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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Fifteenth session
Geneva, 21–23 April 2008

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
ON ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION**

Summary

At its fifteenth session, the Committee on Environmental Policy:

- Discussed the reform of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process and requested the secretariat with the assistance of the Bureau to prepare a draft outline with building blocks for the reform process to serve as basis for its meeting in June. It also agreed on the schedule of meetings in preparation for and adoption of the reform plan;
- Agreed on the composition of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Environmental Performance, on its revised terms of reference (Annex II) and the revision of the Committee’s peer review procedure;
- Reviewed the environmental performance of Kazakhstan, adopted the related recommendations and welcomed the initiation of the second review of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan;
- Agreed on the focus and main directions of work and on the revised terms of reference for the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (Annex III), and requested the Working Group to prepare a detailed programme of work for adoption by the Committee;
- Agreed on its programme of work for 2008 (Annex I) and decided to add an item on promoting environmental partnerships with the private sector;
- Considered ways of incorporating gender into the work of the Committee;
- Agreed on the accomplishments and related indicators of achievements following the request of the Commission to facilitate the Committee’s programme performance evaluation of 2008/2009 and considered the self-evaluations of the EfE process and the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP);
- Noted the information on regular and extrabudgetary resources for all activities related to the environment, and endorsed the updated criteria for financial assistance (Annex IV).

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Pages</i>
Introduction.....	1-4	3
I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA.....	5	3
II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.....	6-7	3
III. REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK: ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS.....	8-12	3-4
A. Environmental Performance Review of Kazakhstan.....	8	3-4
B. Revision of peer review procedure.....	9-10	4
C. Forthcoming reviews.....	11	4
IV. OUTCOME OF THE SIXTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”: THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” PROCESS – ASSESSMENT AND THE WAY FORWARD.....	12-18	4-5
V. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNECE REGION.....	19	6
VI. REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK: ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING, BUILDING CAPACITY AND PARTNERSHIPS, CROSS-SECTORAL ACTIVITIES.....	20-32	6-8
A. Environmental monitoring.....	21-23	6
B. Building capacity and partnerships.....	24-28	7
C. Cross-sectoral activities.....	29-32	7-8
VII. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008.....	33	8
VIII. REPORTING ON PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE.....	34-36	8
IX. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.....	37-39	9
A. Gender mainstreaming in the Committee’s work.....	37-38	9
B. Statement by Belarus on the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.....	39	9
X. CLOSING OF THE FIFTEENTH SESSION.....	40	9

Annexes

I. Programme of work for 2008.....	10-18
II. Ad Hoc Expert Group on Environmental Performance: revised terms of reference...	19-20
III. Working Group on Environmental Monitoring: revised terms of reference.....	21-22
IV. Criteria for financial support.....	23

Introduction

1. The fifteenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) was held from 21 to 23 April 2008 in Geneva. Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia) chaired the session.
2. The session was attended by delegates from 36 UNECE member countries: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States of America and Uzbekistan.
3. Representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the European Commission (Directorate-General Environment), the European Environment Agency and the World Bank also took part.
4. The following regional environmental centres and non-governmental organizations were also represented: European Environment Bureau; European ECO-Forum, including its Issue Group on EfE reform; and the Regional Environmental Centres for Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Moldova and the Russian Federation.

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Committee adopted the agenda for its fifteenth session.

II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

6. The Committee elected the following members to its Bureau: Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia) as Chairperson, and as Vice-Chairpersons: Ms. Ruzanna Davtyan (Armenia), Mr. Bert-Axel Szelinski (Germany), Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy), Mr. Bulat Yessekin (Kazakhstan) and Mr. Sinisa Stankovic (Montenegro), Ms. Eldrid Nordbo (Norway), Mr. Jon Kahn (Sweden) and Mr. John Matuszak (United States).
7. It thanked the two outgoing Bureau members: Ms. Narin Panariti (Albania) and Mr. Czeslaw Wieckowski (Poland).

III. REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK: ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

A. Environmental Performance Review of Kazakhstan

8. Mr. Adriaan Oudeman (Netherlands), the rapporteur designated by the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Environmental Performance (EPR Expert Group), presented an overview of the results of the second Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Kazakhstan conducted by the Expert Group (17–18 April 2008). Mr. Alzhan Braliev, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Head of delegation of Kazakhstan, presented his views about the situation in his country, as well as progress made and main current priorities. A large number of questions were addressed by the representatives of member States to the delegation of Kazakhstan, to which Mr. Braliev

replied point by point. The Committee concluded the peer review by adopting the recommendations in the second EPR of Kazakhstan.

