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Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

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PREPARATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2008–2010

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This note presents elements for the work programme that the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) is expected to implement from October 2008 to the end of 2010. These elements stem from the revised mandate of the Working Group and build on the results achieved so far. The note also contains an assessment of needs for extrabudgetary resources to implement individual work programme elements.

WGEMA will prepare its work programme and submit it to the Committee on Environmental Policy, at its special session to be held on 13-15 October 2008, for approval.

Introduction

1. The Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10-12 October 2007) stressed the need to further improve the indicator-based environmental assessments and reporting in the region. The ministers at the Conference endorsed and called for the adoption and full implementation of the Recommendations on environmental indicators and indicator-based assessments and the Guidelines for enterprise monitoring for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia prepared by the WGEMA. They invited UNECE to continue its efforts, in cooperation with the European Environment Agency (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. They called on EEA to consider preparing the fifth assessment report for their next “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference, building on its partnerships, and requested those countries that would be covered by the report to fully participate in this work and to appropriately improve their monitoring efforts (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/8, para.7).

2. The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its fifteenth session held in April 2008, reviewed the WGEMA report on the implementation of its programme of work (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2007/3 and Add.1) and, in view of the group’s accomplishments and the decisions by the Belgrade Ministerial Conference, agreed on the extension of the WGEMA mandate for two more years and on its revised terms of reference.

3. The revised terms of reference highlight specific tasks emanating from decisions by the Belgrade Ministerial Conference. The capacity-building activities of WGEMA, including those on the modernization and upgrading of national monitoring networks and information systems, will need to target South-East European countries that are not EEA members in addition to countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia¹. WGEMA has been made explicitly responsible for promoting the implementation of the recommendations and guidelines on environmental monitoring and assessment adopted by “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conferences. Its members will be the officials responsible in the UNECE countries for environmental monitoring and assessment. WGEMA will need to involve in its activities experts from statistical agencies, compliance control authorities and sanitary services, as well as representatives of major groups, especially business and industry, the scientific community and environmental citizens’ organizations (ECE/CEP/148, annex III).

4. The Committee on Environmental Policy agreed furthermore on the focus and main directions of its future work on environmental monitoring and assessment as was proposed in document on environmental monitoring ECE/CEP/2008/6. It requested the WGEMA to prepare a detailed programme of work, based on the above-mentioned document, for adoption by the Committee at its next session in October 2008 (ECE/CEP/148, paras.22 and 23). The Committee invited the Conference of European Statisticians to consider cooperating with the WGEMA on methodological issues of environmental indicators.

¹ For the sake of brevity, the term “interested countries” is used hereafter to refer to the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and of South-Eastern Europe that are not EEA members.

5. A draft work programme of WGEMA from the end of 2008 – to the end of 2010 is presented in annex I to the present document.

6. The regular budget of the United Nations provides core support to WGEMA. It covers the costs of the Secretary to WGEMA and associated staff costs as well as conference and documentation services by the United Nations Office in Geneva, including meetings, translation, interpretation and distribution costs. Voluntary contributions will continue to be indispensable in allowing WGEMA to implement its mandate, especially with regard to capacity-building. A detailed breakdown of the extrabudgetary resources required is presented in annex II.

Annex I

**DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME ON ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING
FROM END-2008 TO END-2010**

Task 1: Improving environmental observations, data collection and reporting

Work accomplished

In 2007 WGEMA reviewed the situation with respect to urban air-quality monitoring networks in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asian countries. WGEMA, at its ninth session, organized a round table on latest developments in environmental monitoring and assessment at the national, subnational and company levels. It also appraised the latest developments in international monitoring and assessment requirements, especially obligations under the UNECE environmental legal instruments.

At its ninth session, WGEMA also considered progress made in and/or plans developed for the implementation by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Serbia of recommendations on environmental monitoring and information management emanating from the second cycle of environmental performance reviews (EPRs) of these countries.

Work to be undertaken

1.1 Review of developments in environmental monitoring and assessment at the national and international levels

At WGEMA sessions in 2009 and 2010, delegations will exchange information on major recent, ongoing and planned actions in their countries to modernize and upgrade monitoring and information networks, with a particular focus on:

- (a) Monitoring points (e.g. stationary and mobile points, background stations, transboundary stations) and their location and densities;
- (b) Parameters measured;
- (c) Technical capacities, particularly automated measurements;
- (d) Reliability of measurements and analysis;
- (e) Data management;
- (f) Mobilization of funds from various sources.

