



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/CEP/2008/6
28 February 2008

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Fifteenth session
Geneva, 21–23 April 2008
Item 6(a) of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK: ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING,
BUILDING CAPACITY AND PARTNERSHIPS, CROSS-SECTORAL ACTIVITIES**

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

Progress made and challenges ahead

Note by the secretariat *

Summary

This paper summarizes the accomplishments of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, describes the outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in Belgrade regarding environmental monitoring and assessment, presents possible avenues for further Committee on Environmental Policy’s involvement in the area, and introduces a proposal for the mandate of the Committee’s body on environmental monitoring and assessment that was discussed by the Committee’s Bureau.

The Committee is expected to discuss the proposed future activities on environmental monitoring and assessment and to decide on either the continuation of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment as ad hoc team of specialists or its transformation into a standing Working Party. The Committee will also consider approving the terms of reference of its body on environmental monitoring and assessment.

* This document is submitted on the above date due to the consultations with the CEP Bureau and relevant partners.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction.....	1-2	2
I. MAIN RESULTS.....	3-11	2
II. THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE AND TASKS AHEAD	12-28	4
A. The message from Belgrade.....	12-14	4
B. Methodology and production of indicators	15-18	5
C. Indicator-based assessments	19-20	6
D. Monitoring and reporting by enterprises.....	21-22	6
E. Adaptation of monitoring networks	23-24	7
F. Support to the fifth pan-European assessment report and coordination with related assessments and data collection.....	25-28	8
III. REVISED MANDATE AND STATUS OF THE GROUP.....	29-37	9
Annex.....	1-8	12

Introduction

1. The Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP), at its tenth session in 2003, renamed its Ad Hoc Working Group on Environmental Monitoring as the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) and adopted its updated terms of reference for the period up to the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007). It decided to review these terms of reference after the Conference (ECE/CEP/116, para. 30 and annex I).

2. WGEMA, at its eighth session in June 2008, agreed to transmit to the Committee its report on the implementation of its mandate (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2007/3 and Add.1) with a recommendation to convert the ad hoc Working Group into a Working Party on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment using the current terms of reference as a basis for the Working Party’s mandate, which might be updated in the light of the outcome of the Belgrade Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2007/2, para. 29).

I. MAIN RESULTS

3. According to its revised mandate and the workplan (CEP/AC.10/2005/2, annex) adopted by the Committee at its twelfth session (ECE/CEP/127, para. 26), WGEMA focused on contributing to the fourth assessment report on the state of the environment for the Belgrade Conference that the European Environment Agency (EEA) was preparing as well as on strengthening environmental information and observation capacities in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA).

4. WGEMA considered the initial structure and the extended outline of the assessment report for the Belgrade Conference, and kept under review progress in the preparation of the report itself. WGEMA members from EECCA facilitated data collection for the report. Finally, WGEMA reviewed the draft report and made specific comments on each chapter, which helped EEA to complete the report for submission to the Conference.
5. The involvement of the EECCA countries in the preparation of pan-European assessment reports for “Environment for Europe” (EfE) Ministerial Conferences triggered those countries’ interest in the development of an agreed set of indicators and practical recommendations on their application in countries. As a result, WGEMA prepared the *Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*¹. The *Guidelines* cover 36 key indicators highlighting, for each indicator, the importance of the environmental issue for which it has been designed; international targets, where available; requirements for measurements and data collection; internationally agreed methodologies for the indicator development; and references to useful literature and Internet sites.
6. As a supplement, WGEMA prepared the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Indicator-based Environment Assessment Reports in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*². These provide practical recommendations on how to improve the analysis in national environmental assessment reports so that these reports can better support the setting of priorities and targets for environmental policy and can better assess the efficiency of environmental measures.
7. To promulgate the implementation of both sets of the above *Guidelines*, WGEMA developed the *Recommendations to Governments of East European, Caucasian and Central Asian Countries for the Application of Environmental Indicators and the Preparation of Indicator-Based Environment Assessment Reports*³. The two *Guidelines* and the *Recommendations* were the result of a collective endeavour involving experts from environment ministries, hydrometeorological services, institutions responsible for state-of-the-environment (SoE) reporting at the national and territorial levels, agencies for statistics, and civil society environmental organizations.
8. WGEMA recognized that a number of gaps and inconsistencies in national environmental data collection and reporting were explained by weak self-monitoring by enterprises in EECCA. To respond to this challenge, it prepared the *Guidelines for Strengthening Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*⁴. These *Guidelines* were the result of active cooperation of environmental monitoring experts with representatives of pollution control authorities, statisticians, and representatives of business and industry and their associations as well as civil society environmental organizations.
9. To implement the part of its mandate relating to the appraisal of national environmental monitoring requirements and the enhancement of the international comparability of environmental information, WGEMA reviewed the situation with respect to urban air-quality

