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

Fifth meeting
Geneva, 30 August 2007

**REPORT OF THE AD HOC PREPARATORY WORKING GROUP OF
SENIOR OFFICIALS ON ITS FIFTH MEETING**

Introduction

1. The fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) for the preparation of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade Ministerial Conference), held in Belgrade from 10 to 12 October 2007, took place in Geneva on 30 August 2007. This report has been prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson.

2. The meeting was attended by delegates from Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uzbekistan. Representatives of the European Commission and Council of the European Union also attended.

3. Representatives from the following organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system participated: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank.
4. Representatives of the Energy Charter Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) countries (EAP Task Force) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) and the Project Preparation Committee (PPC) also participated.
5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: the Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity (CEEWEB), the European ECO-Forum, the Brussels Institute for Management of the Environment (IBGE-BIM), Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) and Youth and Environment Europe.
6. Also represented were the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC-CEE), the Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus (REC-Caucasus), the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC), the Regional Environmental Center for Moldova and the Regional Environmental Center for the Russian Federation (REC-Russia).
7. The list of participants is available on the UNECE website (<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/wgso/Belgrade/WGSOMeetings.htm>).
8. Following the decisions at the fourth meeting of the WGSO and the recommendations by the sixth meeting of the WGSO Executive Committee, the secretariat, in consultation with the Chairperson and with input from the partners in the “Environment for Europe” process, had prepared or revised several documents to facilitate WGSO work regarding the preparations for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference. All documents for the meeting are available on the UNECE website (<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/wgso/Belgrade/WGSOMeetings.htm>).

I. ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA

9. Mr. Kaj Bärlund, Director of the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division of the UNECE, opened the meeting and informed the WGSO that since its last meeting, the host country had designated Mr. Aleksandar Vesic, Assistant Minister for Planning and Management, Ministry of Environmental Protection of Serbia as the new Chairperson of the WGSO. The WGSO elected the Chairperson by acclamation.
10. The Chairperson opened the meeting and the WGSO adopted the provisional agenda as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.11/2007/20.

II. PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE SIXTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”

11. Following the request from the fourth meeting of the WGSO, the secretariat, in consultation with the Chairperson, finalized the provisional agenda for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/1). The secretariat presented the document with the provisional agenda for the Conference and the paper with the tentative organization of work at the Conference. In preparing the draft provisional agenda for the Conference, the secretariat had tried to develop a workable format for each session of the Conference, while accommodating most of the proposed activities within the time allocated.

12. The WGSO considered and approved the agenda for the Conference with a few changes to be reflected in its revised version. The discussion under agenda item 7 would be split into two parts. The session would start with a discussion of the future of the “Environment for Europe” process and continue with the consideration and adoption of the Ministerial Declaration. To allocate more time for discussion, the session under this item of the agenda would start on 9.30 a.m. instead of 10 a.m.

13. The secretariat, in consultation with the Chairperson, had prepared the document presenting the organization of work at the Conference (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2007/22) on the basis of inputs received from the UNECE member States and partners in the “Environment for Europe” process. The draft organization of work was structured in accordance with the draft provisional agenda and included a tentative list of chairpersons and keynote speakers for each of the agenda items and sub-items on the basis of interest expressed by member States thus far.

14. The WGSO considered in detail the draft organization of work at the Conference and provided comments and additions to the list of keynote speakers and chairpersons of the sessions. The Chairperson informed the WGSO that together with the secretariat and the concerned partners of the “Environment for Europe” process, he would continue informal consultations to identify keynote speakers in order to ensure a balanced representation and an interactive discussion at the Conference, and would finalize the document with the organization of work of the Conference.

15. In addition, the Chairperson informed the WGSO that as of 3 September 2007 the secretariat would open the List of Speakers for interventions for up to 3 minutes. Delegations were therefore invited to submit to the secretariat requests for intervention(s) during the Conference in accordance with the provisional agenda and the organization of work at the Conference.

16. The proposed Category I document on energy efficiency (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2007/24) had been revised by the authors taking into account the recommendations of the fourth meeting of the WGSO and was put before the meeting for further consideration. The WGSO requested the Energy Charter Secretariat to further revise the document with a view to deciding on its status as a Category I document at the sixth meeting of the WGSO.

III. THE FUTURE OF THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” PROCESS

17. Following the request by the WGSO at its fourth meeting, the secretariat, in consultation with the Chairperson and on the basis of inputs by the UNECE member States and partners in the “Environment for Europe” process, had prepared a document on the future of the “Environment for Europe” process (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2007/23). The first draft of this document had been discussed by the second meeting of the open-ended Drafting Group (Geneva, 2–3 July 2007) and thereafter was revised to reflect the comments of the Drafting Group.

18. The secretariat presented the second draft of this document to the WGSO. The WGSO considered it and introduced some amendments. The WGSO agreed that the issues addressed in the document would be further discussed during the negotiations of the Ministerial Declaration by its next meeting. The WGSO then adopted it as a Category I document and decided to transmit it for discussion under the item 7 of the Conference agenda.

IV. THE STATUS OF PREPARATIONS BY THE HOST COUNTRY

19. The Chairperson made a detailed presentation on the progress made in the host country regarding preparations for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference, including on the resource requirements at the national level to organize the Conference (Information Paper No. 2). He highlighted the number of delegates registered thus far, and the practical and logistical arrangements made by the host country.

20. In addition, the secretariat updated the WGSO on the resource requirements to support participation in the Conference (Information Paper No. 3).

21. The WGSO took note of the information provided by the secretariat.

V. THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” COMMUNICATION PLAN

22. The secretariat informed the WGSO on the progress made in implementing communication activities in accordance with the communication plan for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/13), which had been adopted at the third meeting of the WGSO. The first and second electronic newsletters on the “Environment for Europe” process and the preparations for the Conference had been issued and widely distributed through e-mail and the Conference website. The third and fourth issues were planned for September 2007.

23. The WGSO took note of the information by the secretariat regarding preparation of a poster for the Conference, postcards and information materials for children and for journalists.

VI. SCHEDULE OF THE UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE WORKING GROUP OF SENIOR OFFICIALS AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

24. The WGSO decided to hold its sixth meeting from 6 to 8 October 2007 in Belgrade with the tasks of finalizing the draft Ministerial Declaration as well as considering the draft document on Delivering energy efficiency: developments and priorities by the Energy Charter Secretariat (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/28).

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

25. Following the request of the fourth meeting of the WGSO, the secretariat prepared an informal document (Information Paper No. 1) on the Carbon neutrality of the Belgrade Ministerial Conference. The WGSO considered the document and the options proposed. The WGSO recognized the importance of the carbon neutrality issue, taking into account not only its environmental but also educational aspect, and recommended exploring possibilities for ensuring the carbon neutrality of the Conference.

VIII. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

26. The Chairperson thanked the WGSO for the constructive discussion and closed the meeting.