Delegations will also appraise, at these instances, international monitoring and assessment requirements, including obligations under the relevant UNECE environmental legal instruments, and consider opportunities for supporting relevant international monitoring and data collection activities. The sessions will provide interested countries with practical guidance on effective and cost-efficient ways to extend and upgrade monitoring networks, taking into account the guidelines, standards and manuals developed by international organizations as well as good monitoring practices applied in various parts of the UNECE region.

1.2 Implementation of recommendations on monitoring and information management under country environmental performance reviews

WGEMA will follow up recommendations on monitoring and information management emanating

from the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) programme of EPRs, helping the individual countries reviewed to implement the reforms needed. This will help the interested countries in revising their 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. At its session in 2009, WGEMA will consider the recommendations in the second EPRs of Moldova, Montenegro and Ukraine, and in 2010 those of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uzbekistan.

Task 2: Production of environmental indicators and indicator-based reporting

Work accomplished

WGEMA prepared the *Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia* and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Indicator-based Environment Assessment Reports in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia* (ECE/CEP/140). To promulgate the implementation of both *Guidelines*, the Belgrade Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” endorsed 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 (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/11/Add.1).

Work to be undertaken

2.1 Training in indicator production

WGEMA, in cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division and other partners, will train experts responsible in the interested countries for state-of-the-environment (SoE) reporting and the publication of environmental statistical compendiums in producing the indicators included in the *Indicator Guidelines*. The experts will be also trained in modern approaches to the indicator presentation in the form of charts, diagrammes, etc. In addition, they will be kept abreast of the latest developments in: (a) ongoing work at the international level on additional environment-related indicators such as those on environmental expenditure, environmental taxes and subsidies; (b) production of and trade in environmental goods and services and hazardous substances; and (c) resource productivity. Workshops will be organized for this purpose in 2009 and 2010.

2.2 On-line reporting of indicator data

WGEMA will support the efforts by SoE experts and environmental statisticians from the interested countries to upload on the WGEMA website national time-series data on indicators using, to the extent possible, the operational modalities with which EEA member countries report on EEA environmental indicators. This activity, to be implemented in the period 2009-2010, will help to fill the existing gap in environmental data reporting at the international level and facilitate the environmental data collection for the next pan-European assessment report.

2.3 Production of national indicator-based reports

WGEMA, in cooperation with UNEP, will assist up to two interested countries, at their request,

with establishing procedures and arrangements, and building practical experience for the publication of regular indicator-based environmental assessment report at the national level. This action, to be undertaken in 2009-2010 with the active involvement of SoE experts from other interested countries, will assist in converting existing descriptive SoE reports into reader-friendly, indicator publications that transform raw data into policy messages following the *Indicator-Reporting Guidelines*.

2.4 *Ecosystem-based assessments*

At its session in 2009, WGEMA will review the state-of-the-art and countries' experiences with ecosystem-based assessments. The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the secretariats of the Convention on the Protection of the Alps and of the Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians will be invited to share their methodologies and approaches in assessing the respective marine and mountain transboundary ecosystems. On the basis of this review, WGEMA may initiate the preparation, by interested countries jointly or by relevant international institutions, of case studies to test the successful methodologies and approaches on other transboundary ecosystems, e.g. the mountain ecosystems in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the western Balkans, and the Caspian Sea ecosystem. These case studies would be considered by WGEMA at its session 2010.

Task 3: Environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises

Work accomplished

WGEMA prepared the *Guidelines for Strengthening Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia* (ECE/CEP/141). 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. The Belgrade Ministerial Conference endorsed and called for the adoption and full implementation these Guidelines.

Work to be undertaken

3.1 *Enterprise environmental monitoring programmes in selected industries*

To promote the implementation of the general *Enterprise Monitoring Guidelines*, WGEMA will help interested countries in developing, taking into account available manuals and reference materials at the international level, practical guidance on model enterprise environmental monitoring programmes in selected major polluting industries, including methodologies for measurement, calculation and estimation of emissions, environmental quality and impacts, and the production of indicators which are meaningful for improving environmental performance and resource efficiency. This will be done with the active involvement of pollution control authorities, the national authorities responsible for setting technical regulations for industries, interested large polluting enterprises, and relevant business and industry associations. Case studies will be prepared for consideration by a workshop to be organized in 2009, followed, if

appropriate, by the development of model environmental programme(s) to be considered by WGEMA, at its session in 2010.

3.2 Promotion of corporate environmental and sustainability reporting

At its session in 2009, WGEMA will review country experiences with specific legal approaches, incentives and inducements to promote the publication of open corporate environmental and sustainability reports. For this purpose, WGEMA will attempt to strengthen and enlarge its already established initial network of large polluting enterprises, which committed themselves to the United Nations Global Compact principles in order to better understand enterprises' concerns and make use of their expertise and resources. WGEMA will invite the Global Reporting Initiative, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and business and industry associations of interested countries to cooperate on the project. A workshop will be organized in early 2010 to report the results to the WGEMA session in autumn 2010.