¹ Published in the United Nations publication, *Environmental Indicators and Indicators-based Assessment Reports – Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*, ECE/CEP/140 – Sales # E.07.II.E.9.

² See *ibid.*

³ Issued for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference under document symbol ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/11/Add.1.

⁴ Published as the United Nations publication ECE/CEP/141 – Sales # E.07.II.E.17.

monitoring networks in EECCA countries. It stressed the need for a strategic guidance for decision makers to help with the development of national strategies for the use of air-quality monitoring as environmental policy tool. It proposed to proceed, thereafter, with the evaluation in a similar manner of ambient environment monitoring needs in other areas, e.g. water, land and soil (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2007/2, para. 26).

10. WGEMA ensured synergies with environmental data collection and assessment activities of the EEA and other important international players such as the UNECE environmental legal instruments⁵, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the World Health Organization (WHO) European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH), the Environmental Action Programme Task Force (EAP/TF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

11. The activities that WGEMA implemented from 2004 to 2007 were supported by financial contributions from the Governments of Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, as well as from the EEA (European Commission – EC/Tacis funds) and the private sector. These amounted in total to some US\$ 400,000. Main expenditures related to travel support for EECCA experts, the organization of workshops outside Geneva, and consultancies.

II. THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE AND TASKS AHEAD

A. The message from Belgrade

12. The Belgrade EfE Conference discussed monitoring and assessment issues together with the current state of Europe's environment during its first plenary session. The fourth pan-European assessment report of EEA, a set of WGEMA guidelines and recommendations, and a paper on policy issues⁶ prepared by the secretariat on the basis of WGEMA documentation and country environmental performance reviews (EPRs) provided the basis for the Ministers' discussion.

13. The Ministers in Belgrade took a number of decisions that were of direct relevance to WGEMA and its future activities. These decisions are presented in Box 1 below.

14. It appears that the major tasks that WGEMA is facing relate to the improvement of environmental monitoring, indicator-based assessment and reporting in EECCA and interested South-Eastern European (SEE) countries that are not EEA members, as well as to the support to the preparation of the pan-European assessment report for the next EfE Conference. This would be done in cooperation with EEA and other partners. In practical terms, the priority task for WGEMA would be to build on progress achieved and to help interested countries in implementing the guidelines and recommendations that it has prepared thus far.

⁵ The Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on the Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), and the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution.

⁶ Making Monitoring and Assessment an Effective Tool in Environmental Policy (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/11).

B. Methodology and production of indicators

15. Regarding environmental indicators and indicator-based environmental assessments, WGEMA might assist in the implementation of the *Indicator Guidelines* by helping interested countries to strengthen the legal and regulatory bases and institutional arrangements for the publication of indicator-based reports, and by training experts responsible for SoE reporting and the publication of environmental statistical compendiums. In these efforts, WGEMA could rely on and expand existing networks of SoE experts and environmental statisticians in EECCA to include other interested EECCA and SEE countries.

Box 1: Decisions by the Belgrade Ministerial Conference of Relevance to WGEMA

...

4. We note the fourth assessment report on the state of the environment (*Belgrade Assessment*) prepared by the European Environment Agency (EEA) with the support of countries, the European Commission and UNECE, and in cooperation with other partners....

...

