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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Committee on Environmental Policy

#### Twenty-first session

Geneva, 27–30 October 2015

## Report of the Committee on Environmental Policy on its twenty-first session

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## I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Environmental Policy held its twenty-first session from 27 to 30 October 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. The present report is based on a summary of the session's outcomes and the decisions taken, which the Committee approved on 30 October 2015.<sup>1</sup>

### A. Attendance

2. Delegations from 39 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) attended the meeting: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, United States of America and Uzbekistan. A delegation from Morocco also participated.

3. The Chairs or Vice-Chairs of the following ECE multilateral environmental agreements participated in the session: the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention); the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention); the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention); the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention); the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention); the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers; and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment.

4. From the United Nations system, representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Europe and the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe were present.

5. Other national, regional and international organizations and bodies were represented at the meeting, including: the European Commission; the European Environment Agency; the European Investment Bank; the European Union; the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea; the German Agency for International Cooperation; the Green Growth Knowledge Platform; the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus; the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe; and the Regional Environmental Centre Moldova.

6. In addition, representatives of the following environmental civil society associations participated: Eco-Accord; European ECO Forum; the European Environmental Bureau; the Health and Environment Alliance; and Zoï Environment Network.

### B. Opening of the session and organizational matters

7. In an opening address, the Acting Director of the ECE Environment Division underscored the Committee's role in enhancing environmental governance across the

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<sup>1</sup> Meeting documents and other information on the session, including the summary of decisions, are available on the web page for the session (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38470>).

region. In particular, it was hoped that the work of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016) would provide a valuable contribution to improving the environment in the pan-European<sup>2</sup> region and beyond.

8. The Committee Chair welcomed participants, recalled the main objectives of the session and noted that the meeting was a paperless event.

9. Two side events were organized: “the European Environment — state and outlook 2015 (SOER 2015)”, organized by the European Environment Agency on 27 October; and “Green Economy Knowledge for the Pan-European Region and Beyond”, organized jointly by the Green Growth Knowledge Platform, ECE and UNEP on 28 October.

10. The Committee adopted the agenda of its twenty-first session (ECE/CEP/2015/1), along with the proposed timetable (information paper No. 1/Rev.2).

11. At the end of the meeting, the Committee elected the Chair and Vice-Chairs (see para. 111 below).

## **II. Outcomes of the work of the Bureau**

12. The Chair presented the report of the Bureau on the outcomes of its work from November 2014 to July 2015 (ECE/CEP/2015/3), in particular with regard to:

- (a) Preparing the twenty-first session of the Committee, including the reports and documents necessary for the Committee’s work at the session;
- (b) Advancing preparations for the Batumi Ministerial Conference;
- (c) Further developing the Committee’s rules of procedure.

13. The Committee expressed appreciation to the Bureau for its good work, and for efficiently fulfilling the mandates assigned to it by the Committee, and to the ECE secretariat for the efficient and high-quality support provided to the Bureau.

## **III. Sustainable development in the region**

14. The Principal Adviser to the ECE Executive Secretary, in her capacity as ECE focal point for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), presented the recent developments in the ECE region in that regard. The sixty-sixth session of ECE (Geneva, 14–16 April 2015)<sup>3</sup> had been held under the overall theme “committing to action on sustainable development in times of change”, and its outcomes — in particular, the high-level statement on the post-2015 development agenda and expected sustainable development goals in the ECE region (E/ECE/1475) — constituted the regional contribution to the third meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (New York, 26 June–8 July 2015).

15. Furthermore, she reported on the ongoing discussions to identify the role of the regional commissions, and specifically ECE, in supporting countries’ efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. ECE would assist countries to translate the Goals into concrete measures by: facilitating the development and implementation of norms, standards, guidelines and legal instruments; providing a platform for sharing experiences

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<sup>2</sup> The pan-European region under the Environment for Europe process covers all 56 ECE member States.

<sup>3</sup> Information and documents are available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35851>.

and good practices; and providing capacity development to support the implementation process.

16. ECE was in the process of assessing its activities with a view to aligning them to the relevant Goals and targets. The ECE focal point highlighted the key role of data and statistics in turning the global goals into action, and also the performance reviews (such as environmental performance reviews, innovation performance reviews and review mechanisms under Conventions) in the follow-up and review process. The ECE regional platform aimed to serve as a “docking station” that brought together different actors and mechanisms, and as a bridge between national and global reviews, if the ECE member States decided on such a mandate. In that regard, ECE was preparing a survey<sup>4</sup> of member States, asking them to identify national plans for taking the first steps towards implementing the 2030 Agenda.