B. Revision of peer review procedures

9. The Committee discussed a proposal for the revision of the peer review procedure of the EPR programme as suggested by the CEP Bureau and the EPR Expert Group and reflected in a background note prepared by the secretariat. This note contained three non-exclusive options (ECE/CEP/2008/2, para. 11); delegations expressed their preference for option (a), transforming the EPR Expert Group into an open-ended working group for the participation in the reviews of members of the Committee, and option (b), organizing problem-oriented discussions during CEP sessions. It was agreed that the peer review procedure would be modified accordingly. It was also requested that the EPR Expert Group meeting be held during the same week as the Committee session, preceding the session, so as to allow for the participation of CEP delegates in the Expert Group's meetings.

10. Furthermore, the Committee agreed:

- (a) To modify the EPR peer review procedure by making the EPR Expert Group an open-ended group and by holding policy-related discussions on selected issues related to countries under review during the Committee sessions;
- (b) To extend the mandate of the EPR Expert Group for another two years (up to 2010);
- (c) On the composition of the EPR Expert Group, as follows: Ms. Vanya Grigorova (Bulgaria), Ms. Jarmila Zimmermannova (Czech Republic), Mr. Harry Liiv (Estonia), Ms. Anneliese Loos (Germany), Mr. Grigol Lazriev (Georgia), Ms. Gabriella Buzas (Hungary), Mr. Adriaan Oudeman (Netherlands), Ms. Ann-Sofi Israelson (Sweden), Ms. Martine Rohn-Bossard (Switzerland), Mr. Bekmurad Eyerberdiyev (Turkmenistan) and Ms. Nadejda Dotsenko (Uzbekistan);
- (d) That interim reporting on the implementation of the recommendations by reviewed countries be compulsory between two reviews and become a regular part of the EPR procedure.

C. Forthcoming reviews

11. The Committee took note that the next countries to be reviewed were, in chronological order, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

IV. OUTCOME OF THE SIXTH MINISTERIAL "ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE" CONFERENCE: THE "ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE" PROCESS – ASSESSMENT AND THE WAY FORWARD

12. Following the decision taken by ministers in Belgrade at the Sixth Ministerial Conference to undertake a reform of the EfE process, the Committee discussed the modalities for the reform. The reform is intended to ensure that the EfE process remains relevant and makes a valuable contribution to improving environmental quality and the lives of people across the region. The Committee was entrusted to develop, in consultation with EfE partners, a reform plan that would

be endorsed at the political level by the Economic Commission for Europe annual session in spring 2009.

13. To facilitate the discussion, the CEP Bureau invited the secretariat to solicit the views of Governments on issues of the reform. Responses from Governments were compiled into an official document that was circulated in advance of the Committee's session. Other stakeholders were encouraged to prepare their views and bring them to the attention of the Committee during the session.

14. Participants supported the continuation of the EfE process and re-confirmed its value as a pan-European forum for tackling environmental challenges and promoting broad horizontal environmental cooperation as a pillar of sustainable development in the region. Discussions on the EfE reform may be resumed under three major clusters: (a) the format of the process and the EfE conferences; (b) the preparatory process; and (c) the outcomes of the conferences.

15. The Committee broadly agreed the length and periodicity of the EfE conferences and addressed the need for a more focused agenda for future conferences. There was a general understanding that one important challenge would be to find ways to decide on a limited number of priorities to be discussed at the conferences. A more focused agenda might also reduce the amount of conference documents. Emphasis was placed on the need to maintain the open and inclusive nature of the EfE process for all stakeholders, while at the same time seeking stronger engagement of the private sector. There was also agreement on the need for a shortened and streamlined preparatory process. The need to have assessment reports ready at least one year in advance of the upcoming EfE conferences, so that the reports could be used in developing the conference agenda, was underlined.

16. A major part of the discussion concerned the form of an eventual outcome document from the Conferences. Several delegations expressed hesitation with respect to the need for a ministerial declaration. A number of alternative outcomes for future conferences were discussed. Delegates also considered the question of whether the preparation for future conferences should be incorporated into the Committee's functions or if the current practice of establishing a separate body (e.g. the Working Group of Senior Officials) should be continued.

17. The Committee dedicated two sessions to this item and had a constructive dialogue. It requested the secretariat with the assistance of the Bureau to prepare a draft outline with building blocks for the EfE reform process. The document would take into account the Committee's views and would be structured around the format, the preparatory process and the possible outcomes. The document would serve as a basis for further discussion at the meeting of the Extended CEP Bureau on 23 and 24 June 2008.

18. The Committee agreed on the following schedule of meetings for the reform of the EfE process:

- (a) The meeting of the Extended Bureau to be held on 23 and 24 June 2008;
- (b) The special session of the Committee, to be held from 3 to 15 October 2008;
- (c) Further meetings, to be scheduled if necessary.

V. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ECE REGION

19. The Committee took note of the information on the outcome of the third regional implementation meeting on sustainable development (Geneva, 28–29 January 2008), which addressed agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa (ECE/AC.25/2008/2). The outcome of the meeting in the form of the Chairman's Summary will be presented by the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Moldova at the ECE segment of the regional discussions during the Commission on Sustainable Development's sixteenth session, on 6 May 2008 in New York.

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

20. The Committee took note of the information on regular and extrabudgetary resources for all activities related to the environment and endorsed the updated criteria for financial assistance (Annex IV).

A. Environmental monitoring

21. The Committee welcomed the report of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) on the results of its activities from 2004 to 2007 and the information provided at the session by the WGEMA Chairperson and the secretariat. Delegations supported the continuation of WGEMA activities in the light of its achievements and the decisions on environmental monitoring and assessment taken at the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Belgrade, and called on bilateral and multilateral donors to provide contributions to support WGEMA activities.

22. The Committee agreed:

- (a) On the focus and main directions of the Committee's future work on environmental monitoring and assessment as proposed in the document ECE/CEP/2008/6. It decided to maintain the current status of WGEMA as a team of specialists;
- (b) To request the Working Group to prepare for its next meeting (September 2008) a detailed programme of work for 2009–2010, based on the above document, for adoption by the Committee at its next session in October 2008;
- (c) On the Working Group's revised terms of reference (see Annex III).

23. Further to initial discussions between the Environment and Statistics Divisions of UNECE, the Committee invited the Conference of European Statisticians to consider cooperating with the Working Group on Methodological Issues of Environmental Indicators.

B. Building capacity and partnerships

1. Implementation of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements

24. The Committee took note of the information provided by the secretariats of the five UNECE environmental conventions on activities and developments in the implementation of the Conventions and Protocols, bearing in mind the recommendations discussed at the Sixth Ministerial Conference in Belgrade, as reflected in the document on the implementation of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements (ECE/CEP/2007/4 and Add. 1).

2. Environment and Security Initiative

25. Mr. Bo Libert (Regional Advisor, UNECE Environment, Housing and Land Management Division) presented progress of the projects under way in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) carried out under Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative. He noted that UNECE was involved in the development of cooperation between European Union (EU) and Central Asia within the EU-Central Asia Strategy (the EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership) and in the organization of a high-level conference, "Water Unites - New Prospects for Cooperation and Security in Central Asia" held on 1 April 2008 in Berlin with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A follow-up conference is tentatively scheduled to be held on 17 and 18 November 2008 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

26. Mr. Ajiniyaz Reimov of the UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre gave a brief presentation on activities and results achieved through ENVSEC, in particular in Central Asia.

3. Promoting environmental partnerships with the private sector

27. In response to paragraphs 31 and 36 of the Belgrade Ministerial Declaration on the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships, including with the private sector, to seek its "experience and expertise in effecting change to improve environmental conditions in the region", the Committee discussed ways to strengthen member States' awareness of, capacity for, and use of partnerships with the private sector.

28. The Committee decided to add an item to its programme of work and to initiate and sustain discussions among Member States on ways to engage the interest of the private sector in the work of the CEP and EfE and on how partnerships could address environmental and sustainable development objectives.

C. Cross-sectoral activities

1. Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme

29. The Committee was informed about the progress made under THE PEP, in particular the preparations for the third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment to be hosted by the Netherlands on 22 and 23 January 2009 in Amsterdam. The theme of the Meeting will be "Making the Link: Transport Choices for Our Health, Environment and Prosperity". The importance of strengthening THE PEP as an effective policy framework for promoting sustainable transport was underlined. The High-level Meeting is intended to ensure renewed political commitment from Governments to THE PEP process, a stable funding mechanism and a

more engaged and active implementation of transport, health and environment policies by member States. The Committee took note of this information.

2. Education for sustainable development

30. Information was provided on the outcome of the third meeting of the Steering Committee for Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2008/2), held from 31 March to 1 April 2008 in Geneva. The Steering Committee had considered the outcomes of the Joint Session on Education for Sustainable Development held at the Sixth Ministerial Conference in Belgrade, noting that the session had shown high commitment from the Governments in implementing the Strategy and in particular its Phase I (2005–2007). The Steering Committee agreed that the EfE Ministerial Conferences could be used as a platform for the promotion of the Strategy at a high level, and invited member States to participate in the EfE reform discussion with the view to ensuring that education for sustainable development remained a component of the process in future. The mandate of the Steering Committee was extended until 2015. The next meeting of the Steering Committee would be held on 26 and 27 February 2009, and the Bureau would hold its seventh meeting in November 2008. The Committee took note of the information.

