



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 October 2012

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Special session

Geneva, 24–27 May 2011

Report of the Committee on Environmental Policy on its special session

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction.....	1–12	3
A. Attendance	2–7	3
B. Organizational matters.....	8–10	3
C. Adoption of the agenda.....	11	4
D. Election of officers	12	4
II. Outcomes of the sixty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Europe of relevance to the Committee and sustainable development in the region.....	13–19	4
III. Preparations for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference ..	20–59	5
A. Provisional agenda.....	20–22	5
B. Official substantive documents.....	23–27	6
C. Europe’s Environment Assessment of Assessments report	28–30	6
D. The second assessment of transboundary waters in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region.....	31–32	7
E. Conference outcomes.....	33–39	7
F. Host country preparations for the Conference	40–41	8
G. Communication activities	42–44	8
H. Resource requirements.....	45–50	9
I. Side events.....	51–53	9
J. Private sector involvement.....	54–56	10

	K. Registration.....	57–59	10
IV.	Environmental performance reviews.....	60–73	10
	A. Environmental Performance Review of Tajikistan.....	60–63	10
	B. Environmental Performance Review of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.....	64–67	11
	C. Environmental Performance Reviews Programme: overview of activities.....	68–71	12
	D. Environmental Performance Reviews Programme: third cycle.....	72–73	12
V.	Environmental monitoring and assessment.....	74–75	12
VI.	Cross-sectoral activities: green building.....	76–78	12
VII.	Calendar of meetings.....	79	13
VIII.	Other business.....	80–83	13
IX.	Summary of decisions by the Committee.....	84	14
X.	Closure of the session.....	85–86	16
Annexes			
	I. Draft declaration of the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference, as agreed by the Committee.....		17
	II. Environmental Performance Reviews beyond the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region, as agreed by the Committee.....		20

I. Introduction

1. A special session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) was held from 24 to 27 May 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland.

A. Attendance

2. The session was attended by delegations from 37 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE): Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

3. From the United Nations system, representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offices in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) attended.

4. Representatives of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe (GWP CEE) were present.

5. Representatives of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Environment Agency (EEA) also attended the meeting.

6. Representatives from the five Regional Environmental Centres also took part in the meeting: the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe; the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus; the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia; the Regional Environmental Centre for the Republic of Moldova; and the Regional Environmental Centre for the Russian Federation.

7. In addition, representatives of environmental the civil society associations European ECO Forum, Eco-Accord, the European Environmental Bureau, Women in Europe for a Common Future and Zoï Environment Network, as well as of academia — the Open International University of Human Development “Ukraine” — were in attendance.

B. Organizational matters

8. The session opened with a welcome address by the Director of the Environment Division of ECE, who highlighted that the major goal of the meeting was to agree on a draft ministerial declaration for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” (EfE) Ministerial Conference (Astana Ministerial Conference), to be held in Astana from 21 to 23 September 2011.

9. The CEP Chair recalled that the main objectives of the meeting were to finalize most of the substantive preparations for the Astana Ministerial Conference and consider recommendations for the environmental performance reviews of Tajikistan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as to deal with a number of other substantive, cross-sectoral and administrative issues that were still pending the Committee’s decision.

10. The Chair also briefed CEP about the main outcomes of the Bureau meeting, which had been held in the morning on 24 May 2011.

C. Adoption of the agenda

11. The agenda, as contained in the document ECE/CEP/S/2011/1, was adopted, with the proposed time table in mind (information paper No. 1).¹

D. Election of officers

12. CEP elected Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia) as Chair. Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy), Mr. Bulat Yessekin (Kazakhstan), Ms. Jelena Knezevic (Montenegro), Mr. Adriaan Oudeman (Netherlands), Ms. Elisabete Quintas Da Silva (Portugal), Ms. Martine Rohn-Brossard (Switzerland), Mr. Vadym Pozharskiy (Ukraine) and Mr. John Michael Matuszak (United States of America) were elected as Vice-Chairs.

II. Outcomes of the sixty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Europe of relevance to the Committee and sustainable development in the region

13. The Secretary of CEP presented the relevant outcomes of the sixty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Europe as well as of recent meetings of the ECE Executive Committee. The Commission had recognized the significant role of the EfE process in advancing environmental governance across the region and acknowledged the importance for the region of the two themes of the Astana Ministerial Conference, at the same time expecting that the Conference outcomes would serve as an important contribution to the regional input into the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference), to be held in Rio de Janeiro from 20 to 22 June 2012.

14. The Commission had also welcomed the cooperation of ECE and WHO/Europe, and had recognized the importance of joint activities and promotion of synergies in addressing environment and health-related issues. It had also recognized the value of ECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

15. The ECE Executive Committee had approved the revised terms of reference for the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) (ECE/EX/2011/L.8) and the extension of the mandate of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (ECE/EX/2011/L.3).