Task 4: Support to pan-European assessments and other international initiatives

Work accomplished

WGEMA considered the initial structure and the extended outline of the assessment report for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference, facilitated data collection for the report by interested countries, reviewed the draft report and made specific comments on each chapter. These efforts helped EEA to complete the report for submission to the Conference. This ensured synergies between environmental data collection and assessment activities of important international players. At its ninth session, WGEMA considered a paper drafted by EEA on lessons learned from the data collection for the Belgrade Assessment report.

Work to be undertaken

4.1 Support to the fifth pan-European assessment report

Once EEA has started the preparation of the fifth pan-European assessment report for the next EfE conference, WGEMA will support the effort by reviewing a draft table of contents and arrangements made for the report preparation, facilitating data collection in interested countries and discussing draft report sections, if available. At its sessions in 2009 and 2010, WGEMA will review the documents submitted and progress made by EEA, and will provide comments and guidance. It may convene a workshop in 2010 to prepare a self-standing assessment contribution for the next Ministerial Conference.

4.2 Coordination with related assessments and data collections

At its sessions in 2009 and 2010, WGEMA will consider progress made in other international environmental assessments and data collection activities, e.g the transboundary waters assessment under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, the fifth Global Environment Outlook of UNEP, the development of a pan-European environment and health information system by the World Health Organization/Europe, the Questionnaire on Environment Statistics of the United Nations Statistics Division and UNEP, and a third Environment Outlook of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. WGEMA will explore the synergies between the various reports and provide comments.

Annex II

**DONOR SUPPORT NEEDS FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT
(in U.S. dollars)**

Expenses	number of units	Unit rate (in \$)	Costs ¹
Sub-task 1.1			
1.1.1 Experts travel (2 WGEMA meetings)	36	1,200	43,200
1.1.2 Experts per diems	120	450	54,000
1.1.3 Consultancy (fee & travel)	2	7,000	14,000
Subtotal			111,200
Sub-task 1.2			
1.2.1 Experts travel (2 WGEMA meetings)			Covered under sub-task 1.1
1.2.2 Experts per diems			
Subtotal			
Sub-task 2.1			
2.1.1 Workshop (travel, per diem, logistics)	1	32,000	32,000
2.1.2 Consultancy (fee & travel)	2	7,000	14,000
Subtotal			46,000
Sub-task 2.2			
2.2.1 Consultancy (work-months)	4	5,200	20,800
2.2.2 Computer equipment	1	3,000	3,000
Subtotal			23,800
Sub-task 2.3			
2.3.1 Workshop (travel and per diem)	2	28,800	57,600
2.3.2 National coordination meeting	2	5,000	10,000
2.3.3 Consultancy (fee & travel)	2	9,000	18,000
Subtotal			85,600
Sub-task 2.4			
2.4.1 Experts travel (2 WGEMA meetings)			Covered under sub-task 1.1
2.4.2 Experts per diems			
2.4.3 Consultancy (fee & travel)	1	7,000	7,000
Subtotal			7,000
Sub-task 3.1			
3.1.1 Experts (pollution control authorities) travel (2 WGEMA meetings)	16	1,200	19,200 ²
3.1.2 Experts (pollution control authorities)	60	450	27,000 ²

Expenses	number of units	Unit rate (in \$)	Costs ¹
per diems			
3.1.3 Consultation (expert travel and per diem)	2	15,000	30,000
3.1.4 Consultancy (fee & travel)	2	7,000	14,000
Subtotal			90,200
Sub-task 3.2			
3.2.1 Experts travel (2 WGEMA meetings)	Covered under sub-task 1.1		
3.2.2 Experts per diems	Covered under sub-task 1.1		
3.2.3 Consultancy (fee & travel)	1	14,000	14,000
Sub-total			14,000
Sub-task 4.1			
4.1.1 Experts travel (2 WGEMA meetings)	Covered under sub-task 1.1		
4.1.2 Experts per diems	Covered under sub-task 1.1		
4.1.3 Workshop (travel, per diem, logistics)	1	32,000	32,000
4.1.4 Consultancy (fee & travel)	1	14,000	14,000
Sub-total			46,000
Sub-task 4.2			
4.2.1 Experts travel (2 WGEMA meetings)	Covered under sub-task 1.1		
4.2.2 Experts per diems	Covered under sub-task 1.1		
4.2.3 Staff travel	6	2,000	12,000
Sub-total			12,000
Total costs			435,800

¹ Including United Nations administrative costs and contingency reserves.

² Costs of travel and per diem of monitoring experts are covered under sub-task 1.1.
