Economic Commission for Europe
Committee on Environmental Policy

Special session
Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda
Preparations for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference: provisional agenda

Proposed organization of work for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

Pursuant to a decision by ministers at the Sixth “Environment for Europe” (EfE) Ministerial Conference (Belgrade, 2007), the Seventh EfE Ministerial Conference will be held from 21 to 23 September 2011 in Astana. The Astana EfE Ministerial Conference is being organized in accordance with the Reform Plan\(^1\) of the EfE process.

The present document complements the draft annotated agenda for the Conference (ECE/CEP/S/2011/L.1). It contains a proposal for the organization of work at the Conference, including the organization and composition of the round-table discussions. The draft composition of the round tables is attached as an annex.

This document is submitted to the Committee on Environmental Policy for consideration so that it may provide further guidance to the secretariat on the best approaches for organizing the Conference in an interactive and multi-stakeholder way.

Members of and observers to the Committee are invited to inform the secretariat about the interest of their high-level representatives in chairing the thematic segments of the Conference, as well as in delivering keynote addresses to kick-off the discussions. Also, 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.

* The present 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 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 the Economic Commission for Europe at its sixty-third session (Geneva, 30 March–1 April 2009).
I. Introduction

1. Following the decision of the Committee on Environmental Policy, the Conference will start on Wednesday, 21 September 2011, in the afternoon and end on the afternoon of Friday, 23 September 2011, for a total duration of two and a half days. The Conference will start with an opening ceremony lasting up to two hours.

2. The Conference sessions will be structured in an interactive way. Each of the three thematic segments of the Conference will start with a one-hour plenary session, followed by a multi-stakeholder round table organized in three parallel sessions. The plenary session will feature two presentations from different stakeholders in order to kick off the discussion. Each parallel session will address the same questions, but bring different perspectives.

3. The Conference will be chaired by a high-level representative of Kazakhstan (e.g., the Minister of Environmental Protection). Each thematic segment will be chaired by a minister from a member State of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The parallel sessions of a round table will be moderated by a professional moderator. The UNECE secretariat and other EfE partners, as relevant, will support the work of the moderator.

4. A round-table parallel session will comprise up to 30 participants, including ministers, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), regional environmental centres (RECs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector representatives. NGOs and the private sector should be represented at the highest level, with the latter represented preferably by chief executive officers. To allow for participation of each of the 56 UNECE member States in round-table discussions, the composition of each of the parallel sessions will be as follows:
   a) UNECE member States will have up to 19 seats;
   b) IGOs will have up to 2 seats;
   c) RECs will have 1 seat;
   d) NGOs will have up to 4 seats; and
   e) Private sector representatives will have up to 4 seats.

5. In addition, some 200 registered participants in the Conference will be accommodated in each of the parallel sessions to participate as observers to the round-table discussions. If time permits, these participants will be given the opportunity to pose questions to round-table participants.

6. Each of the round-table sessions will open with introductory remarks by a moderator. Participants in the round table will be invited to engage actively in the discussion, and to address a number of issues that have been agreed by the Committee and which are included in items 3, 4 and 5 of the provisional agenda for the Conference.

7. Following the discussion, the moderator will highlight key points to be brought to the attention of the Conference plenary.

8. Speeches, prepared in advance, are strongly discouraged during the round tables; instead, participants should exchange views on the theme under discussion. To allow each participant at the round table to intervene at least once during the discussion, the time limit for interventions will be three minutes.

9. The consolidated results of discussions from the three parallel sessions of each round table will be presented by the Chair of that round table on the last day of the Conference and will serve as input into the Chair’s Summary of the Conference.
II. Organization of work

**Wednesday, 21 September 2011**

*Registration, greening-the-Conference-related events, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.*

10. The Registration Desk will open at 9 a.m. The host country secretariat will ensure an efficient and smooth security check and registration procedure so as to enable timely registration of all participants in the Conference.

11. The host country will have the opportunity to organize greening-the-Conference-related events, such as planting trees, riding bikes, etc.