16. Concerning regional preparations for the Rio+20 Conference, the Commission had decided to organize the Regional Preparatory Meeting on 1 and 2 December 2011 in Geneva, and had invited its member States to explore the possibility of making an extrabudgetary contribution to help defray the costs of the meeting. The meeting would have an interactive and multi-stakeholder format. Meeting documentation would include the Astana substantive document on greening the economy, complemented by a concise paper focused on forward-looking actions towards greening the economy in the region (to be prepared on the basis of Astana outcomes), and a background document on institutional framework for sustainable development in the ECE region. The outcomes of the meeting would be presented in a Chair's Summary.

17. Regional Preparatory Meeting would also consider a draft inter-agency report on sustainable development with a focus on green economy, prepared as a regional input to the

¹ Documents and other materials from the session, including presentations by speakers, are available on the ECE website at <http://www.unece.org/env/cep/2011SpecialSessionMay.html>.

Rio+20 Conference under the coordination of ECE. Furthermore, it would discuss possible outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference with a view to providing input into the second Intersessional Meeting of Rio+20 to take place in mid-December 2011. The Rio+20 Bureau, with support from the secretariat, would prepare a “zero” draft of the Rio+20 Conference negotiated outcome for consultations in January 2012.

18. Furthermore, the meeting was informed about the 2011–2012 review of the 2005 ECE Reform with a view to drawing conclusions on the future work priorities of ECE. The Executive Committee was working to develop the modalities for the review. Each ECE subprogramme was expected to provide input as necessary. The review would result in a number of conclusions and follow-up actions to be undertaken aimed at further increasing the efficiency of ECE work.

19. CEP took note of the information provided.

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

A. Provisional agenda

20. The CEP Chair presented the draft provisional agenda for the Astana Ministerial Conference, which had been revised by the secretariat in accordance with the Conference schedule, along with questions for discussion agreed by CEP (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.1), as well as a concept note on the proposed organization of work at the Conference (ECE/CEP/S/2011/6). A provisional list of documents for the Conference had been compiled by the secretariat and were presented in information paper No. 7.

21. In the ensuing discussion, CEP considered and provided further guidance to the secretariat on the best way to organize interactive multi-stakeholder discussions at the Conference. Concerning the nine round tables proposed, Regional Environmental Centres had requested to have up to two seats for them for each of the three round tables organized in parallel, so as to allow for the participation of all five Centres.

22. CEP approved the Conference draft provisional agenda and organization of work, and entrusted the secretariat and the CEP Bureau to finalize those two documents for the Conference. Furthermore, CEP invited its members and observers to submit by 1 July 2011 to the secretariat (by e-mail to efe@unece.org) the interest of their minister/head of delegation in: (a) chairing one of the three thematic segments of the Conference; (b) making a keynote address during the one hour plenary session; and (c) participating actively in the round-table discussions.

B. Official substantive documents

23. The Chair reiterated that, in accordance with the EfE Reform Plan, two thematic substantive documents were being prepared for the Astana Ministerial Conference, i.e., on sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems, and on greening the economy: streamlining the environment into economic development.

24. The ECE secretariat, together with the secretariat of the OECD Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme (EAP Task Force) for Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, presented the draft document on sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems that had been prepared jointly by the two secretariats with input from a number of countries and other partners

(ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.2). A collection of countries' good practices in the sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems, complementing the main document, was provided in information paper No. 6.

25. The ECE secretariat together with the UNEP secretariat presented the draft document on greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development, which had been prepared jointly by the two secretariats with inputs from a number of partners (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.3). Also, UNEP was preparing a compilation of case studies and good practices with regard to actions taken at the subregional, national and local levels to transition to green economy. Delegations were invited to submit such information to UNEP.²

26. The CEP Chair informed the meeting that the Bureau considered these two documents and found them of a high quality. In that regard, the Bureau recommended that the documents should not be negotiated documents.

27. Participants welcomed the documents and made comments. CEP approved the two thematic substantive documents for the Conference and agreed that additional comments to the documents could be sent to the ECE secretariat by 10 June 2011. Furthermore, CEP entrusted the ECE secretariat to incorporate the additional comments, as feasible, given the word limits for official United Nations documents.

C. Europe's Environment Assessment of Assessments report

28. The EEA representative informed CEP on progress in preparing the Europe's environment — Assessment of Assessments (EE-AoA) report, including the outcomes of the last meeting of the ECE Steering Group on Environmental Assessments, which had taken place on 23 May 2011 back to back with the present meeting. The structure of the EE-AoA report was presented, including several subregional components that had been carried out by Regional Environmental Centres. EEA invited the delegates to provide comments to the EE-AoA report online, in particular to its chapter 4 containing recommendations, by the end of May 2011.³

29. Regional Environmental Centres briefed CEP on the subregional components, which had been prepared in close cooperation with Governments. The water theme was easier to prepare, while the green economy theme was prepared mostly with the support of international projects. An appeal was made to respective Governments to consider increasing their capacity in the area of greening the economy. A delegation shared its experience of using resources from the State ecological fund for preparing the national contribution to the EE-AoA report, which could serve as example for other countries with similar concerns.