17. In the ensuing discussion, delegations considered the role of the Committee on Environmental Policy and the Environment for Europe process in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and supporting countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It was proposed that the Committee should continue to ensure the advancement of the environmental dimension of the Goals. Some delegations suggested that the Committee could provide a good platform to review progress in achieving relevant Goals on a voluntary basis. In that regard, the role of data and statistics was emphasized as was the need to enhance cooperation with partners, such as the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data<sup>5</sup> and the Group on Earth Observations,<sup>6</sup> and to promote the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting.<sup>7</sup> Also, an effective cooperation mechanism was essential to avoid overlap in the activities or the duplication of efforts to reach the Goals.

18. The Committee took note of the developments in ECE activities regarding the 2030 Agenda, and invited countries to consider the Committee’s role in implementing the 2030 Agenda and to continue to discuss the matter at future meetings.

#### **IV. Multilateral environmental agreements**

19. Opening the discussion on the multilateral environmental agreements, the Chair of the Water Convention presented the key outcomes of the informal meeting between the representatives of the governing bodies of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements and the Committee on Environmental Policy held on 26 October 2015 in Geneva. At the meeting, participants had decided to request the secretariat to prepare an information paper for submission to the Batumi Conference mapping how the multilateral environmental agreements supported the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The draft would be submitted to the Committee for consideration at its next preparatory meeting.<sup>8</sup>

20. The Water Convention Chair presented the results of an informal survey circulated to the Committee to identify how important the ECE multilateral environmental agreements were, collectively, in addressing some of the cross-cutting enabling conditions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The main findings were the following:

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42256>.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.data4sdgs.org>.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.earthobservations.org/index.php>.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/seea.asp>.

<sup>8</sup> For more information on the informal process, see <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/joint-work-and-informal-networks>.

(a) All the ECE environmental treaties offered intergovernmental forums in which to discuss challenges to the achievement of the Goals, with the Aarhus Convention going further by requiring its Parties to promote the principles of the Convention in other international processes relating to the environment. All sought a broad range of partnerships, both internationally and at the national level, to support implementation. Most if not all of the agreements addressed issues at the intersection of the different Goals;

(b) The water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus methodology under the Water Convention and strategic environmental assessment, which could be applied equally at the policy and regulatory levels, were valuable tools for policy coherence and integration. They could be used to ensure that progress on one target did not compromise progress on the remaining 168. Similarly, work on transboundary cooperation should help to ensure that development in one country did not come at the cost of development in another, something the Espoo Convention did every day. The work on National Policy Dialogues under the Water Convention had shown how coordination could be strengthened, and how partnerships established at the national level could serve as a forum for developing coherent domestic policies and regulations;

(c) Almost all the ECE environmental agreements had some form of reporting, with several requiring more precise monitoring — especially the Air Convention and the Protocols on Water and Health and on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. The agreements offered reviews of implementation, and opportunities for peer learning through the exchange of experiences and lessons learned at the regional and subregional levels. Numerous workplan activities supported implementation and capacity development, including actions on the ground that contributed towards the achievement of the Goals — for example, the Industrial Accidents Convention’s fieldwork on hazard and crisis management.

21. In an interactive discussion, the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements and Committee members shared their views on the following two questions:

(a) How could the ECE multilateral environmental agreements, through their experience in implementation, facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by countries?;

(b) Could the Committee contribute to that role?

22. Information paper No. 10, prepared by the secretariat, facilitated the discussion.

23. The Committee welcomed the interactive discussion held on the ECE multilateral environmental agreements, expressed appreciation to the Chairs of ECE multilateral environmental agreements for their contributions, and took note of the information provided with regard to how the agreements, through their experience in implementation, could facilitate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by countries, and:

(a) Recognized that ECE multilateral environmental agreements could play an important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(b) Underlined the importance of using the existing tools, including multilateral environmental agreements and environmental performance reviews, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and, at the same time, considering the need to adjust multilateral environmental agreements and environmental performance review activities in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(c) Recognized national implementation reporting under the ECE multilateral environmental agreements as a valuable tool for monitoring implementation of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals, and underlined the opportunity to align reporting with the

Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and the future indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) Underlined that cooperation between relevant sectors, including effective engagement of stakeholders, was key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(e) Acknowledged that national-level interdepartmental coordination between all (not just ECE) multilateral environmental agreement national focal points would enhance both national implementation and multilateral activities;

(f) Called for the strengthening of interlinkages within the Environment subprogramme and for better cooperation across ECE, and specifically with the Statistics subprogramme, with regard to implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(g) Recognized the need to promote synergies between the ECE multilateral environmental agreements and to identify points of convergence, while respecting the respective mandates of the different instruments;

(h) Agreed that the Committee should make more efforts to ensure adequate coordination and political support for the implementation of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements, and to promote the expansion of their membership;

(i) Recognized the importance of cooperation with other United Nations regional commissions, as well as other international organizations, with a view to ensuring synergies;

(j) Agreed to promote further interlinkages between the environmental performance review recommendations and the ECE multilateral environmental agreements;

(k) Took note of the recent developments under the informal joint meetings between the representatives of the governing bodies of ECE multilateral environmental agreements and the Committee, and encouraged the continuation of such coordination;

(l) Noted the request emanating from the informal joint meeting on 26 October 2015, and asked the secretariat to respond by preparing an information note for the Batumi Ministerial Conference based on the secretariat's internal mapping of Environment subprogramme processes and activities that might support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(m) Took note of concerns expressed regarding the financial resources for the multilateral environmental agreements;

(n) Recognized the need to anticipate and address in advance resource implications when considering amending multilateral environmental agreements to open them to membership beyond the ECE region.

## V. The Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

24. At its twentieth session the Committee had agreed on the two themes for the Batumi Ministerial Conference — greening the economy in the pan-European region; and improving air quality for a better environment and human health — and had adopted organizational procedures for the Conference (see ECE/CEP/2014/15).

25. At its current session, the Committee worked on a number of Conference-related issues or activities with a view to advancing the preparations. It also provided guidance on follow-up work to be undertaken by the Bureau, the secretariat and partners.

26. The Committee appreciated the progress made in organizing the Conference.

27. After considering all the issues (see subsections A–J below), the Committee invited the Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to continue with the preparation of the Batumi Conference, including preparing for the Committee's next session the documents requested, as well as any other documents that might be recommended by the Bureau. The Committee also invited UNEP and other stakeholders to contribute to the preparation of the Batumi Conference.

#### **A. Host country preparations**

28. A representative of Georgia informed participants about developments and concrete steps taken to organize the Conference in Batumi.<sup>9</sup> One remaining challenge was the timely release of the necessary budget for the Conference's organization. The ECE secretariat presented the outcomes of its first mission to Georgia to coordinate organizational issues, inspect the Conference venues and facilities, and see the proposed accommodation options for the delegates.

29. The Committee welcomed the preparations by Georgia for hosting the Conference, and invited interested countries to consider supporting the host country in the organization of the event.

#### **B. Greening the economy**

30. Representatives of the ECE secretariat and UNEP presented the draft thematic document on greening the economy in the pan-European region (ECE/CEP/2015/L.2) and the draft Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy in the Pan-European Region (ECE/CEP/2015/L.4). Both documents had been prepared by ECE and UNEP in consultation with other organizations.

31. In the ensuing discussion, delegates reviewed the two documents, deliberated on the issue of greening the economy, and provided comments to guide revisions of the drafts for consideration by the Committee at its next session.

32. The Committee welcomed the documents prepared under the greening the economy theme (ECE/CEP/2015/L.2 and ECE/CEP/2015/L.4), and the fruitful cooperation between ECE and UNEP, with the engagement of other partners including OECD and the European Environment Agency, in developing them, and:

(a) Invited Committee members and observers to submit to the secretariat by 15 November 2015 possible additional comments to the thematic background document, and requested ECE and UNEP to revise the document for the Committee's special session in February 2016;

(b) Generally agreed with the strategic part of the draft Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy, and invited Committee members and observers to submit to the secretariat possible additional comments by 15 November 2015;

(c) Invited Committee members and observers to submit to the secretariat comments to the proposed voluntary actions to green the economy, which were annexed to the draft Strategic Framework, by 15 November 2015;

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<sup>9</sup> The presentation by the host country is available on the ECE website at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38470>.

