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**JOINT INTERSECTORAL TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS
JOINT MEETING ON ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This paper is prepared according to the terms of reference of the Joint Task Force endorsed by the UNECE Executive Committee (ECE/EX/2009/L.6, annex, para.5). It presents the programme of the joint meeting organized by the United Nations Statistics Division and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The meeting will be held from 31 August to 2 September 2009 in Salle V of the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The Working Group is expected to take note of this document.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. Environmental indicators are a key tool for environmental assessment, reporting and policymaking. They can show trends and help describe the causes and effects of environmental conditions. They can also help in setting priorities, evaluating environmental policy implementation and assessing compliance with international commitments. Regular data collection on internationally-agreed indicators helps not only in national policymaking and raising public awareness, but also in comparing national environmental situations with those of other countries and data gathering for pan-European environmental assessment reports.

2. The Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 2007) endorsed the *Recommendations on environmental indicators and indicator-based assessments*¹. It invited countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), South-Eastern Europe (SEE) and other interested countries to implement the *Guidelines for the application of environmental indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia* (Indicator Guidelines)², prepared by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and other international organizations. The Guidelines cover the 36 indicators that were evaluated as being the most important from the viewpoint of national and international requirements, the most understandable to the public, the best supported by international methodological guidance, and the most compatible with environmental indicator sets available at the international level.

3. The Guidelines are intended for use primarily by officials in government agencies with responsibility for environmental assessment, state-of-the-environment reporting and the publication of statistical compendiums and bulletins on environmental issues. To implement the Guidelines, the countries concerned will have to undertake effective measures for the adaptation of their systems for data collection and statistics. They will have to review and clarify responsibilities of public authorities to ensure that each indicator included in the Guidelines is backed by measurements, calculations and regular data collection. All institutions dealing with the collection and treatment of data and the publication of environmental and statistical reports will have to use international standard classifications.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

4. The Belgrade recommendations on indicators called for a strengthened inter-agency cooperation for a regular production of environmental indicators, the exchange of practical experience obtained in their application and for regular training of national experts on methodologies and standards developed by relevant international forums, and on new internationally-agreed indicators.

¹ ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/11/Add.1. The English version of this document is available online at: www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/ece/ece.belgrade.conf.2007.11.add.1.e.pdf. The Russian version is available at: www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/ece/ece.belgrade.conf.2007.11.add.1.r.pdf.

² Published as United Nations publication, Sales No. E 07.II.E.9. The English version of this publication is available online at: www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/ece/ece.belgrade.conf.2007.inf.6.e.pdf. The Russian version is available at: www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/ece/ece.belgrade.conf.2007.inf.6.r.pdf.

5. To promote the implementation of these recommendations in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), and in interested countries of South-Eastern Europe (hereinafter “target countries”), the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) agreed to establish a joint intersectoral task force on environmental indicators. The UNECE Executive Committee endorsed the terms of reference of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (see annex II). The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) joined this initiative and agreed to cooperate in the organization of the first meeting of the Joint Task Force. The meeting, to take place from 31 August to 2 September 2009 in Geneva³, will:

(a) Discuss priorities and modalities of cooperation on methodological issues of environmental indicators between environmental experts and statisticians in 2009–2010;

(b) Review in detail selected indicators covered by the Indicator Guidelines to provide practical recommendations on the use of statistical classifications, data collection methods and procedures for the production of indicators. The selection of indicators for the review was made on the basis of proposals received from interested target countries and the gaps in data collection in the target countries. These had been identified in the UNECE programme of environmental performance reviews and in the processes of developing Indicator Guidelines and pan-European environmental assessments;

(c) Exchange information on international developments related to environmental indicators that may be important, but are currently not included in the Guidelines and provide references to available guidance materials; and

(d) Initiate discussions on modern presentation formats and tools for effective dissemination of environmental indicators including the use of modern information technologies.

III. PARTICIPATION

6. Officials from environmental institutions that are responsible for the publication of assessment reports on the environment and representatives of statistical services working in the field of environmental statistics in the target countries will be the main audience of the Joint meeting. Participation of experts from other UNECE countries will be highly encouraged, in order to broaden the exchange of experiences and approaches. Furthermore, representatives of international organizations and institutions dealing with environmental indicators, including Eurostat, EEA, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH), the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and

³ According to the accreditation procedures for meetings at the Palais des Nations, delegates are requested to complete the registration form available from the website of the Committee on Environmental Policy (www.unece.org/env/cep/welcome.html), and to transmit it to the secretariat *no later than two weeks prior to the meeting*, by fax (+41 22 917 0107) or by e-mail (nadiya.dzyubynska@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the Committee’s website). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone +41 22 917 2364).

Development (OECD) and the Inter-State Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), will be invited to attend to present their views and achievements.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

7. The discussions will take place during the plenary sessions at which simultaneous interpretation from/into English and Russian will be provided. Plenary sessions will generally include presentations by keynote speakers that will be followed by question-and-answer periods and exchanges of experiences and views. Keynote speakers and other participants will facilitate the discussions as moderators.

