agreements and Environmental Performance Reviews; and references to the possible adoption of the monitoring and assessment guidelines.

II. Capacity-building and Partnerships

Subregional issues identified for the conference agenda covering further measures required for capacity-building for the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) subregions, in particular progress and perspectives regarding the implementation of the EECCA Strategy,¹ and the role of partnerships.

III. The Way Forward

The part on the way forward would focus on the future of the “Environment for Europe” process.

¹ Environmental Partnerships in the UNECE region: Environment Strategy for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (ECE/CEP/105/Rev.1).