(d) Welcomed the proposal by Switzerland to advance the development of the proposed voluntary actions to green the economy, taking into account comments received, and invited Committee members and observers to express their interest to the secretariat by 15 November 2015 if they wished to join a group of experts in greening the economy that would work by electronic means under the leadership of Switzerland, with support from the ECE secretariat and UNEP. Also, entrusted Switzerland to form and convene the group of experts to prepare a revised draft of voluntary actions to green the economy for the Committee's special session in February 2016;

(e) Took note of the information provided by the OECD Environmental Action Programme Task Force secretariat on the ongoing work;

(f) Expressed appreciation to ECE, UNEP and the Green Growth Knowledge Platform for organizing a side event on green economy knowledge for the pan-European region and beyond, in particular to support discussions on modalities to integrate the proposed voluntary actions to green the economy into existing knowledge platforms, such as the Green Growth Knowledge Platform.

### **C. Cleaning the air**

33. The secretariat presented the draft thematic document on improving air quality for a better environment and human health (ECE/CEP/2015/L.3) prepared by the secretariat in consultation with partners. The Air Convention Chair introduced a first draft of the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (ECE/CEP/2015/L.5), prepared by the Bureau of the Air Convention, and reported on progress in preparing a regional scientific assessment report, including a summary for policymakers, which could be used as additional background information to facilitate discussions in Batumi.

34. In the ensuing discussion, delegates considered the two documents, deliberated on the issue of cleaning the air and provided comments to guide revisions of the drafts for the Committee's consideration at its next session.

35. The Committee welcomed the documents prepared under the cleaning the air theme (ECE/CEP/2015/L.3 and ECE/CEP/2015/L.5) and the active participation of the Bureau of the ECE Air Convention, as well as the engagement of other partners, in developing them, and:

(a) Invited Committee members and observers, together with the members of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, to submit to the secretariat by 15 November 2015 possible additional comments to the thematic background document, and requested the secretariat to revise the document for the Committee's special session in February 2016;

(b) Welcomed the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air initiative drafted by the Air Convention Bureau, which could serve as one of the relevant instruments to implement the Conference outcomes on clean air, and invited Committee members and observers, together with the members of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, to submit to the Air Convention Bureau, through the secretariat, any additional comments to the draft initiative by 15 November 2015. Also, it invited the Air Convention Bureau to submit an updated draft of the initiative to the Committee at its special session in February 2016.

## D. Learning together

36. The secretariat summarized the main outcomes of the tenth meeting of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (Geneva, 8–9 June 2015) related to the preparation of a segment on education for sustainable development at Batumi, to be organized in the format of a High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries.<sup>10</sup> The work was advancing well on preparing the format, substance and outcomes of the Batumi segment. In particular, the Steering Committee had worked on the draft future implementation framework for the Strategy and the draft Batumi Statement on Education for Sustainable Development, which would be submitted to the high-level meeting in Batumi for adoption.

37. The Committee took note of the information provided, welcomed progress in preparing the segment on education for sustainable development at the Batumi Ministerial Conference, and invited the secretariat to provide an update on preparations at the Committee's special session in February 2016.

## E. Developing the Shared Environmental Information System and establishing a regular environmental assessment in the pan-European region

38. A representative of the ECE Environment Division presented the results of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in evaluating progress in developing SEIS across the pan-European region, together with the main outcomes of the three Working Group meetings that had been held since the Committee's twentieth meeting.<sup>11</sup>

39. A representative of the ECE Statistical Division gave a presentation on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting, highlighting its importance, and the main outcomes of the ECE and OECD joint seminar on the implementation of system (Geneva, 14–15 October 2015).<sup>12</sup>

40. A representative of the UNEP Regional Office for Europe reported on the preparations for the European regional assessment of the Sixth Global Environmental Outlook, including the outcomes of the European Regional Environmental Information Network conference (Istanbul, 13–15 April 2015), which had been organized back to back to the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment's sixteenth meeting (Istanbul, 16–17 April 2015).

41. The Group of Friends of SEIS completed its mandate by preparing a document on the proposed shape and organization of the regular assessment process based on SEIS for the Committee's further consideration and approval. The Group had also submitted a report to the Committee on its activities for the period of November 2014–July 2015 (ECE/CEP/2015/9).

42. The Committee welcomed the documents prepared for the establishment of a regular environmental assessment process in the pan-European region based on SEIS and the active engagement of all the relevant partners in developing them, and:

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<sup>10</sup> More information is available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38322>.

<sup>11</sup> Meeting documents are available from <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/environmental-monitoring-and-assessment/meetings-and-events>.

<sup>12</sup> Further information on the seminar is available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=37910>.