30. CEP welcomed the draft of the EE-AoA report and agreed with the proposal by the Steering Group on Environmental Assessments to establish a regular process of environmental assessment and develop the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) across the region, and other actions as included in the draft Ministerial Declaration (see annex I to the present document). CEP took note that there would be no extension of the mandate of the Steering Group on Environmental Assessments after the Astana Ministerial Conference.

² Contact person, Ms. Rie Tsutsumi, UNEP Regional Office for Europe (rie.tsutsumi@unep.org).

³ See http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/cep/CEP-ss_May2011/InformalDocs/EEAoA.pdf.

D. The second assessment of transboundary waters in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

31. The Secretary to the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) presented the progress made in preparing the second assessment of transboundary waters in the ECE region. The assessment was being prepared under the auspices of the Water Convention at the request of the Sixth EfE Ministerial Conference (Belgrade, 2007).

32. CEP welcomed the progress made in preparing the second assessment.

E. Conference outcomes

33. CEP established a drafting group to prepare the draft ministerial declaration following the framework agreed at its seventeenth session in November 2010. As requested by CEP, the secretariat had already prepared a first draft of the ministerial declaration (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.6) to serve as a basis for the drafting group's work.

34. The drafting group, under the leadership of Portugal, had a number of meetings during the CEP special session. Its work resulted in a draft ministerial declaration, which was subsequently considered in the CEP plenary. CEP approved the draft ministerial declaration (annex I). Delegates also considered the future of the EfE process and agreed to continue that discussion during the EfE mid-term review, to be convened between the Astana Conference and the next Ministerial Conference, in accordance with the EfE reform plan.

35. The Chair of the Water Convention informed the meeting about the main developments in preparing the Astana Water Action and presented a draft to the Committee (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.4). CEP highly appreciated the document's format and substance and approved the Astana Water Action as an outcome of the Conference.

36. A representative of Kazakhstan — the Vice-Minister of Environmental Protection — briefed the meeting about progress in developing the Partnership Programme for implementing the Astana "Green Bridge" Initiative and presented draft proposal for that Programme (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.5). CEP welcomed the intention of the host country to continue developing the Partnership Programme of the Astana "Green Bridge" Initiative so as to bring to the Astana Ministerial Conference detailed proposals and possible commitments by interested partners. Furthermore, CEP took note of the request of Kazakhstan for the urgent provision of financial and/or in-kind support (some US\$ 100,000) to be used to hire outside experts to develop relevant proposals in time for the Conference, and invited interested delegations to provide such support.

37. The ECE secretariat informed the meeting about the ECE Public-Private Round Tables on Green Economy series — launched in March 2011 — which had been jointly created by ECE and the London Business School Carbon Club with the aim of engaging business as a major group and stakeholder in the Astana Ministerial Conference. CEP welcomed that initiative.

38. Other possible initiatives included bi- and multilateral commitments on protecting river basins, such as between riparian states of the Drin River in South-Eastern Europe and between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine on the Dniester River, provided they would be ready in time for the Conference.

39. The Committee remained open to considering other similar initiatives and policy tools at both the regional and subregional levels as possible Conference outcomes. CEP therefore invited delegations to submit information on other possible outcomes of the

Conference to the secretariat by 1 July 2011. The proposals would be consulted with the CEP Bureau.

F. Host country preparations for the Conference

40. The Vice-Minister of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan informed the Committee that national preparations to host the Astana Ministerial Conference from 21 to 23 September 2011 were well under way. The conference venue would be prepared to meet the demands of CEP for the Astana Ministerial Conference, including hosting its plenary sessions, round tables, side events and exhibitions. A business fair on green innovation, technologies and eco-services was being organized on the margins of the Conference.⁴ Concerning conference documentation, the host country put forward the proposal to have a paperless conference.⁵

41. CEP welcomed the progress made by the host country. It supported the suggestion to have a paperless conference, and discouraged members and observers from bringing printed materials to the Conference. Furthermore, CEP requested the host country to make available on their website information on hotels in Astana at reasonable rates, as well as information on other logistical arrangements, e.g., visas, local transportation and media accreditation.

G. Communication activities

42. The secretariat informed the committee about progress achieved in implementing the Astana Conference Communication Plan (ECE/CEP/2010/5), which had been approved by CEP at its seventeenth session. The Plan was on track to be fully implemented.⁶ One remaining challenge was fund-raising additional resources to support participation of journalists in the workshop organized back to back to the Conference. A detailed overview of the proposed workshop was presented in information paper No. 8, prepared by the secretariat.

43. EEA expressed interest in having an active role in implementing the Astana communication activities, in particular focusing on the promotion of EE-AoA and in supporting the organization of the workshop for journalists. The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia reiterated its interest in being involved in the workshop for journalists with a view to promoting the regional components of the EE-AoA.

