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Preparations for the Seventh “Environment for Europe”

Ministerial Conference: conference outcomes

Draft outline of an agreed outcome of the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference*

Note by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair

Summary

Pursuant to a decision by Ministers at the Sixth “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Belgrade, 2007), the Seventh Ministerial Conference will be held from 21 to 23 September 2011 in Astana (Kazakhstan).

The Reform Plan¹ of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process stipulates that Conference outcomes may include an agreed outcome of two pages on follow-up and further actions, strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference.

Following the request by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its sixteenth session, the secretariat, in consultation with the Committee Chair, prepared a draft outline of an agreed outcome of the Astana Ministerial Conference.

The present draft is being submitted to the Committee for consideration. The Committee may wish to approve the proposed framework for the agreed outcome.

* This document was submitted late due to the need to consult with partners.

¹ The Reform Plan of the “Environment for Europe” process was developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Committee on Environmental Policy during 2008 and adopted on 29 January 2009 (ECE/CEP/S/152 and Corr.1, annex I); the Plan was subsequently endorsed by UNECE at its sixty-third session (Geneva, 30 March–1 April 2009).

I. Introduction

1. At its sixteenth session in October 2009, the Committee decided on the two main themes for Astana Ministerial Conference, namely “Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems” and “Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development”.
2. In line with the EfE Reform Plan, the Committee will prepare in advance of the Conference a document presenting a draft of not more than two pages of an agreed Conference outcome on follow-up and further actions related to the two main themes of the Conference.
3. The current document presents a proposal for a framework for consideration by the Committee, which will then be revised to reflect comments and discussion with a view to serving as a basis for the drafting process.
4. In addition to an agreed outcome, a chair’s summary will be prepared. Furthermore, Conference outcomes could include statements, initiatives, agreements, pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions, as well as policy tools (e.g., strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, good practices and lessons learned) that are presented to the Conference by interested countries and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues, and that were not negotiated within the preparatory process for the Conference.

II. Possible framework for an agreed outcome

5. It is proposed to focus a two-page document on the expected decisions to be taken under the two themes. A possible framework for such a document could be as follows:
 - Introduction: a short introductory paragraph presenting the date and place of the Conference and the number of participating countries, followed by a paragraph on countries’ continuing commitment to protect the environment and the contribution of the EfE process to this cause (maximum length, a quarter of a page);
 - Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems: decisions on follow-up and further actions taken by the Conference under this theme (maximum length, half of a page);
 - Sustainable management of water and greening the economy: decisions on follow-up and further actions taken by the Conference linking the two themes (maximum length, half of a page);
 - Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development: decisions on follow-up and further actions taken by the Conference under this theme (maximum length, half of a page);
 - Closing: the venue of the next Conference; thanking the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting the Conference (maximum length, one quarter of a page).
6. A chair’s summary will be prepared during the Conference jointly by the host country and the secretariat in cooperation with EfE partners. It will focus on the substance of the Conference, providing a summary of discussions and decisions under each of the Conference themes.
7. A report of the Conference will be prepared by the secretariat as a post-session document. Conference proceedings will be made available through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) website

(<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/welcome.html>) in a similar format to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference. After the Conference participants will be invited to submit their statements and interventions to the secretariat for posting on the website.