(a) Appreciated the work of the Group of Friends of SEIS and approved the proposed organization and shape of the regular environmental assessment process based on SEIS (ECE/CEP/2015/10);

(b) Welcomed the information provided on the preparation of the European regional assessment of the Sixth Global Environmental Outlook and agreed to launch it as the regional environmental assessment at the Batumi Conference. In that regard, also expressed its wish to be involved in peer reviewing the draft of the assessment and expressed concern about the timing for commenting on the draft assessment;

(c) Also welcomed the work of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in assessing the progress in developing SEIS across the pan-European region (ECE/CEP/2015/11), and mandated the Working Group to work with the countries and the European Environment Agency to validate the data and information and continue to monitor progress in developing SEIS with a view to submitting an updated report to the Committee at its special session in February 2016;

(d) Expressed appreciation to the European Environment Agency for organizing a side event on “the European Environment — state and outlook 2015 (SOER 2015)”, in particular to support discussions on the organization and shape of a regular environmental assessment process in the pan-European region.

## **F. Proposed outcomes of the Conference**

43. The Chair of the Committee recalled the provisions of the Environment for Europe Reform Plan regarding possible outcomes for Environment for Europe conferences, which provided for an agreed outcome document of no more than two pages on follow-up and further actions, strictly limited in terms of scope to the themes of the conference. The Committee considered possible outcomes of the Batumi Conference contained in an overview prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau, based on inputs provided by partners.

44. The Committee welcomed the document presenting the proposed outcomes for the Conference (ECE/CEP/2015/8), and:

(a) Took note of the proposed initiatives and contributions for the Batumi Conference, and invited stakeholders to finalize their proposals in time for submission to the Committee’s special session in February 2016;

(b) Approved the general framework and structure of the proposed elements for the draft ministerial declaration, as contained in the annex to document ECE/CEP/2015/8;

(c) Invited its Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to prepare a first draft of the ministerial declaration, based on comments received by 25 November 2015 from Committee members and observers, and to submit it to the Committee at its special session in February 2016.

## **G. Draft agenda for the Conference**

45. The Committee considered the first draft of the provisional annotated agenda for the Batumi Conference, prepared by the Bureau with support from the secretariat. In considering the Conference agenda, the Committee also looked into different options for interactive formats. Furthermore, a representative of the European ECO Forum presented a proposal for a round-table discussion between ministers and NGOs on greening the economy in the pan-European region, with a focus on issues related to trade.

46. The Committee welcomed the draft provisional agenda for the Batumi Conference (ECE/CEP/2015/L.1) and the document presenting formats for interactive discussion (ECE/CEP/2015/14), and:

(a) Approved the framework for the Conference as presented in the annex to the draft agenda;

(b) Invited its Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant partners, to further develop the Conference agenda and the options for the format of the Conference sessions, and to submit a note thereon to the Committee for consideration at its special session in February 2016;

(c) Welcomed the proposal by the European ECO Forum to organize a round-table discussion between ministers and NGOs on the green economy theme, and invited the Bureau to work in close consultation with the European ECO Forum on adapting the proposal to the set of questions for discussion under that theme.

## **H. Communication plan for the Conference**

47. The Chair of the Committee recalled the provisions of the Environment for Europe Reform Plan regarding the development of an effective communication strategy, including broad mass media coverage, as appropriate, and informed the Committee that a communication plan for the Batumi Conference had been prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the host country.

48. The Committee welcomed and approved the communication plan for the Batumi Conference (ECE/CEP/2015/13), including using the short slogan “Greener, Cleaner, Smarter!”, and:

(a) Invited countries and other Environment for Europe stakeholders to actively promote the Conference and participate in the communication activities for the Conference;

(b) Also invited interested countries and organizations to provide in-kind and financial support for some of the communication activities, such as organizing the workshop for journalists and the provision of daily news bulletins by the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

## **J. Resource requirements for preparing the Conference**

49. The Secretary to the Committee on Environmental Policy presented an updated overview of resource requirements needed by the secretariat for organizing the Batumi Conference. In addition, the representative of Georgia informed the Committee about resources allocated for hosting the Conference and also some challenges in ensuring their timely release to ensure a smooth preparatory process.

