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**The Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference:
organizational issues****Organizational issues for the Eighth Environment for Europe
Ministerial Conference****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The Environment for Europe (EfE) Reform Plan sets out the provisions for the preparatory process and for the organization of the EfE ministerial conferences (ECE/CEP/S/152 and Corr.1, annex I).

In accordance with those provisions, at its nineteenth session in October 2013, the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) decided to organize the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference in 2016 and, in addition to an updated proposal for a possible framework for the Conference, requested the secretariat to prepare other related documents that might be recommended by the Bureau for consideration by CEP at its twentieth session (ECE/CEP/2013/2, paras. 49 and 116 (h) (iii)).

At its May 2014 meeting in Lisbon, the CEP Bureau requested the secretariat to develop a document presenting organizational issues for the Conference, similar to the one for the Astana Conference, but taking into account the availability of infrastructure in Batumi, Georgia (see ECE/CEP/2014/3, para. 15).

Pursuant to those requests, the secretariat prepared the present document, presenting the main organizational issues for the next Conference with a view to guiding the preparations for and the organization of the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference.

CEP will be invited to consider the document with a view to its adoption.



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Introduction

1. The present document was prepared following the requests by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) and its Bureau (ECE/CEP/2013/2, paras. 49 and 116 (h) (iii) and ECE/CEP/2014/3, para. 15).
2. The document presents a number of organizational issues for the Eighth Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference. In developing the document, relevant provisions stated in the EfE Reform Plan were taken into account (ECE/CEP/S/152 and Corr.1, annex I).
3. At the time of preparing the current document, the secretariat had not received formal confirmation regarding the hosting of the Conference. Therefore, the relevant text throughout the document was adapted accordingly. In that context, the deadlines indicated throughout the document were calculated based on the assumption that the Conference will be organized at the beginning of June 2016.
4. CEP will be invited to consider the document with a view to its adoption. Thereafter, the document will guide the preparations for and the organization of the Conference.

I. Participation

A. Governments

5. The Conference is open to all 56 member States of ECE. Other interested United Nations Member States may also participate as observers, subject to decision by CEP. National delegations can include up to 10 people. Governments are invited to include representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and of business in their national delegations, as appropriate.
6. Governments should each designate a national focal point, who will collect and consolidate all registration forms from national delegates and send them to the ECE secretariat. The list of nominated delegates should be submitted to the ECE secretariat by e-mail (efe@unece.org) together with their registration forms as soon as possible, but not later than Monday, **29 February 2016**.

B. Intergovernmental organizations

7. Intergovernmental organizations and other international organizations that participate regularly in ECE activities and in activities included in the EfE process are eligible to participate. Delegations from these organizations can include up to 10 people. Representatives of these organizations should submit a registration form to the ECE secretariat by e-mail (efe@unece.org) by Monday, **29 February 2016**.

C. Non-governmental organizations

8. Up to 150 representatives of NGOs may be invited to attend a possible joint session with ministers at the Conference, out of which 30 places are reserved for NGOs from the host country, and up to 75 NGO representatives may be present at all other official meetings of the Conference, out of which 10 places are reserved for NGOs from the host country.

9. The European ECO Forum will be invited to organize a nomination process and will form a delegation representing NGOs. Major international NGOs, such as Greenpeace, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), can register directly with the ECE secretariat.

10. The NGO delegation of up to 75 persons to be present (on a rotational basis) at the official segments of the Conference can include up to 65 representatives of international and national NGOs from the ECE region (of which 56 seats are allocated for the participation of one NGO per ECE member State and 9 seats are reserved for international NGOs, NGO networks and experts actively involved in the preparatory process), and another 10 seats are reserved for representatives from national NGOs of the host country.

11. Selection and nomination of NGOs will be done according to the following criteria:

- (a) The organization should be an environmental NGO from the ECE region;
- (b) It should have expertise in the subjects included on the Conference agenda;
- (c) It should have international experience and be actively involved in the Efe process;
- (d) The selection should ensure balanced representation of the different parts of the ECE region;
- (e) Nominees should know at least one of the three official ECE languages (i.e., English, French or Russian).

