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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Special session

Geneva, 24–27 May 2011

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the special session

**To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on
Tuesday, 24 May 2011***

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of officers.
3. Outcomes of the sixty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Europe of relevance to the Committee on Environmental Policy.
4. Preparations for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference:
 - (a) Provisional agenda;
 - (b) Official substantive documents;
 - (c) Europe’s Environment Assessment of Assessments report;
 - (d) The second Assessment of transboundary waters in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region;

* New accreditation procedures have been introduced for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to complete the registration form available from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) website (<http://www.unece.org/env/cep/currentSession.html>), and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat no later than two weeks before the meeting by e-mail (efe@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’s Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see map available at: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 2682.

- (e) Conference outcomes;
 - (f) Host country preparations;
 - (g) Communication activities;
 - (h) Resource requirements;
 - (i) Side events;
 - (j) Private sector involvement;
 - (k) Registration.
5. Sustainable development in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region.
 6. Environmental Performance Reviews:
 - (a) Environmental Performance Review of Tajikistan;
 - (b) Environmental Performance Review of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
 - (c) Environmental Performance Reviews Programme: overview of activities;
 - (d) Environmental Performance Reviews Programme: third cycle of reviews.
 7. Environmental monitoring and assessment.
 8. Cross-sectoral activities: green building.
 9. Calendar of meetings.
 10. Other business.
 11. Closure of the meeting.

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. The Committee on Environmental Policy's activity is guided by the goals set out in the document on future strategic directions for the environment adopted in 2003 (CEP/2004/2) and by the workplan on United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) reform adopted in 2005 (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1). In 2007, UNECE adopted the revised terms of reference for the Committee (E/ECE/1447/Add.1).
2. The reform plan of the "Environment for Europe" (EfE) process adopted by the Committee, and subsequently endorsed by UNECE, mandated the Committee to act as the convening body for the preparatory processes for the EfE Ministerial Conferences (see ECE/CEP/S/152 and Corr.1, annex I).
3. Information and materials for this meeting are being made available on the UNECE website (<http://www.unece.org/env/cep/welcome.html>).

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

4. Following the opening of the meeting, the Committee will be invited to adopt the agenda as set out in the present document (ECE/CEP/S/2011/1). The provisional timetable is presented in information paper No. 1.

2. Election of officers

5. The Committee will be invited to elect a Chair and other members of the Bureau.

3. Outcomes of the sixty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Europe of relevance to the Committee on Environmental Policy

6. The secretariat will inform the Committee about relevant decisions taken at the sixty-fourth session of the Commission (Geneva, 29–31 March 2011). The Committee will be invited to consider these, as appropriate. Documents for the session are available on the UNECE website (http://www.unece.org/commission/2011/64th_index.htm).

4. Preparations for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference

(a) Provisional agenda

7. The Committee agreed on the schedule for the Seventh EfE Ministerial Conference, to be held in Astana in 2011, as well as the questions for discussion at the Conference, at its seventeenth session in November 2010 (ECE/CEP/161, annex III). The secretariat has revised the draft provisional agenda of the Conference accordingly (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.1).

8. The Committee will be invited to consider the draft Conference agenda with a view to approving it.

9. In addition, the secretariat prepared a concept note on the organization of the round-table discussions at the Conference (ECE/CEP/S/2011/6). The Committee will be invited to consider the note and provide further guidance to the secretariat on the best way to organize interactive multi-stakeholder discussions at the Conference. In this context, the Committee is invited to submit to the secretariat by 29 April 2011 concrete suggestions regarding eminent persons who could be invited to have a prominent role in the Conference.

(b) Official substantive documents

10. In accordance with the EfE Reform Plan, two thematic substantive documents are being prepared for the Astana Ministerial Conference on the Conference’s two main themes, i.e., on sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems, and on greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development.

11. The Committee will be invited to consider for approval the drafts of these two documents (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.2 and ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.3).

(c) Europe’s Environment Assessment of Assessments report

12. The Committee will be briefed on progress in preparing the Europe’s Environment Assessment of Assessments (EEAoA) report. The UNECE Steering Group on Environmental Assessments (SGEA) will hold its third meeting in Geneva on 23 May 2011. Documents and information related to the work of the SGEA are available on the EfE Process web page (<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/Astana/welcome.html>).

13. The Committee will be invited to comment on a prototype report of the EEAoA that the European Environment Agency is expected to circulate among the delegations prior to the session.

(d) The second Assessment of transboundary waters in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

14. The Committee will be briefed on the progress in preparing the second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in the UNECE region. Documents and information related to the work on the Assessment are available on the web page of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) at http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_WGMA.htm.

15. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided.

(e) Conference outcomes

16. In line with the EfE Reform Plan, a brief outcome document on follow-up and further actions, strictly limited in terms of scope to the themes of the Conference, is expected to be prepared by the Committee in advance of the Conference. At its last meeting the Committee welcomed a framework for a ministerial declaration and agreed to establish a drafting group during its next session to prepare a draft ministerial declaration.

17. The Committee, at its special session, is expected to establish the drafting group and agree on its composition and modalities of its work. To facilitate the work of the drafting group, following a request by the Committee, the secretariat will prepare a first draft of a ministerial declaration (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.6).

18. Concerning other possible outcomes of the Conference, the Committee will be invited to consider a draft toolbox for action on sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems prepared by interested stakeholders under the leadership of the Chair of the Water Convention (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.4).

19. The Committee will also be invited to consider a draft partnership programme of the “Green Bridge” Initiative developed by Kazakhstan jointly with interested partners (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.5).

20. The Committee will be invited to consider any other proposals for similar initiatives and policy tools at both regional and subregional levels that might be put forward by interested countries and partners. To facilitate the discussions, interested EfE actors should make available texts of such initiatives in three languages (English, French and Russian) prior to the meeting.