50. The Committee took note of the information on the resource requirements for the Conference (information paper No. 2), as well as the information on the resources provided by the host country, and:

(a) Noted that, in accordance with the Bureau’s recommendation, the secretariat had sent official fundraising letters to 55 ministers of environment before the Committee’s twenty-first session through the permanent missions to the United Nations at Geneva, and requested that a master copy be circulated by e-mail to the Committee;

(b) Invited countries and other stakeholders to consider the need for resource mobilization to assist both the host country and the secretariat in preparing for the

Conference, and in that regard expressed gratitude to Norway for its financial contribution and to Switzerland for its pledge at the session to support secretariat activities under the Environment for Europe process, and asked the host country and the secretariat to keep the Committee and its Bureau informed about progress in funding the Conference preparations.

## VI. Environmental performance reviews

51. The Secretary of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews presented an overview of the activities carried out during 2015. The third reviews of Georgia and Belarus had been completed, and the review mission for the third review of Tajikistan was being prepared for 9 to 18 November 2015. The third reviews of Montenegro and Serbia had been published and launched. In addition, a side event had been organized in July 2015 in New York, on the margins of the third high-level political forum on sustainable development, to present the 20 years of experience of ECE in using peer-review mechanisms to improve policies and policy implementation.

52. Presenting planned activities for 2016, the Expert Group Secretary said the work on the third review of Tajikistan would continue and the third review of Bulgaria would be undertaken. In addition, requests for a third review had been received from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The third review of Georgia would be launched in Batumi on the margins of the Ministerial Conference, and a side event would be held to celebrate 20 years of the ECE Environmental Performance Review Programme.

53. The Expert Group Secretary also wished to acknowledge the contributions, expertise and training provided by countries and partner organizations for activities under the ECE Environmental Performance Review Programme, including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, UNEP, WHO, the Joint UNEP/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Environment Unit and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The in-kind contribution of countries whose representatives participated in the Expert Group — e.g., Belarus, Estonia, Hungary, Georgia, Germany, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Sweden, Switzerland and Uzbekistan — was also highly appreciated.

54. The Committee welcomed the information provided on activities under the Environmental Performance Review Programme, acknowledged the Environmental Performance Reviews as a flagship programme of ECE, and expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for the excellent work in support of the Environmental Performance Review Programme.

55. Furthermore, the Committee took note of the information provided by the secretariat on resource mobilization for the Environmental Performance Review Programme in 2015 and in particular thanked:

(a) Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland for their financial support;

(b) Finland, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, UNEP, the Joint UNEP/United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Environment Unit and WHO for providing expertise;

(c) UNDP for logistical support;

(d) Belgium and Portugal for providing training to the Environmental Performance Review Programme secretariat.

56. In addition, the Committee welcomed the ongoing third Environmental Performance Review of Tajikistan, as well as requests from Bulgaria, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to

undergo a third Environmental Performance Review. The Committee also welcomed the offer of Bosnia and Herzegovina to undergo a third review in 2017–2018.

57. Regarding preparations for the Batumi Conference, the Committee requested the secretariat to develop and publish a review of lessons learned in implementation of Environmental Performance Review Programme recommendations and to analyse the impact of the implementation of recommended national policies, strategies and initiatives on the state of the environment in the countries reviewed. In that regard, the Committee welcomed the cooperation with UNEP to prepare such a document for the Batumi Conference.

58. The Committee appreciated greatly the work of the ECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews in 2015 and invited delegations to nominate their representatives to the Group.

59. The Committee encouraged delegations to provide in-kind (expert) and financial support to the Environmental Performance Review Programme.

60. Subsequently, the Committee proceeded with the peer review of the environmental performance of Georgia and of Belarus.

61. The rapporteur for the review (Sweden) summarized the main findings and recommendations of the third Environmental Performance Review of Georgia, conducted by the Expert Group in Geneva on 13 and 14 October 2015. Since the second review in 2010, Georgia had improved its performance in protected areas and in phasing out ozone-depleting substances. Addressing air and water pollution and waste management remained among the main challenges to be tackled.

62. The Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia presented the main developments and underlying conditions influencing national environmental performance, such as the political and institutional changes that had taken place and their budgetary implications. She highlighted policies and activities supporting integration of environmental concerns into other policy areas. The third review would help the country to advance and improve its environmental performance.

63. Following a discussion on the review, the Committee adopted the recommendations in the third Environmental Performance Review of Georgia (information paper No. 3).

64. The rapporteur for the review (Switzerland) summarized the main findings and recommendations of the third Environmental Performance Review of Belarus, conducted by the Expert Group in Geneva on 12 and 13 October 2015. Since the second review in 2005, Belarus had made progress on air protection, water management and biodiversity conservation. The remaining challenges included the need to rehabilitate industrial waste sites and to improve conditions for public participation in environmental decision-making.