12. The list of NGO delegates should be submitted to the ECE secretariat by e-mail (efe@unece.org) by Monday, **29 February 2016**. The ECE secretariat, in cooperation with the host country, will complete the registration process.

D. Business

13. Up to 100 representatives of business may be invited to attend a possible joint session with ministers at the Conference, out of which 20 places are reserved for business representatives from the host country, and up to 50 business representatives may be present at any given time at all official meetings, out of which 5 places are reserved for host country business representatives. Interested representatives from business should submit a registration form to the ECE secretariat by e-mail (efe@unece.org) by Monday, **29 February 2016**.

E. Other civil society representatives

14. Other representatives of civil society/major groups¹ whose activities are directly relevant to the Conference agenda may also participate. Eligible representatives of major groups should submit their registration forms to the ECE secretariat by e-mail (efe@unece.org) by Monday, **29 February 2016**.

¹ Business and industry; children and youth; farmers; indigenous people; local authorities; NGOs; scientific and technological community; women; workers and trade unions, as defined by Agenda 21 (United Nations, Rio de Janeiro, 1992).

F. Mass media

15. Representatives of the mass media should submit an accreditation form directly to the host country secretariat by Friday, **8 April 2016**.

16. Information on participation and registration will be available through the ECE website dedicated to the EfE process (<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/welcome.html>) by 20 November 2015.

II. Documents

17. The provisions of this section are based on the EfE Reform Plan, which stipulates that in order to reduce the amount of documents produced for the Conference, only one official document per selected theme would be prepared by the ECE or another EfE partner, in close cooperation with other EfE partners. The official substantive documentation will thus comprise the pan-European assessment, provided that CEP decides to produce it, and theme-specific reports. Documents on substantial themes of the Conference should be released six weeks before the Conference (i.e., by Monday, **18 April 2016**). The Reform Plan also states that interested ECE member States, EfE partners and other stakeholders may produce other documents featuring their activities and initiatives related to the EfE process, which will be circulated as information documents.

18. Furthermore, the EfE Reform Plan provides for the following possible Conference outcomes: (a) a chair's summary; (b) statements, initiatives, agreements or pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions; (c) an agreed outcome of two pages on follow-up and further actions strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference; (d) policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that are presented to the Conference by interested countries of the ECE region and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues, and that were not negotiated within the preparatory process for the Conference; and (e) assessment reports used in the preparation for the Conference or presented to the Conference and which are important for the implementation of the Conference's outcomes.

19. Accordingly, the Conference documents will be divided into: (a) official substantive documents; and (b) information documents. The outcome documents will be processed either as official substantive documents or as information documents, depending on their nature.

20. During the preparatory process, in order to save paper and make the process of distributing documentation more efficient, the ECE secretariat will not provide hard copies of meeting documents in the meeting room (exceptions will be made for meeting discussion documents prepared during or shortly before meetings). All relevant documents prepared by or submitted to the ECE secretariat will be posted on the ECE website. Therefore, the delegates are kindly asked to bring with them all the documents that they need for their work during the meetings, including reference documents and documents circulated specifically for meetings of CEP and its Bureau. Participants wishing to distribute papers relevant to meetings are requested to bring the necessary number of copies.

A. Official substantive documents

21. Official substantive documents for possible action by Ministers (e.g., signature, endorsement, approval, adoption or discussion) shall be submitted through and endorsed by CEP.² The submission of official substantive documents to the Conference has to be approved by CEP at its special session to be held from 9 to 11 February 2016 (dates to be confirmed). Therefore, taking into account the requirements of the the Conference Services Division of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the deadlines for submitting these documents to the ECE secretariat are as follows:

(a) Documents prepared directly under the auspices of CEP will be translated and reproduced by the United Nations Conference Services. The deadline for their submission is **30 November 2015**. These documents may not exceed a length of **8,500 words**. The original language can be English, French or Russian. If submitting documents in French or Russian, an adequate quality and editing should be ensured by the author to enable translation into the other two official languages of ECE by Conference Services;

(b) Documents prepared by other EfE partners should be submitted to the ECE secretariat in the three official ECE languages (English, French and Russian) in electronic form by **5 January 2016** for reproduction in electronic format by Conference Services and posting on the official CEP website.