8. Nominated country participants are invited to prepare jointly and submit national reviews to the UNECE secretariat by e-mail (mikhail.kokine@unece.org and vania.etropolska@unece.org) by 20 August 2009, for the circulation among the registered participants prior to the joint meeting. The reports should be up to 10 pages in length in English and Russian, if possible, and in 12-point Times New Roman with 1.5 line-spacing.. The national reports should describe achievements, problems and perspectives regarding:

- (a) The application of indicators from the Guidelines in national assessment reports, statistical compendiums and other publications;
- (b) The use of modern presentation formats and tools for dissemination of environmental indicators;
- (c) The application of additional indicators, especially those measuring the effectiveness of environmental policy.

9. Meeting documentation including national reviews, presentations and the list of participants will be uploaded to the UNECE website as they become available (www.unece.org/stats/documents/2009.05.viron.htm)

Annex I

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME OF THE JOINT MEETING

The preliminary programme is as follows:

Item 1: Opening

Timing: Monday, 31 August, 10 – 10.15 a.m.

Opening statements by:

- (a) United Nations Statistics Division
- (b) UNECE.

Item 2: Election of officers of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators

Timing: 10.15 – 10.30 a.m.

The Joint Task Force will elect its Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson(s).

Item 3: Cooperation framework on environmental indicators for environmental experts and statisticians

Timing: 10.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Mr. Svein Homstvedt (Statistics Norway) will moderate the discussion on this item. The Joint Task Force will discuss priorities, operational modalities and time schedule for its activities to effectively implement its mandate.

Item 4: Review of the Guidelines on the Application of Environmental Indicators

Timing: The Working Group will work on this agenda item from Monday afternoon to Wednesday, 2 September, 11.30 a.m.

A. Indicators on air and climate change

Timing: 3– 6 p.m.

Mr. Stephen Hall (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, United Kingdom) will moderate the discussion on this sub-item.

(i) *Emissions of pollutants into the atmosphere*

Timing: 3– 4.30 p.m.

Presentations will be made by the following keynote speakers:

- (a) Mr. Stefan Tzonev (National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria);
- (b) Mr. Martin Adams (EEA).

Brief presentations of national experiences will be made by:

- (a) Ms. Natalia Shashlova (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation);
- (b) Mr. Leo Kolttola (Statistics Finland).

Presentations and questions-and-answers periods will be followed by an interactive discussion.

(ii) *Greenhouse gas emissions*

Timing: 4.30 – 6 p.m.

Presentation will be made by the following keynote speaker:

Mr. Svein Homstvedt (Statistics Norway).

Brief presentation of national experiences will be made by:

Ms. Natalia Shashlova (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation).

Presentations and questions-and-answer periods will be followed by an interactive discussion.

Timing: Tuesday, 1 September, 9.30 – 10.50 a.m.

B. Indicators on final energy consumption

Ms. Rosemary Montgomery (Eurostat) will moderate the discussion on this sub-item.

Presentation will be made by the following keynote speaker:

Mr. Dag Spilde (Statistics Norway).

A brief presentation of national experiences will be made by:

Mr. Leo Kolttola (Statistics Finland).

Presentations and questions-and-answers periods will be followed by an interactive discussion.

C. Indicators on water

Timing: 10.50 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Mrs. Myriam Linster (OECD) will moderate the discussion on this sub-item.

(i) *Household water use per capita*

Timing: 10.50 – 11:40 a.m.

Presentations will be made by the following keynote speakers:

- (a) Mr. Rainer Enderlein (UNECE);
- (b) Mr. Daniel Clarke (UNSD).

Presentations and questions-and-answers periods will be followed by an interactive discussion.

(ii) *Drinking water quality*

Timing: 11.40 a.m.– 12:30 p.m.

Presentation will be made by the following keynote speakers:

Mr. Rainer Enderlein (UNECE).

The presentation and a question-and-answer period will be followed by an interactive discussion.

D. Indicators on land use and agriculture

Timing: 2.30 – 4.30 p.m.

Ms. Ljubov Gornaja (EEA) will moderate the discussion on this sub-item.

(i) *Land uptake*

Timing: 2.30 – 3.30 p.m.

Presentation will be made by the following keynote speaker:

Mr. Dominic Ballayan (FAO)

The presentation and a questions-and-answers period will be followed by an interactive discussion.

(ii) *Fertilizer consumption*

Timing: 3.30 – 4.30 p.m.

Presentation will be made by the following keynote speaker:

Mr. Dominic Ballayan (FAO)

Brief presentation of national experiences will be made by:

Ms. Natalia Shashlova (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation).

Presentations and questions-and-answers periods will be followed by an interactive discussion.

E. Indicators on waste

Timing: 4.30 – 5.30 p.m., and continued on Wednesday, 2 September, 9.30 – 11.30 a.m.
Mr. Martin Adams (EEA) will moderate the discussion on this sub-item.