3. Environment and health

31. The Committee was informed about the first high level preparatory meeting and the outcome of the European Environment and Health Committee (Milan, Italy, 10–12 March 2008), which launched preparations for the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, to be held in Italy in 2009.

32. The Committee took note of the information provided on the above programmes.

VII. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008

33. The Committee agreed on its programme of work for 2008 (ECE/CEP/2008/1) and requested that a programme element be added on promoting environmental partnership with the private sector. The Committee decided to renew its programme of work for 2009–2010 at its next session in 2009, taking into account the outcome of the EfE reform process.

VIII. REPORTING ON PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

34. Following the request of the Commission to each Sectoral Committee to conduct biennial evaluations its programme of work, the Committee discussed document ECE/CEP/2008/5, which contained, for each cluster of activity of the Committee, draft expected accomplishments and related indicators of achievements. Delegations provided some additional input related to the indicators of achievement and requested that an expected accomplishment related to private sector involvement be incorporated in the document.

35. The Committee agreed to postpone the discussion on reporting related to the 2006/2007 budget year and on lessons learned to the next session (October 2008), and requested the secretariat, when preparing the agenda, to allocate adequate time for such discussion under the item on the programme of work for 2008.

36. The Committee was informed about updated regular and extrabudgetary resources and agreed on the criteria for financial assistance for 2008 (see Annex IV).

IX. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A. Gender mainstreaming in the Committee's work

37. The Committee was invited to consider ways of incorporating gender into the work of the Committee, in accordance with the request of the UNECE Executive Committee, General Assembly resolution 50/203 on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action and Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/33 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, the workplan on UNECE reform and in the recommendations of the panel on the economics of gender at the sixty-second session of ECE.

38. The Committee agreed on the proposal put forward by the Chairperson to incorporate gender-specific aspects into the introductory chapters of EPRs, while providing information on the socio-economic situation in the reviewed country. Moreover, each of the experts involved in the EPRs was requested to incorporate gender-related issues into their respective chapters, if relevant.

B. Statement by Belarus on the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol

39. The delegation of Belarus informed the Committee about the work being done in the country on the implementation of its commitments under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and called on Parties to the Protocol to ratify the amendment proposed by Belarus and adopted by the second session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties, held from 6 to 17 November 2006 in Nairobi (decision 10/CMP.2).

X. CLOSING OF THE FIFTEENTH SESSION

40. The decisions of the Committee at its fifteenth session were summarized by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson.

Annex I**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008**

At its fifteenth session, the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) adopted its programme of work for 2008 (ECE/CEP/2008/1) and requested the secretariat to add a new programme element on promoting environmental partnerships with the private sector. The Committee decided to renew its programme of work for 2008–2009 at its next session in 2009, taking into account the outcome of the reform of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process once agreed upon.

The Committee carries out work in accordance with its strategic goals as contained in the “[Future UNECE strategic directions for the Environment](#)” (CEP/2004/2), adopted in 2003 to structure and adapt its programme of work. Specific activities in the draft programme of work for 2008 relate to the following main processes and strategic goals:

- (a) **Goal 1: Contributing to the “Environment for Europe” process.** Programme activity 1, the EfE reform;
- (b) **Goal 2: Improving environmental governance.** Programme activities 2 and 3, Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) and environmental monitoring;
- (c) **Goal 3: Improving the effectiveness of international legal instruments.** Programme activity 4.1, implementation of the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements;
- (d) **Goal 4: Integrating environmental concerns into sectoral policies.** Programme activity 4.2, environment and security; and programme activity 4.3, promoting environmental partnerships with the private sector;
- (e) **Goal 5: Contributing to regional implementation of the environmental pillar of sustainable development.** Programme activities 5, 6, 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3: sustainable development in the UNECE region; education for sustainable development; transport, health and environment; and environment and health.

SUBPROGRAMME 01– ENVIRONMENT**PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 1****“ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” REFORM**

Ministers at the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007) agreed to undertake a reform of the EfE process to ensure that the process remained relevant and valuable, and to strengthen its effectiveness as a mechanism for improving environmental quality and the lives of people across the region. They decided that the reform should focus on, although may not be limited to, the following aspects:

- (a) The format, focus and priorities of the EfE process and Ministerial Conferences;
- (b) Evaluating the performance and impact of the EfE process;
- (c) Attracting the broader interest and more active engagement of all stakeholders, in particular the private sector;

- (d) Expanding the use of partnerships as vehicles for improving implementation;
- (e) Leveraging external contributions of expertise, manpower and resources;
- (f) Assessing ways and means to promote more effectively the UNECE region-wide dimension of environmental cooperation;
- (g) The full cost of the EfE process and the effective allocation of available resources;
- (h) Future secretariat arrangements.