22. Organizations that wish to reproduce the documents in electronic format themselves should submit the documents to the ECE secretariat in electronic form in the three official ECE languages (English, French and Russian), or give the web reference where these documents can be viewed, for posting on the official CEP website by **8 January 2016**.

23. Official substantive documents approved by the February 2016 special session of CEP and processed by the United Nations Conference Services will be posted on the website and distributed by e-mail prior to the Conference according to the ECE distribution list (which includes national and international delegations, permanent missions and intergovernmental organizations) and the provisional list of Conference participants. The final deadline for processing official substantive documents by the United Nations Conference Services in time for the Conference is **18 March 2016**.

24. The formula "ECE/VENUE CITY NAME.CONF/ 2016/No." will be used for official substantive document symbols. The ECE secretariat will issue a uniform cover page (to be used for finalizing the documents). Documents produced outside the ECE secretariat should be made available to delegates at the latest six weeks prior to the Conference, i.e., by **18 April 2016**.

25. The host country secretariat may wish to translate the official substantive documents of the Conference into the national language(s).

B. Information documents

26. Information documents are background, informational and analytical documents of direct relevance to the Conference agenda submitted by the EfE partners and other interested stakeholders.

² According to the EfE Reform Plan, the annotated provisional agenda for the Conference should be approved by CEP at its twenty-first session (Geneva, 27–30 October 2015). Drafts of other official substantive documents should also be available for comments at the twenty-first session of CEP.

27. The list of background, informational and analytical documents of direct relevance to the Conference agenda that are submitted by the EfE partners and other interested stakeholders will be made available for information to the special session of CEP in February 2016. The final titles of these documents, as well as a reference to the website where they can be viewed, should be submitted to the ECE secretariat by **4 December 2015**. Alternatively, the electronic version of these documents can be posted on the official CEP website.

28. The Conference aims to be a paperless event to the extent possible. Therefore, Conference delegates, including EfE partner organizations, are encouraged to disseminate materials in electronic version via the Internet, as feasible.

29. For ease of reference, the information documents will use the formula "ECE/VENUE CITY NAME.CONF/2016/INF/No." symbols. The final deadline for processing information documents by the United Nations Conference Services in time for the Conference is **18 March 2016**.

30. The ECE secretariat will assign appropriate symbols to documents and issue a uniform cover page (to be used for finalizing the documents). The electronic versions (or the web reference where these documents can be viewed) of the information documents can also be posted on the ECE website dedicated to the Conference, size permitting.

31. Documents produced outside the ECE secretariat should be made available to delegates at the latest six weeks prior to the Conference, i.e., **by 18 April 2016**. Submission in French or Russian as the original language is also possible, provided that an English version of an adequate quality is provided by the author to enable all delegates to consider the documents.

C. Conference outcomes

32. Regarding Conference outcomes, CEP should be informed in advance of the Conference on any possible: (a) statements, initiatives, agreements, pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions; and (b) policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that are intended to be presented to the Conference by interested countries of the ECE region and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues.

33. In that regard, interested EfE actors should inform CEP at its twenty-first session (Geneva, 27–30 October 2015) of such envisaged documents and make available the electronic version of the final drafts to CEP for information in the three official ECE languages (English, French and Russian) at its special session in February 2016. The electronic versions (or the web reference where these documents can be viewed) of drafts of such documents should be submitted to the ECE secretariat for posting on the official CEP website by **8 January 2016**. The deadline for making the final draft documents available for the Conference is **18 April 2016**.

34. An agreed outcome of two pages on follow-up and further actions strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference, will be prepared by CEP in advance of the Conference.

35. A chair's summary will be produced during the Conference by the ECE secretariat in close collaboration with the host country secretariat and the relevant EfE partners. A draft of the chair's summary will be made available in English at the end of the Conference and the final edited version will be processed in English, French and Russian after the Conference.