(i) *Waste generation*

Timing: 4.30 – 5.30 p.m.

Presentations will be made by the following keynote speakers:

- (a) Mrs. Kaia Oras (Statistics Estonia);
- (b) Ms. Reena Shah (UNSD).

Brief presentation of national experiences on all waste indicators will be made by:

Mr. Leo Koltola (Statistics Finland).

The presentations and questions-and-answers periods will be followed by an interactive discussion.

(ii) *Waste re-use and recycling*

Timing: Wednesday, 2 September, 9.30 – 10.30 a.m.

Presentations will be made by the following keynote speakers:

- (a) Mrs. Kaia Oras (Statistics Estonia);
- (b) Ms. Reena Shah (UNSD).

The presentations and questions-and-answers periods will be followed by an interactive discussion.

(iii) *Final waste disposal*

Timing: 10.30 – 11.30 a.m.

Presentations will be made by the following keynote speakers:

- (a) Mrs. Kaia Oras (Statistics Estonia);
- (b) Ms. Reena Shah (UNSD).

The presentations and questions-and-answers period will be followed by an interactive discussion.

Brief presentation of national experiences on all waste indicators will be made by:

Ms. Lyudmyla Kvashuk (State Committee of Statistics of Ukraine).

Item 5: Briefing on additional indicators not covered by the Guidelines

Timing: 11.30 – 12.30 a.m. and 2.30 – 4.10 p.m.

Mrs. Eszter Horvath (UNSD) will moderate the discussion on this item.

Presentations will be made by the following keynote speakers:

- (a) Ms. Myriam Linster (OECD) on resource productivity and sector integration indicators (agriculture and transport)
- (b) Ms. Rosemary Montgomery (Eurostat) on indicators of environmental expenditures and taxes
- (c) Mr. Martin Adams (EEA) on indicators development in EEA
- (d) Mr. Dominic Ballayan (FAO) on indicator development in FAO
- (e) Dr. Dafina Dalbokova (WHO/ECEH) on progress made in the development of health and environment indicators
- (f) Mr. Merab Sharabidze (Black Sea Strategic Action Plan) on environmental indicators for Black Sea cooperation.

Each presentation will follow by a brief questions-and-answers period.

Item 6: Modern presentation formats and tools for effective dissemination of environmental indicators

Timing: 4:10 – 5.10 p.m.

Mr. Mikhail Kokine (UNECE) will moderate the discussion on this item.

Presentations will be made by the following keynote speakers:

- (a) Ms. Vania Etropolska (UNECE)
- (b) Mr. Stephen Hall (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, United Kingdom).

The presentations and questions-and-answers period will be followed by an interactive discussion.

Item 7: Conclusions and closing

Timing: 5.10 – 5.30 p.m.

The Chairperson of the Joint Task Force will make a concluding statement on the main outcomes of the meeting.

Annex II

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF
THE JOINT TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS⁴**

A. Objective

1. The purpose of the task force is to assist national statistical agencies and institutions responsible for the production of national reports on the state of the environment in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and interested countries of South-Eastern Europe to improve environmental data collection, further strengthen environmental reporting and promote comparability of environmental statistics and indicators in the region.

2. The joint task force will report to its parent bodies, the Committee on Environmental Policy and Conference of European Statisticians (CES), and to their Bureaux. The task force will work closely with the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and inform it about the progress made and about the outcome.

3. The joint task force on environmental indicators will:

(a) Review the indicators covered by the Indicator Guidelines to provide practical recommendations on the necessary adaptation of statistical classifications and data collection forms and procedures for the production of indicators;

(b) Propose additional environmental indicators that may be important but are currently not included in the Indicator Guidelines (e.g. environmental expenditure, environmental taxes and subsidies, production of and trade in environmental goods and services and hazardous substances, and resource productivity) as well as provide and adapt to the needs of the countries concerned relevant guidance materials that are available at the international level;

(c) Recommend modern presentation formats and tools for effective dissemination of environmental indicators, including the use of modern information technologies;

(d) Assist in the organization of a workshop on environmental indicators to be jointly organized by UNECE and the United Nations Statistics Division in 2009. The workshop will be open to all interested countries so as to broaden the exchange of experiences and approaches. It will provide a forum for presenting the latest developments on relevant methodologies and classifications available at the global level.

⁴ See document ECE/EX/2009/L.6, Annex.

B. Membership

4. Members of the task force will be nominated by country focal points in the CES and the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment. The UNSD, Eurostat, EEA, WHO/ECEH, OECD and the CIS Inter-State Statistical Committee will be invited to designate representatives. The UNECE Statistical Division and the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division will jointly service the task force.

C. Timetable

5. The mandate of the task force will cover the period from 2009 to September 2010.

D. Outcome

6. The task force will submit, through the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and the CES Bureau, a final report on its accomplishments and a proposal for follow-up, if any, to both UNECE Committees.