65. The First Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus highlighted that almost all the recommendations of the previous two reviews had been implemented. Regarding the third review, she emphasized the complexity of integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions in developing the national economy with a view to achieving sustainable development; the country was making a particular effort to embrace a green economy approach. In addition, activities had been carried out to improve environmental monitoring and data production to support informed decision-making. The review was an important assessment tool, providing the objective opinion of international experts to aid national efforts to protect the environment.

66. Following a discussion on the review, the Committee adopted the recommendations in the third Environmental Performance Review of Belarus (information paper No. 4).

67. Representatives of Albania and Morocco then reported on the implementation of recommendations of their reviews, carried out in 2012 and 2013, respectively. Albania had continued its work on improving, enforcing and implementing its environmental legislation and policy, and approximating it to the relevant European Union directives. In Morocco, efforts had focused on enhancing and enforcing the environmental legislative and policy framework, including by supplementing it with additional necessary regulations and policies. Also, a special effort had been made to integrate environmental concerns into other sectoral policies, such as energy and industry.

68. The Committee welcomed the information provided by Albania and Morocco on the implementation of recommendations contained in their Environmental Performance Reviews, conducted in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

69. As part of the discussions on environmental performance reviews, a round-table discussion was held on the theme of improving air quality with a focus on the energy and transport sectors. The round table was moderated by the ECE Executive Secretary. The Deputy Ministers of Belarus and Georgia and the International Policy Adviser of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment of the Netherlands participated as panellists. In addition, the Acting Director of the Environment Division, the Director of the Sustainable Energy Division and the Deputy Director of the Transport Division participated in the round-table discussions.

70. The Committee welcomed the information provided during the high-level round table, “Addressing air quality — working across the environment, transport and energy sectors: 2015 Environmental Performance Reviews of Belarus, Georgia and the Netherlands”, and expressed appreciation to the panellists for their contributions, and:

(a) Acknowledged the importance of the effective cooperation between the environment, transport and energy sectors for improving air quality;

(b) Also acknowledged the importance of intersectoral cooperation to ensure an integrated approach for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular those related to air quality;

(c) Recognized the importance of environmental performance reviews as a mechanism for review, exchange of experiences and transfer of good practices, which could be useful in reviewing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) Welcomed the information provided by Belarus and Georgia on their plans to join the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone to the ECE Air Convention by mid-2018 and by the end of 2019, respectively;

(e) Expressed appreciation for the contribution of the ECE Transport and Sustainable Energy Divisions to the preparation of the Environmental Performance Reviews of Georgia and Belarus and for their contributions to the round table.

## **VII. Cross-sectoral activities**

71. The Committee was informed about recent developments under a number of ongoing cross-sectoral activities undertaken under the leadership of ECE, or in partnership with other organizations.

### **A. Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme**

72. A representative of the Environment Division presented highlights of activities carried out under the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE

PEP) since the Committee's twentieth session, including the main outcomes of the twelfth session of THE PEP Steering Committee (Geneva, 19–20 November 2014).<sup>13</sup>

73. Activities included advancing the practical application of implementation mechanisms, for example, the development by France and Serbia of national transport, health and environment action plans and step-by-step manuals for their implementation. THE PEP Partnerships had also progressed, with the establishment of the Austrian Partnership on Cycling Promotion, the development of an eco-driving course in Kaliningrad (Russian Federation), and the implementation of the second phase of the Partnership on Jobs in Green and Healthy Transport. The Russian Federation had hosted THE PEP Relay Race workshop in Irkutsk in September 2015. A concept for the operationalization of a new implementation mechanism, THE PEP Academy, was currently being developed.

74. In follow-up to the Fourth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (Paris, 14–16 April 2014), a proposal by France and the Russian Federation on modalities to implement Priority Goal 5 on the integration of THE PEP objectives into urban and spatial planning policies had been endorsed by the Steering Committee. The thirteenth meeting of the Steering Committee was under preparation and would be held in Geneva on 18 November 2015. It would be preceded by THE PEP 2016 Symposium, which would focus on reducing transport-related emissions for a better environment and human health.

75. The Committee took note of information provided and welcomed the progress of work under THE PEP. The representative of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe expressed the Centre's interest in being involved in the work of THE PEP Academy.