(f) Host country preparations

21. The representative of Kazakhstan will be invited to inform the Committee about progress in the preparations to host the Astana Ministerial Conference. In this context, the Committee will expect to be briefed on progress in organizing on the margins of the Conference a “green” innovation and technologies fair.

(g) Communication activities

22. The Committee will be informed on progress in implementing the Communication Plan for the Astana Ministerial Conference, which it approved at its last meeting (ECE/CEP/2010/5).

23. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided.

(h) Resource requirements

24. The EfE Reform Plan stipulates that for the preparatory process of the Conference and the Conference itself, the necessary extrabudgetary financial resources will have to

continue to be provided to UNECE to supplement the United Nations core budget resources. The Plan also states that the host country should assume relevant financial commitments.

25. Following a request by the Committee, in February 2011 the secretariat circulated an updated overview of resource requirements for the preparatory process and the Conference with a view to fund-raising.

26. The Committee will be invited to consider a further updated paper on resource requirements (information paper No. 2). Interested countries and organizations may inform the meeting regarding envisaged contributions for the preparation of the Astana Ministerial Conference.

(i) Side events

27. In accordance with the approved organizational issues for the Conference (ECE/CEP/2010/2), the host country will provide the Committee with the list of side events for information purposes (information paper No. 3).

(j) Private sector involvement

28. The secretariat and the host country will inform the Committee on progress in involving the private sector in the Conference. Committee members and observers are invited to submit to the secretariat concrete suggestions for private sector representatives that would be interested in participating in the Conference by 31 March 2011.

(k) Registration

29. The Committee will be briefed on the status of the registration process for the Conference. Delegations are invited to register for the Conference as soon as possible, and not later than the deadline of 13 June 2011. The registration form is available on the UNECE website at <http://www.unece.org/env/efe/Astana/welcome.html>.

5. Sustainable development in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

30. The secretariat will inform the Committee about developments in preparing for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held from 4 to 6 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20). The Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Rio+20 Conference is scheduled to take place in Geneva on 1 and 2 December 2011, pending a formal decision of the Economic Commission for Europe at its sixty-fourth session in March 2011.

31. The Committee will be invited to take note of the information provided and consider the input into the Regional Meeting from the Seventh EfE Ministerial Conference.

6. Environmental Performance Reviews

(a) Environmental Performance Review of Tajikistan

32. The Committee will conduct a peer review of the environmental performance of Tajikistan. The Committee will be invited to conclude the peer review by adopting the recommendations contained in the draft report elaborated by the Expert Group on Environmental Performance at its meeting on 3 and 4 May 2011.

(b) Environmental Performance Review of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

33. The Committee will conduct a peer review of the environmental performance of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Committee will be invited to conclude the peer review by adopting the recommendations contained in the draft report elaborated by the Expert Group on Environmental Performance at its meeting on 3 and 4 May 2011.

(c) Environmental Performance Review Programme: overview of activities

34. The Committee will be briefed on other recent and planned activities under the Environment Performance Review (EPR) Programme. With regard to supporting countries outside the UNECE region to conduct a first EPR (e.g., Morocco), following the Committee's request, the secretariat prepared a document presenting alternative options, including a set of criteria and cost implications for providing such help (ECE/CEP/S/2011/4).

35. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided.

(d) Environmental Performance Review Programme: third cycle of reviews

36. At its seventeenth session, the Committee considered a proposal prepared by the secretariat for a third cycle of EPR. Following comments received from the Committee, the secretariat has revised the document (ECE/CEP/S/2011/3).

37. The Committee will be invited to consider for approval the revised document, as well as the possible launching of the third cycle of EPR Programme at the Seventh EfE Ministerial Conference.

7. Environmental monitoring and assessment

38. The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment prepared draft guidelines for developing national strategies to use water-quality monitoring as an environmental policy tool for countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as interested South-Eastern European countries (ECE/CEP/S/2011/5).

39. The Committee will be invited to consider the guidelines for approval.

8. Cross-sectoral activities: green building

40. The Timber Committee recommended that the Executive Secretary of UNECE form a task force on green building to be composed of experts from the Timber Committee, the Housing and Land Management Committee, the Committee on Environmental Policy and the Committee on Sustainable Energy, together with partner organizations. The task force would address the issue of green building in a neutral and scientific way. It would start its work as soon as possible to develop a comparative study of the different materials in buildings and their carbon efficiency. The task force should participate in and contribute to the UNEP Sustainable Building Climate Initiative (see report of the sixty-eighth session of the Timber Committee, ECE/TIM/2010/7, para. 19).

41. Following a letter from the Executive Secretary of UNECE, the Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy consulted the members of the Bureau on the establishment of such a task force. The Bureau found the idea interesting for consideration at the Committee's next meeting, and requested detailed terms of reference, including the planned mandate in terms of substance and time frame, financial and other resource

implications (including interpretation, translation and participation costs), the proposed structure of the task force, the reporting procedure and other related information.

42. The secretariat will update the Committee on developments in this regard.

43. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided.

9. Calendar of meetings

44. The last preparatory special session of the Committee is scheduled to take place back to back with the Conference in Astana, on 20 September 2011.

10. Other business

45. The Committee will be invited to discuss any other business that might be brought to its attention. Delegations wishing to propose items are invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

11. Closure of the meeting

46. The Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, will sum up the Committee's conclusions and decisions and close the meeting. The report of the meeting and the list of participants will be finalized by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau for circulation to the Committee after the meeting. These documents will be posted on the Committee on Environmental Policy website (<http://www.unece.org/env/cep/welcome.html>).