44. CEP welcomed the communication activities accomplished thus far and considered the proposal for a workshop for journalists in Astana. The CEP Chair expressed gratitude to the Government of Germany for pledging €20,000 for the workshop for journalists and invited other interested donors to consider providing additional financial support.

⁴ See <http://www.ecotech.kz/en/photo2011alma/>.

⁵ Detailed information on the host country preparations was made available on a dedicated Conference website from http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/cep/CEP-ss_May2011/InformalDocs/KAZ_Preparation.pdf.

⁶ Detailed information on the plan is also available on the website for the special session http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/cep/CEP-ss_May2011/InformalDocs/EfECommunicationActivities.pdf.

H. Resource requirements

45. The secretariat presented a paper on resource requirements for the preparatory process and the Conference (information paper No. 2), which was a revised version of the overview that had been circulated for fund-raising purposes in February 2011 at the request of CEP.

46. The host country informed participants about the status of the budget allocated for the Conference. A particular challenge had been attracting eminent persons and speakers to the Conference, for which the national funds could not be used. Another challenge had been ensuring sufficient resources to enable the process for developing the “Green Bridge” Partnership Programme. Fund-raising was required to support those two activities.

47. European ECO Forum presented a proposal to support the participation of NGO representatives in the Conference and appealed to delegations to consider providing financial support to enable NGO participation (resource requirements for NGOs had been circulated to CEP by e-mail on 23 May 2011). Given the ongoing economic crisis, and taking into account the high cost of travel to and accommodation in Astana, NGO fund-raising efforts had not been successful enough. To ensure a multi-stakeholder participation in plenaries and round tables, NGOs needed to bring to Astana a minimum of 40 representatives. In particular, European ECO Forum asked the Government of Kazakhstan to consider possibilities for supporting the participation of NGOs.

48. CEP considered the ECE secretariat’s resource requirements for preparing and organizing the Conference and invited its members and observers to consider possibilities for contributing to ECE, primarily to support the workshop for journalists, for two months’ programme assistance, and for funding renewable energy projects to compensate for the carbon footprint of the Conference.

49. CEP also considered the host country budget implications and financial constraints in relation to the organization of the Conference, and took note of the request of the host country to interested countries and organizations to invite and support participation of eminent persons and speakers in the Conference.

50. Furthermore, CEP considered the appeal of the European ECO Forum concerning resource requirements to support representatives of NGOs in the Conference, and invited interested countries and organizations to consider providing such support to NGOs.

I. Side events

51. The Chair recalled that the deadline for registration of side events with the host country secretariat was 29 April 2011. The list of side events was presented in information paper No.3/Rev.1. Also, information about side events was being made available on the host country website.⁷

52. The host country stood ready to assist the organizers of side events. Efforts were being made to accommodate all side events at the Conference premises. A separate registration procedure was to be organized for delegates wishing to participate only in side events.

53. CEP took note of the side events planned at the Conference and invited the host country secretariat to provide the detailed schedule of side events on their website.

⁷ See <http://efe.kz> (in Russian).

J. Private sector involvement

54. The Chair recalled that the EfE reform plan stipulated a stronger involvement of business in the EfE process. The secretariat had sent an e-mail inviting CEP to submit concrete proposals for business representatives to be invited to the Conference, and had expressed appreciation to those members and observers that had already submitted their proposals to the secretariat.

55. Delegations considered the best ways to engage businesses in the Conference and suggested a few possibilities, such as involving national chambers of commerce and industries in identifying relevant businesses, as well as asking national embassies in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries to identify businesses that were active in the Central Asian subregion.

56. CEP invited its members and observers to submit to the ECE secretariat as soon as possible, and preferably by 10 June 2011, the names of business representatives to be invited to the Conference, including those that would actively participate in the round-table discussions.

K. Registration

57. The CEP Chair informed the meeting that the information about the registration was available on the ECE website⁸ as well as on the host country website for the Conference. Due to the recent elections in Kazakhstan, the nominal invitation letters were sent out to the ministers of environment of the ECE region at the beginning of May; the secretariat had sent by e-mail scanned copies of the invitations to CEP. Invitation letters to international governmental organizations and other EfE partners were to be sent soon by the host country, with support from the ECE secretariat.

58. CEP members were encouraged to include in the national delegations representatives of NGOs and business. European ECO Forum was invited to form the NGO delegation and submit the list of registered NGOs and their registration forms to the ECE secretariat by the established deadline for registration.

59. CEP extended the registration deadline for the Conference until 15 July 2011. Delegations were invited to register in accordance with the approved registration procedure as soon as possible and not later than 15 July 2011. Furthermore, CEP encouraged European ECO Forum to make available on their website the information necessary for the NGOs registration to the Conference.

IV. Environmental performance reviews

A. Environmental Performance Review of Tajikistan

60. The Secretary to the Expert Group on EPRs informed CEP that the Expert Group had reviewed Tajikistan's environmental performance at its meeting on 3 and 4 May 2011 in Geneva. It was the second review of Tajikistan. The EPR recommendations were distributed at the meeting. Financial support for the EPR had been provided by Germany and Switzerland. Germany, Italy, Portugal and WHO had delegated experts for the EPRs and UNDP Tajikistan had provided support in carrying it out.