1. Opening of the Conference and adoption of the agenda

*Plenary session, 2–4 p.m.*

**Chair:** Minister of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan

**Welcoming address:** by a high-level representative of Kazakhstan, e.g. the Prime Minister (up to 10 minutes)

**Introductory remarks** by the Chair (up to five minutes)

**Keynote address** (up to five minutes per keynote address):

- Mr. Jan Kubiš, Executive Secretary of UNECE
- Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

**Opening event** by the host country (up to one hour)

**Family photo** of all ministers and heads of delegations (up to 20 minutes)

2. The “Environment for Europe” process: 20 years of pan-European cooperation

*Plenary session, Wednesday, 21 September 2011, 4–6 p.m.*

**Chair:** Minister of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan

**Introductory remarks** by the Chair (up to five minutes)

**From Dobřiš to Astana: 20 years of pan-European cooperation,** address by a representative from the Czech Republic (up to 10 minutes)

**Presentation** by a representative of Kazakhstan of the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative and a partnership programme to implement this Initiative (up to 10 minutes)

**Interactive discussion/questions from the floor/statements** by ministers and high-level representatives of the private sector and civil society (up to 3 minutes per intervention; a total of up to 35 minutes)

**Presentation** by Ms. Jacqueline McGlade, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency (EEA), of the key findings of “Europe’s Environment Assessment of Assessments” (EEAoA) report (up to 10 minutes)

**Presentation** by a representative of Finland of the findings of the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in the UNECE Region (up to 10 minutes)
Interactive discussion/questions from the floor/statements by ministers and high-level representatives of the private sector and civil society (up to 3 minutes per intervention; a total of up to 35 minutes)

Concluding remarks by the Chair (up to five minutes)

Thursday, 22 September 2011

3. Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems

Plenary session, 10–11 a.m.
Chair: A minister from a UNECE member State

Introductory remarks by the Chair (up to five minutes)

Two keynote addresses (up to 10 minutes per keynote address):
- A minister of a UNECE member State
- A representative of civil society/the private sector

Presentation by Ms. Sibylle Vermont, Chair of the Bureau of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, of the Toolbox for Action on Sustainable Management of Water and Water-related Ecosystems (up to 10 minutes)

Interactive discussion/statements by ministers and high-level representatives of the private sector and civil society; interested countries and organizations will be given the opportunity to briefly present initiatives and policy tools relevant to this item of the agenda (up to 3 minutes per intervention; a total of up to 20 minutes)

Remarks by the Chair (up to five minutes)

Round-table discussion, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.
Three parallel sessions of a multi-stakeholder round-table on sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems (for details refer to the introductory part of the present document)

4. Sustainable management of water and greening the economy

Plenary session, 3–4 p.m.
Chair: A minister from a UNECE member State

Introductory remarks by the Chair (up to five minutes)

Two keynote addresses (up to 10 minutes per keynote address):
- A minister of a UNECE member State
- A representative of civil society/the private sector

Interactive discussion/statements by ministers and high-level representatives of the private sector and civil society; interested countries and organizations will be given the opportunity to briefly present initiatives and policy tools relevant to this item of the agenda (up to 3 minutes per intervention; a total of up to 30 minutes)

Remarks by the Chair (up to five minutes)
Round-table discussion, 4–6 p.m.

Three parallel sessions of a multi-stakeholder round table on sustainable management of water and greening the economy (for details refer to the introductory part of the present document)

Friday, 23 September 2011

5. Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development

Plenary session, 10–11 a.m.

Chair: A minister from a UNECE member State

Introductory remarks by the Chair (up to five minutes)

Two keynote addresses (up to 10 minutes per keynote address):

- A minister of a UNECE member State
- A representative of civil society/the private sector

Interactive discussion/statements by ministers and high-level representatives of the private sector and civil society; interested countries and organizations will be given the opportunity to briefly present initiatives and policy tools relevant to this item of the agenda (up to 3 minutes per intervention; a total of up to 30 minutes)

Remarks by the Chair (up to five minutes)

Round-table discussion, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Three parallel sessions of a multi-stakeholder round table on greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development (for details refer to the introductory part of the present document)

6. Reporting on the outcomes of the discussions under the thematic segments

Plenary session, Friday, 23 September 2011, 3–4.30 p.m.