III. Side events and exhibitions

36. An organizer of a side event may be a Government, an intergovernmental, international or non-governmental organization, the private sector or other major group. Organizers from the ECE region should be given preference.
37. Official delegates may not be invited to side events organized during the plenary sessions of the Conference or during official social events.
38. The theme and content of a side event should be a subject of direct relevance to the Conference agenda. Events should be conducted in at least one of the official ECE languages (English, French or Russian).
39. Completed registration forms for side events should be submitted to the host country secretariat by **15 January 2016**. All practical arrangements for side events are subject to the agreement made between the host country and the organizer.
40. The final list of side events should be available for the information of CEP at its February 2016 special session.
41. Materials for exhibitions and side events should be shipped to the venue by the delegations themselves and should reach the venue by **31 May 2016**. Alternatively, delegations may bring them to the Conference venue upon their arrival (subject to the arrangements made between the host country and delegations). At the same time, the organizers of side events and exhibitions should keep in mind that the Conference aims to be a paperless event with a view to diminishing the mass distribution of printed materials.

IV. Accommodation

42. The designated national focal point may wish to assume the responsibility for hotel booking. Information on hotel booking will be available through the official site of the EfE process and the host country secretariat by **1 October 2015**.

V. Further information

43. For information on documents, participation and registration please contact the ECE secretariat via e-mail at efe@unece.org.
44. For information on press accreditation, meeting venue, local transport, hotel booking, exhibition, side events and other questions related to local logistics, please contact the host country secretariat.³

³ The contact details of the host country secretariat will be communicated at a later time and posted on the ECE website.

Annex

Summary of major deadlines for the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

A. Registration

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Deadline for submission</i>
Government delegations	Via e-mail to the ECE secretariat	29 February 2016
Intergovernmental organizations	Via e-mail to the ECE secretariat	29 February 2016
NGOs	European ECO Forum will submit the list of NGO delegation to the ECE secretariat	29 February 2016
Major international NGOs	Via e-mail to the ECE secretariat	29 February 2016
Business	Via e-mail to the ECE secretariat	29 February 2016
Other civil society representatives	Via e-mail to the ECE secretariat	29 February 2016
Mass media	Via e-mail (or other means to be determined) to the host country secretariat	8 April 2016

B. Documentation

<i>Languages, format and purpose of submission</i>	<i>Type of processing or reproduction to be carried out</i>	<i>Deadlines for submission</i>
Substantive documents		
In English, ^a for the CEP special session in February 2016	For processing by United Nations Conference Services	30 November 2015
In English, French and Russian, for the CEP special session in February 2016	For reproduction in electronic format by United Nations Conference Services	5 January 2015
In English, French and Russian, for the CEP special session in February 2016	For posting on the CEP website	8 January 2016
In English, ^b for the Conference	For processing by United Nations Conference Services	18 March 2016
In English, French and Russian, for the Conference	For reproduction in electronic format by United Nations Conference Services	8 April 2016
In English, French and Russian for the Conference	For posting on the Conference website	18 April 2016

<i>Languages, format and purpose of submission</i>	<i>Type of processing or reproduction to be carried out</i>	<i>Deadlines for submission</i>
Information documents		
In English, ^c final title and electronic versions, for the CEP special session in February 2016	For compiling the list of information documents and posting on the CEP website	4 December 2015
In English, ^d final versions for the Conference	For posting on the Conference website	18 April 2016
Conference outcomes		
In English, ^e draft electronic versions, for the CEP special session in February 2016	For posting on the CEP website	8 January 2016
In English, ^f draft electronic versions approved by CEP for the Conference	For posting on the Conference website	18 April 2016

^a Submission in French or Russian as the original language is also possible. An adequate quality and editing should be ensured by the author for such documents to enable their translation into the other two official languages of ECE by United Nations Conference Services.

^b Idem.

^c Submission in French or Russian as an original language is also possible, provided that an English version of an adequate quality is provided by the author to enable all delegates to consider such documents.

^d Idem.

^e Idem.

^f Idem.

C. Side events and exhibitions

<i>Registration format</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Deadline for submission</i>
Completed registration forms for side events	Via e-mail (or other means to be determined) to the host country secretariat	15 January 2016