⁸ See <http://www.unece.org/env/efe/astana/welcome.html>.

61. The rapporteur (Switzerland) designated by the Expert Group on EPRs summarized the main findings and recommendations of the second EPR of Tajikistan, and gave an overview of the main challenges facing the country. Some progress in environmental protection had been achieved since the first EPR in 2004. However, many recommendations made seven years ago still needed to be implemented. Providing adequate State funding and efficient use of foreign aid for environmental concerns remained a key challenge for Tajikistan.

62. The representative of Tajikistan presented an overview of progress in implementing the recommendations of the first EPR and highlighted the added value of the recommendations provided in the second EPR. In the ensuing discussion, participants posed questions to the delegation of Tajikistan as well as provided some practical advice on the best ways to implement the EPR recommendations. The second EPR would provide a valuable support to the country's efforts to advance in environmental governance.

63. CEP concluded the peer review by adopting by acclamation the recommendations in the second EPR of Tajikistan. It expressed appreciation to the Governments and organizations for their support, including providing experts and financial contributions, which had made possible to carry out the second EPR of Tajikistan.

B. Environmental Performance Review of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

64. The Secretary to the Expert Group on EPRs informed CEP that the Expert Group had reviewed the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's environmental performance at its meeting on 3 and 4 May 2011. It was the second review of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The EPR recommendations were distributed at the meeting. Financial support for the EPR had been provided by Germany, Portugal, the United States, UNEP and WHO had delegated experts for the EPRs and the UNDP office for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had provided support in carrying it out.

65. The rapporteur (Netherlands) designated by the Expert Group on EPRs summarized the main findings and recommendations of the second EPR of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and gave an overview of the main concerns that still remained to be addressed. Good progress in environmental protection had been achieved since the first EPR in 2002. The major driving force was the country's status as a candidate for membership in the European Union, and the consequent harmonization of the national legislation with EU law. The main remaining challenge was the efficient and effective implementation of the legislative and policy frameworks.

66. The representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia presented the current situation in the country. One main challenge was to ensure an efficient system to monitor the implementation of all policy and legal instruments. Future priorities for the country were to increase the level of capital environmental investments (with waste and water management as priorities), as well as to strengthen the administrative structures necessary to provide an efficient environmental management. In the interactive follow-up discussion, participants commented on the main findings of the EPR, providing some practical advice on how to better implement the EPR recommendations.

67. CEP concluded the peer review by adopting by acclamation the recommendations in the second EPR of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It expressed appreciation to the Governments and organizations for their support, including providing experts and financial contributions, which had made possible to carry out the second EPR of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

C. Environmental Performance Review Programme: overview of activities

68. The Secretary to the Expert Group on EPRs briefed CEP about recent activities carried out under the EPR Programme. The mission to carry out a first EPR of Turkmenistan had taken place in February 2011. Preparations for missions to carry out the second EPR of Albania were well on the way. Also, Romania confirmed its interest in having a second EPR. EPR launch events were planned for the EPRs of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Uzbekistan.

69. Two studies were foreseen — a publication presenting a review of the second cycle of the EPRs Programme and an internal evaluation of the EPR Programme since its beginning — to be produced under the EPR Programme.

70. Furthermore, the Secretary presented the proposed procedure for conducting EPRs in countries beyond the ECE region (ECE/CEP/S/2011/4), which had been prepared following a request by CEP. Participants considered the document, made comments and requested the secretariat to incorporate the comments in a revised version. The secretariat revised the document and circulated it to CEP for further consideration at the special session.

71. CEP welcomed the progress under the EPR Programme. It approved the document presenting the procedure for conducting EPRs in countries outside the ECE region, as revised (annex II).

D. Environmental Performance Review Programme: third cycle

72. The Secretary to the Expert Group on EPRs introduced the document presenting the third cycle of the EPR Programme (ECE/CEP/S/2011/3), which had been revised to reflect comments received by CEP as agreed at its seventeenth session in November 2012.

73. CEP welcomed the document and approved the third cycle of EPRs.

V. Environmental monitoring and assessment

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

75. CEP welcomed the document and adopted the Guidelines.

VI. Cross-sectoral activities: green building

76. The CEP Chair informed the meeting that the Timber Committee had recommended that the ECE Executive Secretary form a task force on green building to be composed of experts from four relevant ECE Sectoral Committees, namely, the Timber Committee, the Housing and Land Management Committee, CEP 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. The CEP Bureau found the idea interesting for consideration at the present CEP session and requested the secretariat to present detailed terms of reference of the task force.

77. The secretariat presented the draft terms of reference of the task force (information paper No. 4). CEP would need to nominate three experts to participate in the task force. A formal call for expert nominations would be sent in due course.

78. CEP considered the information provided and agreed to participate in a task force on green building in accordance with its terms of reference.

