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Item 8 (c) of the provisional agenda

**Environmental Performance Review Programme:
overview of activities**

Extension of the mandate of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its eighteenth session in April 2012, highly appreciated the work of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews and adopted the renewed mandate of the Expert Group for 2013–2014 (ECE/CEP/2012/2, annex III). The terms of reference stipulate that the mandate of the Expert Group will cover a two-year period, from 2013 to the end of 2014.

The present document contains a review of the Expert Group's achievements for the mandated period, and presents, in an annex, a draft decision on the renewal of its mandate for a further four-year period, for the consideration of the Committee on Environmental Policy at its twentieth session.



Achievements of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews in 2013–2014

1. To implement its terms of reference for the period 2013–2014 (ECE/CEP/2012/2, annex III), the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews (Expert Group on EPRs) undertook a series of activities focusing on improving environmental performance in the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and, on an exceptional basis, in Morocco, a member State of the Economic Commission for Africa. The Expert Group reported annually to the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) on progress made to that end. The main results are presented below.
2. At its twenty-third session, held in Rabat in September 2013, the Expert Group on EPRs reviewed the first Environmental Performance Review (EPR) report of Morocco, comprising 13 chapters, and agreed with the Morocco delegation on 60 recommendations. At its twenty-fourth session, held in Geneva in October 2013, it reviewed the third EPR of the Republic of Moldova, comprising 10 chapters, and the second EPR of Croatia, comprising 9 chapters, and agreed with the relevant delegations on 41 and 36 recommendations, respectively. At its twenty-fifth session, to be held in Geneva in September 2014, it will have reviewed the third EPR of Montenegro and the third EPR of Serbia, comprising eight chapters each. The Expert Group is expected to agree on 30 recommendations for Montenegro and 38 for Serbia.
3. Given that the current mandate of the Expert Group expires at the end of 2014, the secretariat prepared revised terms of reference for the Group, which are annexed to this note. CEP is invited to adopt these terms of reference and transmit them to the Executive Committee for endorsement.

Annex

Mandate and terms of reference for the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for 2015–2018

1. The Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews (Expert Group on EPRs) is mandated until the end of 2018 to support the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Environmental Performance Review (EPR) Programme in accordance with the terms of reference described below.

Membership

2. The core membership of the Expert Group on EPRs for 2015–2018 should consist of 10 to 14 participants, with due consideration given to a balanced geographical representation from the countries in the region. It is also suggested that, when new members are chosen, due regard should be given to experts from countries that have recently been reviewed, as well as to those which have undergone or will soon undergo reviews.

3. The Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) delegates may participate in the meetings of the Expert Group as observers and act as advisers to review the report and its recommendations.

4. In addition, experts nominated by the CEP delegates, and agreed by the members of the Expert Group in consultation with the secretariat, may participate in the meetings of the Expert Group on any country under review.

Terms of reference

5. The mandate of the core members of the Expert Group is renewed for a period of four years for the purposes of:

(a) Carrying out the expert review process, prior to the peer review to be undertaken by CEP;

(b) Providing guidance to the ECE secretariat and CEP on all substantive and organizational matters arising in the implementation of the ECE EPR Programme;

(c) Assisting the ECE secretariat in coordinating the ECE EPR Programme with processes that have a bearing on it under way in other international institutions, *inter alia*, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization, the European Environment Agency and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

6. The guidance of the Expert Group to the ECE secretariat and CEP will include:

(a) Identification of opportunities and requirements for improving the conduct of EPRs;

(b) Assessment of environmental trends relevant to the EPR process in non-OECD member countries, including through the organization of joint meetings, seminars and workshops at the regional and subregional levels, where these are demand-driven.

7. The core members of the Expert Group are nominated by the ECE member States. The secretariat will invite international institutions pursuing related work to participate in the work of the Expert Group.
8. While taking decisions on an EPR report under review and its recommendations, the Expert Group shall take into consideration the inputs by the reviewing countries and CEP delegates who participate in the meeting.
9. The Expert Group shall elect its Chair and Vice-Chair.
10. The Expert Group will report annually on its activities to CEP, and may raise any issue with CEP that it deems necessary for the implementation of its mandate.

Timetable

11. The mandate of the Expert Group will cover a four-year period, from the beginning of 2015 to the end of 2018.
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