7. We stress the need to further improve the indicator-based environmental assessments and reporting in the region. To this end, we, the Ministers and Heads of delegation of States of the Pan-European region and of the European Commission endorse and call for the adoption and full implementation of the UNECE *Recommendations on environmental indicators and indicator-based assessments* and the *Guidelines for enterprise monitoring for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. We invite UNECE to continue its efforts, in cooperation with EEA and other partners, to make monitoring an effective instrument in environmental policymaking in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe. We call on EEA to consider preparing the fifth assessment report for our next EfE Ministerial Conference, building on its partnerships, and call upon those countries that will be covered by the report to fully participate in this work and to appropriately improve their monitoring efforts.

37. ... We reconfirm our commitment to following up on the various ongoing processes, projects and initiatives launched under the EfE process and now implemented in the UNECE as well as other forums and institutions. Among our key areas of concern are:

...

(b) Continuing and strengthening environmental monitoring and assessment in the region;

...

Source: Declaration "Building Bridges to the Future" by Ministers of the UNECE region (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/L.1).

16. SoE experts and environmental statisticians from EECCA and interested SEE countries could be kept abreast of latest developments in internationally agreed methodologies for the calculation and computation of indicators included in the *Indicator Guidelines*, and of the ongoing work on additional environment-related indicators such as those on environmental expenditure, environmental taxes and subsidies; production of and trade in environmental goods and services and hazardous substances; and resource productivity. They could be also trained in modern approaches to the indicator presentation in the form of charts, diagrammes, etc. The UNECE Conference of European Statisticians might be invited to cooperate with WGEMA in helping EECCA and interested SEE countries to launch a regular publication of environmental statistics compendiums or to modernize existing ones.

17. It is expected that EEA would remain a key partner in the promotion of the *Indicator Guidelines*. There are indications of potential partnerships that WGEMA could establish in its training and knowledge-sharing activities. UNSD is interested in helping WGEMA to organize training workshops on environmental statistics, indicators and environmental-economic accounts, while OECD, through its Working Group on Environmental Information and Outlooks (WGEIO), is considering the organization of a joint meeting to share results of its work on material flow analysis and resource productivity indicators. The production of internationally compatible environmental indicators and the assessment of comprehensive environmental indices might be other subjects where OECD/WGEIO might cooperate with WGEMA.

18. Based on an initial UNEP/EEA effort prior to the Belgrade Conference to have their secretariats and consultants produce a compendium of EECCA data on selected indicators from the *Indicator Guidelines*, WGEMA might attempt to follow this up in a structured way through its network of SoE experts and environmental statisticians in EECCA countries. The WGEMA website could be used for uploading data using the EEA methodology and modalities with which EEA member countries report on EEA environmental indicators. This activity would help to fill the existing gap in environmental data reporting at the international level, as EECCA is the only UNECE subregion that is not covered by either Eurostat, OECD or EEA data reporting networks. It would also facilitate the environmental data collection that UNSD and UNEP organize jointly every second year at the global level. The next pan-European assessment report would be another beneficiary of such WGEMA efforts.

C. Indicator-based assessments

19. Resources permitting, WGEMA could, possibly in cooperation with UNEP, assist individual EECCA and SEE countries, at their request, with establishing legal and regulatory procedures and institutional arrangements for the publication of regular indicator-based environmental assessment reports. Both past WGEMA work and the UNECE Environmental Performance Review Programme identified such needs in the two subregions as well as requirements to convert the existing descriptive SoE into reader-friendly, indicator publications that transform raw data into policy messages following the *Indicator-Reporting Guidelines*.

20. In response to the wishes of some Governments expressed in Belgrade, WGEMA may review the state of the art and countries' experiences with ecosystem-based assessments. Lessons learned from the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme and from mountain ecosystems assessments under the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions might be studied. The preparation of case studies might be initiated, thereafter, to test existing methodologies and approaches in other large transboundary ecosystems such as, for instance, the mountain ecosystems in the Caucasus, Central Asia and SEE, and/or in the Caspian Sea ecosystem. Cooperation with UNEP and with the relevant intergovernmental bodies established by the countries concerned would be encouraged.