VII. Calendar of meetings

79. The Committee noted that its next special session would take place in Astana on 20 September 2011.⁹

VIII. Other business

80. The CEP Secretary presented the preliminary list of publications forecasted by the Environment Subprogramme for the biennium 2012–2013 (information paper No. 5/Rev.1). Given that the United Nations General Assembly required that mandates be provided for all official publications, CEP was requested to consider the document for approval.

81. CEP considered the document and welcomed the proposal to produce many publications in electronic format only. At the same time, delegations expressed their concerns regarding the production of EPRs in electronic format only, given that EPR publications still needed to be widely disseminated in the reviewed countries, as they had been in the past. CEP approved the list of environmental publications for 2012–2013 as presented in the information paper No. 5/Rev.1.

82. Following a request by the seventeenth session of CEP, the ECE secretariat informed CEP about recent developments concerning the project proposal on strengthening implementation of ECE MEAs and enhancing transboundary cooperation in Central Asia. The secretariat had prepared a revised version of the project proposal, taking into account comments received at the seventeenth session of CEP. The revised version was consulted with the recipient countries as well as with the MEAs Bureaux. Positive feedback had been received from the recipient countries. Most of the 17 replies that had been received from members of MEA Bureaux expressed general support for the project. At the same time, they had stressed one major challenge facing the project, i.e., financing the implementation of the project and the necessary human resources. Those additional comments would be taken into account in the further development of the project. One possibility was to convene a joint meeting of the MEA Bureaux Chairs and other interested members, as well as the MEA secretariats, to further consider the next steps in the project development. In that regard, efforts would be made with a view to raising resources for the project's implementation (making sure not to tap funds allocated for the MEA secretariats' daily work).

83. CEP took note of the information provided. Due to the lack of time at the present meeting, delegations suggested that the proposed project could be given a proper consideration at one of the next CEP meetings. Regarding the possible organization of joint meetings of the MEA Bureaux, some participants suggested that the CEP Chair and interested members of the CEP Bureau be invited. Representatives of most of the Central Asian countries present at the meeting emphasized the importance of developing such a

⁹ The schedule of Committee's meetings is available on its website at <http://www.unece.org/env/efe/Astana/welcome.html>.

project; however, they needed more time at the national level to consider in detail the revised version of the project and subsequently provide feedback to the secretariat.

IX. Summary of decisions by the Committee

84. At its meeting, CEP:

(a) Adopted the agenda of the special session with the proposed timetable in mind;

(b) Elected the Chair and other members of its Bureau, as specified in paragraph 12 above;

(c) Approved the draft ministerial declaration (annex I);

(d) Approved the Astana Water Action as an outcome of the Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.4);

(e) Welcomed the intention of the host country to continue developing the Partnership Programme of the “Green Bridge” Initiative so as to bring to the Astana Conference detailed proposals and possible commitments by interested partners, took note of the request of Kazakhstan for the urgent provision of financial and/or in-kind support (some US\$ 100,000) to engage external experts to develop relevant proposals in time for the Conference and invited interested delegations to provide such support;

(f) Welcomed the draft of the EE-AoA report and agreed with the proposal of the Steering Group on Environmental Assessments to establish a regular process of environmental assessment and to develop the SEIS across the region, and other actions as included in the draft ministerial declaration;

(g) Welcomed the progress made in preparing the second assessment of transboundary waters in the ECE region;

(h) Invited delegations to submit information on other possible outcomes of the Conference to the secretariat by 1 July 2011, which proposals would be consulted with the CEP Bureau;

(i) Approved the Conference agenda and organization of work, and entrusted the secretariat and its Bureau to finalize those two documents for the Conference;

(j) Invited its members and observers to submit to the ECE secretariat by 1 July 2011 the interest of their Minister/Head of Delegation in:

(i) Chairing one of the three thematic segments of the Conference;

(ii) Making a keynote address during the one-hour plenary session;

(iii) Participating actively in the round-table discussions.

(k) Approved the two substantive official documents on water and on greening the economy. Additional comments to those two documents could be sent to the secretariat by 10 June 2011. The secretariat was entrusted to incorporate those comments, as feasible, given the word limit for official United Nations documents;

(l) Supported the suggestion of the host country to have a paperless conference and discouraged members and observers from bringing printed materials to the Conference;

(m) Extended the Conference registration deadline to 15 July 2011 and invited delegations to register in accordance with the approved registration procedure as soon as

possible; and encouraged the European ECO Forum to make available on their website necessary information for NGO registration to the Conference;

(n) Invited members and observers to submit to the ECE secretariat as soon as possible, and preferably by 10 June 2011, the names of private sector representatives to be invited to the Conference, including those that would actively participate in the round-table discussions;

(o) Requested the host country secretariat to make available on their website the information on hotels in Astana at reasonable rates, as well as information on other logistical arrangements, e.g., visas, local transportation and media accreditation;

(p) Considered:

(i) The ECE secretariat's resource requirements for preparing and organizing the Conference, and invited CEP members and observers to consider possibilities for contributing to ECE, primarily for the workshop for journalists, for two months' programme assistance and to fund renewable energy projects to compensate for the carbon footprint of the Conference (information paper No. 2);

(ii) The host country budget implications and financial constraints in relation to the organization of the Conference, and took note of the request of the host country to interested countries and organizations to invite to and support participation of eminent persons and speakers in the Conference;

(iii) The appeal of the European ECO Forum concerning resource requirements to support NGO representatives in the Conference, and invited interested countries and organizations to consider providing such support to NGOs;

(q) Welcomed communication activities accomplished thus far and considered the proposal for a workshop for journalists in Astana (information paper No. 8);

(r) Took note of the side events planned at the Astana Ministerial Conference, and invited the host country secretariat to provide the detailed schedule of side events on their website;

(s) Adopted by acclamation the recommendations in the Second EPR of Tajikistan;

(t) Adopted by acclamation the recommendations in the Second EPR of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;

(u) Approved the document presenting the procedures for carrying out EPRs in beyond the ECE region (annex II);

(v) Approved the third cycle of the EPRs, as outlined in document ECE/CEP/S/2011/3;

(w) Adopted the Guidelines for developing national strategies to use water quality monitoring as an environmental policy tool (ECE/CEP/S/2011/5);

(x) Agreed to participate in a Task Force on Green Building in accordance with its terms of reference (information paper No. 4);

(y) Approved the list of ECE Environment Division publications for 2012–2013 (information paper No. 5/Rev.1);

(z) Agreed to organize its next special session in Astana on 20 September 2011;

(aa) Requested the Bureau and the secretariat to follow up on CEP decisions;

(bb) Expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for an excellent organization of the session.

X. Closure of the session

85. The Chair informed CEP that a summary of decisions taken by CEP at its special session would be circulated by e-mail after the meeting. The report of the present special session would be prepared on the basis of the summary of decisions and posted on the ECE website after the meeting along with the list of participants.

86. The Chair thanked the participants and closed the session.

Annex I

Draft Declaration of the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference, as agreed by the Committee

1. We, the Ministers and Heads of delegation from ... countries in the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Representative of the European Commission, met at Astana from 21 to 23 September 2011, in the seventh of a series of Ministerial Conferences held as part of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process.

2. We confirm our commitment to improve environmental protection and to promote sustainable development in the ECE region. We reaffirm the important value of the EfE process as a unique pan-European forum for tackling environmental challenges and promoting broad horizontal environmental cooperation among countries in Europe, North America, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and as a pillar of sustainable development in the ECE region for 20 years. We are committed to the objectives and priorities of the EfE process as agreed in the EfE reform plan adopted by ECE in 2009. We reiterate the importance of the involvement of the civil society, including business, women, non-governmental organizations and other groups in decision-making to improve the environment.

3. Water is critical for economic and social development and environmental protection. Water management and water quality have improved in the past 20 years in many subregions. However, there are numerous remaining pressures, including chemical pollutants, and progress has often been weak regarding access to safe water and adequate sanitation, especially in rural areas, in particular, in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Many countries experience a continued decline of water-related ecosystems and their services, climate change impacts on water resources are already visible. Improvements to the current institutional framework for water management may need to be undertaken.

4. We encourage improvement of water and environmental systems and policies, and intersectoral cooperation, including, inter alia, National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Supply and Sanitation. We agree to pursue implementation of principles of integrated water resources management, an ecosystem approach and the integration of ecosystem values in economic accounting.

5. We invite countries to ratify and implement the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), inter alia, the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and its Protocol on Water and Health. We underline the role of ECE to assess the obstacles to ratify the ECE environmental agreements and to assist countries to ratify and implement these agreements. We encourage riparian countries to undertake and implement agreements on transboundary waters, to strengthen the institutional frameworks and to develop strategies including on environment and security issues and for adapting their water management to extreme events and climate change.

6. Additional financial resources need to be mobilized for investments from all sources for improvement in the water sector including for water supply, sustainable sanitation and more efficient, environmentally sound irrigation systems and improved technology. We stress the need to include water and environment issues in national development plans. We therefore encourage a more systematic use of economic instruments, the provision of incentives for water efficiency and the generation of revenues to finance water services

aiming at full cost recovery prices for water, while making adequate provisions for vulnerable social groups. We encourage enhanced donor coordination in order to focus our joint efforts on needs-driven issues.

7. We welcome the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in the ECE Region, prepared under the auspices of the ECE Water Convention. We invite the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention to cooperate with the regular process of environmental assessment and the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in future assessments.

8. We endorse the Astana Water Action and welcome the initiatives launched by interested countries and organizations during our conference aimed at improving water management and strengthening transboundary cooperation. We invite countries and other actors to implement the Astana Water Action and to report progress at CEP.