Ministers invited the Committee to develop, in consultation with EfE partners, a plan for the EfE reform so that it could be endorsed by the Commission at its next session in spring 2009.

Work to be undertaken

The Committee had a first substantive discussion on the EfE reform during its fifteenth session. The Committee requested the secretariat, with assistance of the Bureau to prepare for its consideration a draft outline of the EfE reform plan to be used as a basis for further discussion at the meeting of the Extended CEP Bureau (23–24 June 2008). A special session of the Committee (13–15 October 2008) is scheduled to further discuss the reform plan for its possible adoption, as well as other issues.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 2

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The EPR programme will continue its second cycle of reviews on the basis of the recommendations adopted by the Fifth EfE Ministerial Conference (Kiev, 2003) and the Committee. The second reviews focus on the particular environmental concerns of the reviewed countries, with emphasis on integration (sustainable development), implementation and financing. Ministers at the Sixth Ministerial Conference in Belgrade invited reviewed countries to implement THE recommendations of their national EPRs in accordance with their national needs and priorities.

Countries being reviewed a second time provide voluntary interim reports to the Committee on the implementation of the recommendations in the first review for its consideration. At its fifteenth session, the Committee decided that interim reporting on the implementation of the recommendations by reviewed countries would be compulsory between the two reviews, and become a regular part of the EPR procedure;

Work accomplished

The EPR Expert Group continued to support and offer advice for the preparation and conduct of the EPRs. It also carried out detailed expert reviews prior to the Committee's peer reviews and reported back to the Committee. The Committee reviewed the drafts of the second EPR reports of Montenegro and Serbia and adopted the recommendations (May 2007). Since then, the second review of Kazakhstan has been undertaken and the launch of the EPRs of Montenegro (November 2007), Serbia (November 2007) and Ukraine (February 2008) have been carried out. In April 2008, the Committee reviewed the draft of the second EPR report of Kazakhstan and adopted the recommendations.

The Committee provided a contribution on EPRs to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference on "Critical Issues in Implementation of Environmental Policies". The report included recommendations for creating the preconditions to achieving a better environment in the Russian

The Committee modified the EPR peer review procedure, making the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Environmental Performance an open-ended group and agreeing to hold policy-related discussions on countries under review during Committee sessions. The Committee also agreed to extend the mandate of the Expert Group for another two years (up to 2010).

Work to be undertaken

Following the adoption of the review of Kazakhstan, a launch event will be organized in autumn 2008 in Kazakhstan.

The second review of Kyrgyzstan (2007–2008) is under way, and the draft report will be ready for review at the next Committee session in 2009. Uzbekistan is the next country to be reviewed in 2008.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 3

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) will help countries in EECCA and SEE to strengthen their environmental information and observation capacities. WGEMA work will focus on areas emphasized by the ministers in Belgrade, in particular indicator-based assessment, environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises, and support for preparation of the pan-European assessment report for the next EfE Ministerial Conference.

Work accomplished

At its eighth session (12–13 June 2007), WGEMA discussed the communication and dissemination of the Belgrade assessment report, specific activities supporting the preparation of the report, related products on monitoring and assessment for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference and lessons learned for future pan-European assessments. WGEMA organized a workshop on 11 June 2007 in Geneva on the interaction between air-quality monitoring and air protection strategies in EECCA countries. A feasibility study was prepared on the development of guidelines on environmental monitoring programmes in the chemical industry for enterprise management and relevant public authorities in EECCA (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2007/2).

Work to be undertaken

At its next session in September 2008, WGEMA, on the basis of its renewed mandate and main directions identified in document ECE/CEP/2008/6, will prepare a detail work programme that will focus on:

- (a) Promoting the implementation of the *Indicator Guidelines* by training experts responsible for state-of-the-environment reporting and the publication of environmental statistical compendiums;
- (b) Assisting individual countries, at their request, to establish legal and regulatory procedures and institutional arrangements for the publication of regular indicator-based environmental assessment reports on the basis of the *Indicator Reporting Guidelines*;
- (c) Promoting the implementation of the *Enterprise Monitoring Guidelines*, by developing practical, industry-specific guidance material;

- (d) Revising ambient environment monitoring programmes in EECCA and SEE countries and the Russian Federation to make monitoring a practical tool for policy target-setting, pollution abatement strategies and measuring progress in achieving policy targets and in the effectiveness of abatement measures;
- (e) Further strengthening and harmonizing environmental data collection and promoting comparability of environmental statistics to support future pan-European assessments.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 4

BUILDING CAPACITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

4.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF UNECE MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

Since the 1970s, five regional environmental conventions and 12 protocols have been negotiated and adopted in the framework of UNECE. The responsibility for implementation activities lies with the governing bodies.