D. Monitoring and reporting by enterprises

21. To promote the implementation of the general *Enterprise Monitoring Guidelines*, WGEMA might help EECCA and interested SEE countries in developing, taking into account available manuals and reference materials at the international level, practical guidance on:

- (a) Model enterprise environmental monitoring programmes in major polluting industries, including methodologies for measurement, calculation and estimation of emissions, environmental quality and impacts;
- (b) Good practices in managing environmental data flows at the enterprise and company level, and in the production of indicators that are meaningful for improving environmental performance and resource efficiency;
- (c) Ways and means to streamline environmental and statistical reporting by enterprises, and to ensure consistency of reported emission data to facilitate its use for national emission inventories, SoE reports and data submission to the international community;
- (d) Specific legal approaches, incentives and inducements to promote additional (beyond mandatory) enterprise environmental monitoring and the publication of open corporate environmental and sustainability reports.

22. For this purpose, WGEMA would more actively involve representatives of pollution control authorities who are interacting with enterprises on a regular basis and have the first-hand knowledge of enterprise environmental performance. National authorities responsible for setting technical regulations for industries such as Ministries of Industry might also need to be involved. The already established initial WGEMA network of large polluting enterprises in EECCA, which committed themselves to the United Nations Global Compact principles, would have to be strengthened and enlarged to better understand enterprises' concerns and make use of their expertise and resources. Business and industry associations in EECCA and SEE might play a useful role in this regard. Cooperation would continue with the Working Group on PRTRs⁷ and with the relevant subsidiary bodies of the Executive Body to the LRTAP Convention⁸.

E. Adaptation of monitoring networks

23. WGEMA may need to strengthen its efforts to narrow the existing gap between monitoring systems with environmental decision-making. It could help countries in EECCA and SEE in revising their ambient environment monitoring programmes by making monitoring a practical tool for policy target-setting, pollution abatement strategies and measuring progress in achieving policy targets and in effectiveness of abatement measures. In doing so, particular attention would be paid to aspects referred to in Box 2 (below).

24. When developing practical guidance to the countries concerned on extending and upgrading monitoring networks, especially those on air, water and soil quality, account would be taken of the requirements of relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), in particular of the atmospheric⁹ and effects¹⁰ monitoring and assessment programmes under the

⁷ Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.

⁸ The Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution.

⁹ The Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP).

¹⁰ The International Cooperative Programmes (ICPs) and Task Forces of the Working Group on Effects.

LRTAP Convention; the guidelines, standards and manuals developed by international organizations; and good monitoring practices in other parts of the UNECE region. Cooperation would continue or be established anew with secretariats of relevant MEAs, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), WHO/Europe, the International Standardization Organization (ISO) and the European Commission. Sharing the North American experience with EECCA and SEE countries would be also useful for this purpose.

Box 2: Promoting interaction between monitoring and environmental strategies

Increasing the role of monitoring in policymaking can be achieved primarily by:

- (a) Integration of environmental quality monitoring data with emission inventories and modelling activities;
- (b) Revision of environmental quality standards and their harmonization with relevant international standards and guidelines to use them effectively in policy- and decision-making;
- (c) Better use of monitoring data in permitting, compliance monitoring, setting policy targets and developing abatement policies and measures; in environment assessment reports; and for informing and warning populations, taking urgent actions in cases of extreme exceedance of limit values, and monitoring compliance with international targets or obligations;
- (d) Improvement of coordination of national environmental quality monitoring programmes with monitoring activities by environmental inspectorates, sanitary and health inspectorates, subnational (oblast and city) authorities, and enterprises;
- (e) Modernization and upgrading of national monitoring networks and information systems, with a particular focus on:
 - (i) Monitoring points (e.g. stationary and mobile points, background stations, transboundary stations) and their location and densities;
 - (ii) Parameters measured;
 - (iii) Technical capacities, particularly automated measurements;
 - (iv) Reliability of measurements and analysis;
 - (v) Data management;
 - (vi) Mobilization of funds from various sources.

Source: Making Monitoring and Assessment an Effective Tool in Environmental Policy (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/11).