9. We stress the need to strengthen efforts, including through cooperation with the private sector, for the transition to a green economy by supporting the decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation, including through the internalization of externalities, as well as stimulating green investment in various economic sectors, applying effective mixes of policy instruments to promote resource efficiency and supporting research, innovations, education and training to secure the achievement of a green, and competitive economy. Natural capital and ecosystems are critical economic assets. Environmentally harmful subsidies are obstacles for greener economies and investments in sustainable policies.

10. We recognize that energy efficiency is one of the most cost effective ways to address climate change and move to a green economy. Investments and policy reforms to promote energy efficiency are particularly effective for this transition.

11. We agree to take a lead in the transition to a green economy and to make a substantive contribution to the discussions on green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty alleviation at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to take place in Rio de Janeiro from 4 to 6 June 2012. We invite ECE to contribute, together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and relevant international organizations, to the development of the Rio+20 Green Economy outcomes.

12. Sustainable consumption and production are fundamental to green the economy and we agree to pursue completion and implementation of a 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

13. Building upon the success of the ECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) Programme, we invite the ECE to conduct its third cycle of EPRs, which may include environmental governance and financing in a green economy context, countries' cooperation with the international community and environmental mainstreaming in priority sectors.

14. We welcome the report "Europe's Environment: An Assessment of Assessments" co-ordinated and produced by the European Environment Agency (EEA) in cooperation with the countries, the Regional Environmental Centers (RECs), MEAs secretariats, ECE and international organisations. This assessment clearly demonstrates the linkages and gaps between the challenges that exist and the means to evaluate and address them. To keep the pan-European environment under review, we decide to establish a regular process of environmental assessment and develop the SEIS across the region. These will serve multiple policy processes including MEAs and include capacity building of countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe to monitor and

assess their environment. We invite the EEA and its partners to outline how these actions could be performed and present it to the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP).

15. We welcome the work of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force and we invite OECD to continue this work, including on the themes of this Conference, in cooperation with the RECs and other partners.

16. We recognize the role of RECs in communicating and implementing initiatives and call for strengthening RECs' contributions both in promoting green economy and better environmental governance at local, national, sub-regional and regional levels.

17. We welcome and support, as appropriate, the "Green Bridge" Initiative and Partnership Programme, and encourage its further development. We invite interested Governments, international financial institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders to join this Programme to promote an environmentally sustainable, equitable and prosperous future in both the pan-European and the Asia and the Pacific regions.

18. We invite the ECE/CEP to convene in 2013 a mid-term review to assess progress of the implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences.

19. [We welcome the offer of the Government of to host the next EfE Ministerial Conference in 2015.] / [We invite offers of interest from Governments to host the next EfE Ministerial Conference for consideration by ECE/CEP.]

20. We express our gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan for having hosted this Conference and we wish to thank it and the people of Kazakhstan for the warm hospitality that we have received.

Annex II

Environmental Performance Reviews beyond the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region, as agreed by the Committee

A. Subject

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and its role in carrying out Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) beyond the ECE region, and sharing the EPR methodology with other regional commissions.

B. General rule

2. As the time and resources of the ECE are limited, ECE member countries always have priority over countries belonging to other regional commissions to have an EPR carried out.

C. Criteria

3. In order to conduct an EPR with ECE, the non-member country should inform its respective regional commission beforehand. Full funding must be available to conduct the whole review process from the preparatory mission to the launch event, including the time of the ECE staff involved in the process. The country under review and/or its corresponding regional commission should take the lead in identifying partners to provide in-kind and/or financial funding,

D. Goals

4. An EPR for a non-ECE country is a pilot project in cooperation between ECE and the respective regional commission. The goal is that the regional commission will take over, as soon as possible, the EPR methodology from the ECE in order to carry out its own EPR activities.

E. Scenario

5. UNECE would be fully responsible for the EPR of a non-member country.

6. Under this scenario, the country should liaise with its regional commission to inform it that it wants to have its EPR carried out by ECE. If not yet in place, the respective regional commission and ECE would conclude an agreement on the EPR procedure. Then the country would submit the request for the review to the ECE EPR secretariat and to the Committee on Environmental Policy, which is the governing body of the EPR process.

7. Once agreed by the Committee on Environmental Policy, ECE would be responsible for and would carry out all operations related to the review, which include a preparatory mission, a main fact-finding mission, an expert group, a peer review and a launch event. ECE would be responsible for choosing the experts for the mission, but the respective regional commission, as well as ECE member countries, the international partner

organizations, such as the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization, might suggest, recommend or provide experts in specific fields.

8. ECE would liaise with the national authorities of the country undergoing an EPR review.

9. The regional commission of the non-ECE country should:

(a) Acquire expertise by training provided by the ECE EPR Team, and by participation in an ECE EPR mission and review process;

(b) Be responsible for handling the formatting, translation into a local language and publication of the EPR report.

10. Expert group review would be carried out by the ECE EPR Expert Group and peer review would be carried out by the Committee on Environmental Policy, with representatives of the host regional commission in attendance, as appropriate.