All the protocols have entered into force except the three protocols adopted at the Kiev Ministerial Conference, namely the Protocols on Strategic Environmental Assessment, on Civil Liability and Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters, and on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.

The Committee provides a catalysing forum in which all government representatives, including the governing bodies of the conventions, can share their experiences in promoting and assessing the implementation of these regional environmental instruments as well as identifying means of improving compliance with them. Furthermore, the Committee supports, as appropriate, the implementation of the conventions and their protocols.

Work accomplished

The sixth informal meeting between the Bureaux of the Committee on Environmental Policy and of the governing bodies of the UNECE environmental conventions was held on 12 February 2007 at the invitation of the Chairperson of the CEP Bureau. The aim of the meeting was to share experiences and seek synergies and areas of cooperation and to assess and promote the implementation of environmental legal instruments in the region. In this context, a paper (The Implementation of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements) was prepared by the secretariat was discussed and submitted by the Committee through the Working Group of Senior Officials to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference. The paper assessed the progress achieved and problems encountered in the effective implementation of the conventions and provided an overview of capacity-building activities in the UNECE region. It also provided a basis for ministers to make policy recommendations for enhancing the effective implementation of the conventions by Governments.

Work to be undertaken

It is envisaged that informal meetings between the Bureaux of the Committee and the governing bodies of the conventions will continue to be held annually. The next informal meeting is scheduled for 15 October 2008, and it was agreed that participants would discuss the outcomes of the Belgrade Ministerial Conference related to the UNECE conventions, and in particular the EfE reform process.

4.2 ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY

The Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe and UNECE that builds on the combined strengths and field presence of the lead organizations to perform three key functions: (a) assessment and monitoring of linkages between environment and security; (b) capacity-building and institutional development; and (c) integration of environmental and security concerns and priorities into international and national policymaking. One component of the Initiative's activities is to strengthen the implementation of UNECE regional environmental conventions.

Work accomplished

To date, assessments of environment and security risks have been made for Central Asia, Southern Caucasus and Eastern Europe. Based on the assessments, the ENVSEC Initiative has developed and implemented specific work programmes aimed at reducing tensions and solving problems identified (see www.envsec.org).

Work to be undertaken

UNECE will continue to collaborate within the framework of ENVSEC, in particular through projects supporting the implementation of UNECE regional conventions. Examples of ongoing and planned projects where the UNECE is engaged are: (a) pilot implementation in Central Asia of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context; (b) regional cooperation project on dam safety in Central Asia; (c) support for the development of water cooperation in the Kura-Aras river basin; and (d) development of cooperation between Moldova and Ukraine on the Dniester River.

4.3 PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The Committee recognizes the importance of strengthening the engagement of the private sector in the environmental activities of UNECE; contacts are to be developed through UNECE Committees, MEA secretariats and the work of Regional Advisors. In this context, the UNECE will initiate and sustain discussions on ways to attract the private sector interest to the work of the Committee and EfE and on how partnerships could address environmental and sustainable development objectives.

Work to be undertaken

The Bureau will convene an informal meeting with representatives of the private sector during the meeting of the Extended Bureau on 24 June 2008. The secretariat will prepare a compilation of existing examples on private sector engagement within UNECE in the Environment, Housing and Land Management and other Divisions, and will submit it to the Bureau in advance of the

June meeting. A roundtable discussion is envisaged at the special session of CEP (October 2008) to exchange ideas on possible ways of enhancing the involvement of the private sector in CEP and EfE frameworks.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 5

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNECE REGION

Building on Agenda 21 (Agenda for the Twenty-first Century) and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development invited the Regional Commissions to consider organizing Regional Implementation Meetings, within the framework of the two-year implementation cycles of the Commission.

Work accomplished

In preparation for the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-16, New York, 5–16 May 2008), the third ECE regional implementation meeting on sustainable development was held on 28 and 29 January 2008 in Geneva. UNECE member States, representatives of civil society, United Nations specialized agencies and other international bodies met to review the region's progress in implementing WSSD commitments regarding the following thematic clusters: agriculture, rural development, land management, drought and desertification, and Africa. The purpose of the regional implementation meeting was to evaluate the progress achieved as well as obstacles and constraints remaining in the above areas. The meeting also specifically discussed linkages between thematic priorities and cross-cutting issues such as sustainable production and consumption patterns, education for sustainable development and finance.