F. Support to the fifth pan-European assessment report and coordination with related assessments and data collection

25. Pursuant to the discussions held at its last meeting, WGEMA would at its next meeting consider a paper that the EEA has committed to prepare on lessons learned from the data collection for the Belgrade Assessment report. WGEMA would be expected to discuss opportunities, inter alia, for:

- (a) Further strengthening and harmonizing environmental data collection, and producing pan-European environmental indicators;
- (b) Promoting comparability of environmental statistics through the cooperation with

EECCA and SEE national statistical offices, UNSD, the Conference of European Statisticians, and the Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the basis of the *Indicator Guidelines*;

- (c) More widely communicating the findings of pan-European assessments to the public;
- (d) Creating a common environmental information system for the pan-European region.

26. Once EEA has started the preparation of the fifth pan-European assessment report for the next Efe conference, WGEMA would be again at hand to support the effort by reviewing a draft table of contents, facilitating data collection in EECCA and SEE countries, discussing draft report sections and promoting the visibility of the work throughout the region.

27. WGEMA might be more actively involved in the appraisal of national and international monitoring and assessment requirements, including obligations under the relevant UNECE environmental legal instruments. It could follow up recommendations on monitoring and information management emanating from the CEP/EPR programme helping individual countries reviewed to implement reform needed. WGEMA would be at hand to support activities on air and effects monitoring, and emission inventories under the CLRTAP, assessment of transboundary surface and groundwaters under the Water Convention¹¹, on indicators and reporting under the Protocol on Water and Health to the Water Convention, on SoE reporting under the Aarhus Convention and on pollutant registers under the PRT Protocol to the Aarhus Convention.

28. As in the past, WGEMA would be kept abreast of progress made in other international environmental assessments and data collection activities of relevance to the pan-European assessments, such as the preparation of the UNEP Global Environment Outlook; the development of a pan-European environment and health information system by WHO; the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics; and the OECD Environment Outlook.

III. REVISED MANDATE AND STATUS OF THE GROUP

29. The last terms of reference of WGEMA appear to be still valid to a great extent. They may need to be updated, however, to reflect experience gained in the past and to focus on key issues of significant importance. They may highlight specific tasks emanating from decisions by the Belgrade Conference.

30. First, in compliance with the Belgrade Ministerial Declaration, the capacity-building activities of WGEMA might embrace SEE countries that are not EEA members in addition to EECCA countries. The former participated in WGEMA meetings in the past. The involvement of interested SEE countries in the WGEMA training workshops on indicator-based assessments, SoE reporting and environmental statistics compendiums, environmental monitoring by enterprises and modernization of ambient environment monitoring networks might bring them added value.

¹¹ Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

31. Second, WGEMA might be made explicitly responsible for promoting the implementation of recommendations and guidelines on environmental monitoring and assessment adopted by EfE Ministerial Conferences, especially regarding indicator-based reporting and enterprise self-monitoring. This could be particularly instrumental in helping EECCA and interested SEE countries to make monitoring and assessment an effective instrument in environmental policymaking and pollution control.

32. Third, WGEMA would involve in its activities officials and experts from the main governmental institutions responsible for the collection, treatment, publication and reporting of environmental data. These could comprise monitoring departments in Environment Ministries, hydrometeorological services, pollution control authorities, statistics agencies, and environmental institutes or centres. WGEMA would continue its active cooperation with territorial (e.g. Oblast and City) environmental authorities and representatives of the private sector and competent civil society organizations. As far as the membership in the WGEMA itself it would be highly desirable that Governments designate two focal points per country, one from the Environment Ministry/Agency and the other one from the Agency for Statistics. Such dual composition proved its efficiency in OECD/WGEIO, for instance.

33. A proposal for the terms of reference prepared in the light of the discussion by the CEP Bureau at its meeting of 30 January 2008 is annexed to the present document. The Bureau considered that the Committee, when discussing these terms of reference, should decide on the status of its body on environmental monitoring and assessment, namely (a) either to continue with WGEMA as ad hoc team of specialists with a sunset clause for its mandate or (b) to transform it into a standing Working Party as was recommended by WGEMA itself. Alternative wording is bracketed in the annexed text, accordingly.

