



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/CEP/AC.11/EXECOM/2006/2
28 August 2006

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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

Third meeting
Geneva, 30 June 2006

REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING

Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson

INTRODUCTION

1. The third meeting of the Executive Committee of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) for the preparation of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (the Belgrade Conference), to be held in Belgrade, Serbia, on 10–12 October 2007, took place on 30 June 2006 (in the afternoon) in Geneva, back-to-back with the second meeting of the WGSO (29–30 June 2006).

2. The following members of the Executive Committee participated: Hungary (Ms. Alojzia Lakosné Horvath), Italy (Mr. Massimo Cozzone and Ms. Loredana Dall’ora), Kyrgyzstan (Mr. Bekmurza Chybyev), the Russian Federation (Mr. Alexander Pankin), Serbia (Mr. Miroslav Spasojevic and Mr. Mihailo Djukic), Sweden (Mr. Jon Kahn), Switzerland (Mr. Juerg Schneider) and the United States of America (Mr. John Michael Matuszak and Mr. Chuck Ashley).

3. Participating as observers were the Chairperson of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (Mr. Zaal Lomtadze), the Co-Chairperson of the OECD Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme (represented by Ms. Aziza Nasirova and Ms. Angela Bularga), the Chairperson of the Project Preparation Committee (Mr. Craig Davies), the Chairperson of the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (Ms. Sylvi Ofstad Samstag), a representative of the Presidency of the European Union (Ms. Elisabeth Hosner and Ms. Ann-Britt Ylinen), a representative of the European Commission (Ms. Annika Agerblad), a representative of the European ECO-Forum (Ms. Victoria Elias) and a representative of the Regional Environmental Centres (Mr. Bulat Yessekin). The list of participants is available at

<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/wgso/Belgrade/ExecomMeetings.htm>.

4. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Miroslav Spasojevic (Serbia).

5. Following the second meeting of the WGSO, the Executive Committee further discussed several issues considered by the WGSO at its meeting, such as the conceptual framework of the Belgrade agenda, the budget required for the Conference and its preparatory process, and the schedule for its and WGSO's next meetings, in order to provide further guidance to the secretariat for preparing the documentation for the third meeting of the WGSO (12-13 October 2006).

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Chairperson opened the meeting and the Executive Committee adopted the provisional agenda as set out in the working paper WGSO/EXECOM-3/2006/1.

II. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE

7. Following the adopted draft outline of the Belgrade agenda by the WGSO at its second meeting (annex 1, ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/2), the Executive Committee provided further guidance and recommendations with regard to the development of the provisional agenda of the Belgrade Conference. The Committee agreed that the WGSO at its next meeting would need to address in more detail the content and format of the ministerial discussions for each of the agenda items.

8. The Committee discussed the contribution of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to the Conference and recommended that the report on MEAs requested by the WGSO should focus on the UNECE MEAs. It asked the UNECE secretariat to prepare such a report for discussion by Ministers. Furthermore, the Committee recommended that this report should focus on good practice as well as on gaps and problems in implementing the MEAs, on the future role of the MEAs in shaping environmental policies in the region, and on enhanced cooperation and synergies between the different MEAs and their secretariats.

9. With regard to the session on capacity building that is supposed to focus on EECCA and SEE perspectives, the Committee suggested that the countries of these two sub-regions should decide on the topics to be covered during this session and on the format for discussion of the proposed items and sub-items. At the same time, it recommended choosing only those issues for which the "Environment for Europe" process was the appropriate mechanism.

10. The Committee agreed that the session on partnerships appeared to be overloaded with a variety of topics and recommended to the WGSO to consider a possible clustering of some of these topics. To facilitate the discussion on partnerships at the Conference a background paper on the nature of partnerships was suggested. It was also proposed to invite representatives of the private sector to participate in the discussion. Another idea was to ask individual countries to take the lead in preparing the discussion of specific items for the partnerships session.

11. The Committee agreed to further consider the details of the agreed draft outline of the Belgrade agenda at its next meeting, so as to develop the best possible agenda to merit and warrant the attention of the Ministers.

III. THE BUDGET REQUIRED FOR THE CONFERENCE AND THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

12. The Executive Committee noted with appreciation the indications of financial support by some donor countries. It requested the secretariat and the host country, as well as other partners to update their budgets, with clearer and more realistic financial requests that should be limited to their core activities for the Conference. The Chairperson asked for updated information to be sent to the secretariat by 10 July 2006. As a follow-up to the donors' meeting held on 29 June 2006, the secretariat would soon send out a letter asking for financial support to possible donors.

IV. THE THIRD MEETING OF THE WGSO AND THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

13. As agreed, the third meeting of the WGSO would take place in Geneva on 12-13 October 2006, back-to-back to the thirteenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (9-11 October 2006). The Executive Committee considered the pros and cons for holding its fourth meeting before or after the WGSO. It proposed to tentatively schedule the meeting after the WGSO meeting on 13 October 2006. The Committee could also meet briefly right before the WGSO meeting, on 12 October 2006, if such a need would occur. The secretariat would inform members of the Committee in due time.

V. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

14. The Chairperson thanked the members of the Executive Committee for the constructive discussion and closed the meeting.