As a basis for the discussions, the secretariat had prepared two background documents (ECE/AC.25/2008/3 and 4). Contributions were made by various partners in and outside the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the World Meteorological Organization, and the Africa Partnership Forum Support Unit of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Work to be undertaken

The outcome of the discussions was reflected in the Chairman's Summary presented at CSD-16, contributing a UNECE regional perspective to the global-level debate. Moreover, in cooperation with the CSD secretariat and the other regional commissions, the UNECE secretariat organized an interactive discussion during CSD-16, focusing in particular on region-specific barriers and constraints as well as lessons learned and good practices.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 6

INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SECTORAL POLICIES

Integrating environmental concerns into the activities of other sectors, whether economic or social, is one of the key challenges for the effective implementation of environmentally sound sustainable development principles. Since the Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, actions and programmes in the UNECE region have moved towards that goal, but significant efforts are still needed through a wide range of policy, legal, institutional and financial measures and incentives.

The Committee has established cross-sectoral linkages, activities and cooperation with other UNECE committees (e.g. Transport, Housing and Land Management) and the conventions' governing bodies, as well as with other international organizations such as the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe. UNECE environmental cross-sectoral programmes should be further encouraged to ensure effective support for national and regional initiatives thus accelerating the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in order to promote social and economic development.

6.1 EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

At the Kiev Ministerial Conference, ministers agreed on the preparation of a UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and invited UNECE to work with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Council of Europe and other relevant actors on a regional ESD strategy. The High-level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries (Vilnius, 17–18 March 2005) adopted the UNECE Strategy for ESD and established a Steering Committee for ESD to decide on the Strategy's implementation and to review its progress.

Work accomplished

The Steering Committee for ESD held three meetings thus far (December 2005, December 2006 and March–April 2008) with major outcomes such as the adoption of the Work Plan for 2005–2007 (Phase I) and the decision to hold a joint high-level segment on ESD during the Belgrade Ministerial Conference, as well as the recently adopted Work Plan for 2008–2010. A number of activities have been carried out: (a) subregional workshops on ESD; (b) the establishment of a comprehensive reporting mechanism; and (c) a collection of good practices in ESD. Most countries are showing commitment to establishing the necessary policies and institutional structures to implement the Strategy. A Joint Statement on ESD, expressing commitment to further implementation of the Strategy throughout its implementation phases and beyond 2015, was adopted at the Belgrade Ministerial Conference. The mandate of the Steering Committee to oversee the regional implementation of the Strategy was extended until 2015.

Work to be undertaken

In accordance with the adopted Work Plan of Implementation for Phase II of the Strategy (2008–2010) – including its substantive content, time frame for implementation, and financial implications (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2008/5) – future activities will focus on coordination, capacity-building and the sharing of experience to support and further ESD in the region, including workshops and trainings, sharing good practices and case studies, and strengthening the use of electronic tools, awareness-raising and the review of implementation. The two key priorities for Phase II are (a) the development of National Action Plans for ESD and (b) the development of competence in ESD. The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held on 26 and 27 February 2009, and the Bureau will hold its seventh meeting in November 2008.

6.2 TRANSPORT, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) was established in 2002 under the joint auspices of UNECE (Environment and Transport Divisions) and WHO/Europe. The objectives of THE PEP are to promote policy integration and sustainable transport development, notably in urban areas, through capacity-building and awareness-raising.

It focuses on bringing particular benefits to the Russian Federation and countries in EECCA and SEE.

Work accomplished

At its fifth session (16–17 April 2007), the Steering Committee of THE PEP assessed the progress made in the implementation of its work programme and provided guidance on further implementation.

The Steering Committee of THE PEP discussed preparations for the Third High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health, to be held in 2008, agreeing that the main objectives should be: (a) to strengthen Member States' commitment to the integration of transport, health and environment policies at the national level, with a special focus on the challenges faced by EECCA and SEE countries; and (b) to reinforce the role of THE PEP as the platform for promoting such policy integration and to secure the necessary resources and support.

Work to be undertaken

THE PEP Steering Committee and its extended Bureau will continue the preparations for the Third High-level Meeting. The Third High-level Meeting will be hosted by the Netherlands and held on 22 and 23 January 2008 in Amsterdam under the theme, "Making THE Link: Transport Choices for our Health, Environment and Prosperity". Several documents will be prepared for the event, including (a) a review of trends and developments in the UNECE-WHO Pan-European Region (1997–2007); (b) recommendations from THE PEP Assessment Report; and (c) a brochure on policy integration. The outcome of the meeting will include a set of concrete action points for policymakers.

A workshop on sustainable and healthy urban transport and land-use planning is scheduled for autumn 2008 in Chisinau along the same line of the one held in Tbilisi (18–20 October 2006), in cooperation with the Ministries of Health and Environment of Moldova and the Ministries of Transport and Environment of Switzerland. The workshop will highlight specific urban transport challenges in EECCA and SEE. The outcome of the workshop will be presented to the High-level Meeting.