34. If WGEMA remains a team of specialists, it will continue to have a sunset clause for its duration. It will have informal character and its meetings will not require full interpretation and translation¹². An upgrading to a Working Party would give the group a continuous standing, although its mandate and extension would need to be reviewed every five years. The Working Party could establish teams of specialists (task forces led by interested countries or expert groups) to do substantive work in specialized areas. Formal UNECE procedures would be applied regarding the election of officers and the participation of representatives of EEA and other international organizations and institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Meetings would be “held with full interpretation and translation, unless the members of the Working Party decide otherwise”.¹³ For the UNECE secretariat, the change might lead to additional workload, for instance, to assist teams of specialists that the Working Party might establish. Much will depend in fact on the work programme adopted.

35. The continuation of and even an increase in extrabudgetary support would be crucial for the achievement of the Committee’s objectives in its subprogramme on environmental monitoring and assessment. Exploring approaches and partners that would increase the

¹² See the *Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Teams of Specialists within the UNECE* (ECE/EX/2006/L.3).

¹³ See the *Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Working Parties within the UNECE* (ECE/EX/2006/L.2).

proportion of external contributions as compared to those provided by the secretariat, interested Governments and the European Commission, might be an additional task of the secretariat.

36. Whatever decision the Committee takes on status the status of the WGEMA, its preferred option, together with the approved terms of reference, will have to be submitted to the UNECE Executive Committee for endorsement.

37. Once the revised terms of reference have been adopted, WGEMA would meet to prepare its work programme, including the prioritization of activities and the assessment of requirements in extrabudgetary resources, for consideration by the Committee at its next session. The next WGEMA meeting has been provisionally scheduled for 4 and 5 September 2008.

Annex

**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKING [GROUP]/[PARTY]
ON ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT**

Note by the secretariat

1. In the light of the decision of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, October 2007), the Committee on Environmental Policy [renews the mandate of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment]/[converts the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment into a Working Party on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment]. The Working [Group]/[Party] should serve as an instrument for UNECE member States to provide recommendations and to improve coordination of international initiatives within the region in the areas of harmonized and cost-effective environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting, with a view to supporting decision-making processes and contributing to streamlining international reporting in the UNECE region.
2. The Working [Group]/[Party] on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment will promote the coordination of efforts in the above areas, and in particular towards preparations for the Ministerial Conferences “Environment for Europe”. It should contribute:
 - (a) To the development of assessment reports on the state of the environment by the European Environment Agency (EEA);
 - (b) To an appraisal of monitoring and assessment requirements within the framework of the “Environment for Europe” process as well as national and international monitoring and assessment requirements, including obligations under the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).
3. The Working Group should promote implementation of recommendations and guidelines on environmental monitoring and assessment adopted by Ministerial Conferences “Environment for Europe”. It should use relevant results of the work of and cooperate with other international networks and forums, such as EEA, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the World Health Organization (WHO) European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH), relevant MEAs, especially those of UNECE, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and give priority to the following specific areas:
 - (a) The strengthening of environmental information and observation capacity, including monitoring networks, in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and in interested countries of South-Eastern Europe to make monitoring and assessment an effective instrument in environmental policymaking and pollution control;
 - (b) Improvement of data collection, transfer and use;
 - (c) Enhancement of international comparability of environmental information;

- (d) Promotion of the use of indicator-based mechanisms for periodic environmental assessments and evaluation of the effectiveness of environmental policies and decision-making;
 - (e) Improvement of environmental assessments, including ecosystem-based assessments, outlooks and reporting;
 - (f) The strengthening of environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises.
4. Donors will be invited to provide support for the Working [Group's]/[Party's] activities.
5. The Working [Group]/[Party] on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment will be open to all UNECE member States [and include EEA]. In its operation it will be guided by the relevant procedures established by the UNECE Executive Committee.
6. Interested Governments will be invited to designate two focal points for the Working [Group]/[Party] per country, one from the Environment Ministry/Agency and the other one from the Agency for Statistics. The Working [Group]/[Party] will involve in its activities officials and experts from public authorities responsible for environmental policy, environmental monitoring, compliance monitoring and statistics, as well as representatives of major groups, especially business and industry, and environmental citizens' organizations.
7. The UNECE secretariat will provide secretariat assistance and conference facilities to the Working [Group]/[Party] at the United Nations Office at Geneva, in accordance with UNECE rules and practices.
8. The Committee on Environmental Policy will review the present terms of reference after the Seventh Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe".