Chair: Minister of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan

Introductory remarks by the Chair (up to five minutes)

Reporting by the Chair of the thematic segment on sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems (up to 10 minutes)

Interactive discussion/questions from the floor/statements by ministers and high-level representatives of the private sector and civil society (up to 3 minutes per intervention; a total of up to 15 minutes)

Reporting by the Chair of the thematic segment on sustainable management of water and greening the economy (up to 10 minutes)

Interactive discussion/questions from the floor/statements by ministers and high-level representatives of the private sector and civil society (up to 3 minutes per intervention; a total of up to 15 minutes)

Reporting by the Chair of the thematic segment on greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development (up to 10 minutes)
Interactive discussion/questions from the floor/statements by ministers and high-level representatives of the private sector and civil society (up to 3 minutes per intervention; a total of up to 15 minutes)

Concluding remarks by the Chair (up to five minutes)

7. Adoption of Conference outcomes

Plenary session, Friday, 23 September 2011, 4.30–5.30 p.m.

Chair: Minister of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan

Introductory remarks and presentation of the draft Ministerial Declaration by the Chair (up to five minutes)

Adoption of and statements on the Ministerial Declaration (up to 10 minutes)

Presentation of initiatives, agreements, pledges and policy tools by interested ministers and stakeholders on subjects related to the Conference themes that may have been submitted to the Conference (up to 25 minutes)

Consideration of the Conference’s contribution to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (up to 15 minutes)

Concluding remarks by the Chair (up to five minutes)

8. Closure of the Conference

Plenary session, Friday, 23 September 2011, 5.30–6 p.m.

Chair: Minister of the Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan

Chair’s Summary and closing remarks
Annex

Draft composition of the round tables

Item 3
Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems

Questions for discussion

(a) Which policies proved to be effective to value and protect water-related ecosystems, including payment for ecosystem services? What are the main obstacles and gaps?

(b) What policies proved to be effective in addressing human health issues related to water quality and quantity? What are the main obstacles and gaps?

(c) What are the priorities/challenges in adapting management of water and water-related ecosystems to extreme weather events and to climate change?

(d) What are the experiences and lessons learned from the cooperation in transboundary basins to improve water quality, manage water quantity and protect ecosystems?

1. Parallel session 1 (English/Russian/French interpretation)

Moderator: [a professional moderator]

Participants:
1. [UNECE member State]
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19. [UNECE member State]
2. Parallel session 2 (English/Russian interpretation)

Moderator: [a professional moderator]

Participants:
1. [UNECE member State]
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21. [IGO]
22. [REC]
23. [NGO]
24. [NGO]
3. **Parallel session 3 (English/Russian interpretation)**

**Moderator:** [a professional moderator]

**Participants:**
1. [UNECE member State]
2. [UNECE member State]
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29. [Private sector]
Item 4
Sustainable management of water and greening the economy

Questions for discussion

(a) What policy mixes and practical tools, such as integrated water resources management (IWRM), pricing, standards and water users associations, can be most effective to improve water efficiency by different water users, especially in agriculture, households and industrial operations?

(b) How can we encourage investments to take into account the impacts on water quantity and water quality, energy and resource efficiency and vulnerable populations?

1. Parallel session 1 (English/Russian/French interpretation)

Moderator: [a professional moderator]

Participants:
1. [UNECE member State]
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22. [REC]
23. [NGO]
24. [NGO]
25. [NGO]
26. [NGO]
2. Parallel session 2 (English/Russian interpretation)

Moderator: [a professional moderator]

Participants:
1. [UNECE member State]
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27. [Private sector]
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30. [Private sector]
3. Parallel session 3 (English/Russian interpretation)

Moderator: [a professional moderator]

Participants:
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Item 5
Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development

Questions for discussion

(a) What policy mixes have the potential to secure the achievement of a green, inclusive and competitive economy, through an integrated approach, including sectors such as transport, housing, energy, agriculture and education?

(b) How can resource efficiency improve sustainability and competitiveness in local, regional and global markets?

(c) How can research, innovation and investment help the transition towards a green economy?

(d) How could the “Environment for Europe” process contribute to outcomes on green economy in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) 2012 (Rio+20)?

1. Parallel session 1 (English/Russian/French interpretation)

Moderator: [a professional moderator]

Participants:
1. [UNECE member State]
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2. **Parallel session 2 (English/Russian interpretation)**

**Moderator:** [a professional moderator]

**Participants:**
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3. **Parallel session 3 (English/Russian interpretation)**

Moderator: [a professional moderator]

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25. [NGO]
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27. [Private sector]
28. [Private sector]
29. [Private sector]