A meeting of the THE PEP extended Bureau will be held in autumn to continue the preparations for the High-level Meeting.

6.3 ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

WHO/Europe Ministerial Conferences have been organized since 1989 and bring together ministers of health and environment and other stakeholders to strive for consensus and make political commitments to promote a safe and healthy environment. Ministers entrusted the European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) with following up on their decisions and serving as a steering committee for the preparation of the next conference to be held in Italy in 2009.

Work accomplished

CEP elected five members to represent the environment sector on the EEHC for a period of two and half years, i.e. until the next Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, to be held in Italy in 2009. The first resumed EEHC meeting was held in October 2007 in Bonn, Germany,

and the second in Milan, Italy, in March 2008 together with the first high-level preparatory meeting. The main item on the agenda was the preparation to the next Ministerial Conference in 2009.

Work to be undertaken

Further meetings will be held to prepare the agenda and issues for discussion at the upcoming Ministerial.

Annex II

AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE: REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

Membership

1. The core of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Environmental Performance should comprise 10 to 14 members, with due consideration to geographical balance among countries in the region. It is suggested that, when new members are chosen, due regard should be given to experts from countries that have recently been reviewed, as well as to those who have undergone or will soon undergo second reviews.
2. Participation in the meetings of the Expert Group will be open to Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) delegates, who would act as advisers to review the report and its recommendations.

Terms of reference

3. The UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy renews the mandate of the core members of the Expert Group for a period of two years for the purposes of:
 - (a) Carrying out the Expert Review process prior to the peer review to be undertaken by the Committee;
 - (b) Providing guidance to the UNECE secretariat and the Committee on all substantive and organizational matters arising in the implementation of the UNECE Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR) programme;
 - (c) Assisting the secretariat in coordinating the EPR programme with processes under way in other international institutions that have a bearing on it, inter alia, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Asian Development Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development EPR programme and its work in the region of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.
4. The guidance of the Expert Group to UNECE and the Committee will include:
 - (a) Identification of opportunities and requirements for improving the conduct of the EPRs;
 - (b) Assessment of environmental trends relevant to the EPR process in countries in transition, including the organization of joint meetings, seminars and workshops at the regional and subregional levels, where these are demand-driven;

- (c) Review and improvement of the data and information used for the EPR;
- (d) Drawing up proposals on how to improve the adoption of the recommendations contained in the EPR country reports and their implementation.

5. The core members of the Expert Group are elected by the CEP on the recommendation of the Bureau. The secretariat will invite international institutions pursuing related work to participate in the work of the Expert Group.

6. While taking decisions on an EPR report under review and its recommendations, the Expert Group shall take into consideration the inputs by the CEP delegates who participate in the meeting.

7. The Expert Group elects its Chair and Vice-Chair.

8. The Expert Group will report annually on its activities to the Committee on Environmental Policy, and may raise any issue with the Committee that it deems necessary for the implementation of its mandate.

Annex III**WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT:
REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. In the light of the decision of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007), the Committee on Environmental Policy renews the mandate of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment. The Working Group should help strengthen environmental information and observation capacity, including monitoring networks, in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Russian Federation as well as in interested countries of South-Eastern Europe, to make monitoring and assessment an effective instrument in environmental policymaking, and to improve international environmental reporting.
2. The Working Group will promote the coordination of multilateral and bilateral 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 “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conferences. It should use relevant results of the work of and cooperate with other international forums and networks, such as EEA, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Statistics Division, the World Health Organization European Centre for Environment and Health, as well as relevant MEAs, especially those of UNECE, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and should give priority to the following specific areas:
 - (a) Modernization and upgrading of national monitoring networks and information systems;
 - (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 activities.
- 5. The Working Group 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. Members of the Working Group are officials responsible in the UNECE countries for environmental monitoring and assessment. The Working Group will 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.
- 7. The UNECE secretariat will provide secretariat assistance and conference facilities to the Working Group 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 two years after the adoption by the Committee of the Working Group's work programme.

Annex IV

CRITERIA FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Approved by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its fifteenth session, 21–23 April 2008

Country	GDP per capita (\$)	Eligibility note: threshold set for financial support for 2008–2009 = US\$ 3000; countries with GDP per capita below \$2500 are eligible for financial support (travel expenses and DSA <u>1</u>); countries with GDP per capita between \$2500 and \$3000 are eligible for financial support (DSA only)			
Albania	2870				
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2834				
Azerbaijan	2340				
Ukraine	2284				
Armenia	2122				
Georgia	1760				
Moldova	936				
Uzbekistan	631				
Kyrgyzstan	546				
Tajikistan	405				
COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE		10			
COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR DSA ONLY		2			
COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES + DSA		8			
<u>1</u> / DSA - daily subsistence allowance.					