## **B. Environment and security**

76. The Acting Director of the ECE Environment Division gave an overview of recent developments under the Environment and Security Initiative (information paper No. 5). One of five partners of the Initiative, ECE had carried out numerous activities in 2015 to assist countries in cooperating on the management of their shared natural resources.

77. In the ECE region, the Environment and Security Initiative had supported efforts in the areas of transboundary natural resources; hazardous substances and industrial installations; climate change adaptation; and public information and participation in decision-making. In the 12 years since its inception, more than 150 awareness-raising and capacity development projects had been implemented, costing over US\$ 60 million and benefiting some 170 million people. Key results included strengthened regional cooperation on the management of 13 transboundary water basins and increased awareness of environmental issues, through the establishment of 50 Aarhus Centres.

78. ECE activities under the Initiative's umbrella included projects and capacity development to promote the ECE multilateral environmental agreements. Under the Water Convention, projects had been carried out on climate change adaptation and transboundary cooperation at the basin level and on capacity development for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia. Efforts had also been undertaken to promote the ratification of the Convention by Georgia and to develop an agreement between Georgia and Azerbaijan on transboundary watercourses management.

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<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=36755>.

79. The implementation of Espoo Convention had been strengthened in the Caucasus and a legislative review and post-project analysis for the Khotislavskoye quarry in Belarus and Ukraine had been implemented. Under the Industrial Accidents Convention, capacity development on the preparation of safety reports had been carried out in Croatia, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and a comparative analysis had been undertaken of the hazard and crisis management legislation, policy and institutions in the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine.

80. The Aarhus Convention had been promoted through a project to strengthen institutional capacity and integrate the provisions of the Convention into national legislation in Belarus. In addition, a project to strengthen public access to justice in environmental matters had been carried out in South-Eastern Europe. A number of Aarhus Centres had also been established and supported by other Environment and Security Initiative Partners, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

81. The Director of the UNEP Regional Office for Europe also reported on developments in 2015 under the Initiative under the chairmanship of UNEP.

82. The Committee took note of and welcomed information provided with regard to the Environment and Security Initiative.

### C. European Environment and Health Process

83. The representative of the WHO Regional Office for Europe presented the outcomes of the Mid-term Review of the European Environment and Health Process (Haifa, Israel, 28–30 April 2015), which had gathered together representatives from 37 countries and 9 stakeholder organizations. In addition to progress reports on the European Environment and Health Process (EUR/RC65/18 and EUR/RC65/11), six thematic publications had been prepared for the review.<sup>14</sup>

84. The main outcomes of the review, which would guide the preparation of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (2017), included the following: (a) completing the Parma commitments; (b) reviewing environment and health in the context of the twenty-first century; (c) clearly linking the process to the two strategic frameworks — Health 2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals; (d) committing to specific outcomes; and (e) ensuring that countries benefited directly from the regional process. The proposed themes for the next Conference focused on health and well-being, and covered air, water, energy, chemicals, food, waste, cities and climate change, environment and health security.

85. The Committee welcomed the information provided regarding developments under the European Environment and Health Process, including on the outcomes of the Mid-term Review in Haifa in April 2015, and:

(a) Took note of the progress reports on the European Environment and Health Process (EUR/RC65/18 and EUR/RC65/11);

(b) Agreed to allocate more time in the agenda of its twenty-second session to discussing progress in preparing the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (2017);

<sup>14</sup> For more information, see <http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/events/events/2015/04/ehp-mid-term-review>.

(c) Requested the secretariat to solicit interest from the 53 ECE member States also members of the WHO Regional Office for Europe in serving on the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board during the next term (2017–2018) by sending official letters in June 2016 to ministers of environment to seek their views in that regard.

#### **D. Green building**

86. The Secretary to the ECE Housing and Land Management Committee presented developments in the area of green building.<sup>15</sup> The activities on green, energy-efficient buildings had progressed well, including the organization of several regional and national workshops and the development of national action plans on sustainable housing and land management containing provisions on energy efficiency in buildings (Armenia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Tajikistan). An ECE Task Force on building codes and standards on energy efficiency in buildings was being established in 2016 in cooperation with the ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy. The Task Force's proposed activities included: mapping the energy efficiency standards for buildings and preparing gap analyses; preparing guidance materials; promoting partnerships; establishing a database of experts; and developing and organizing training programmes.

87. The representative of the ECE/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Forestry and Timber Section presented recent developments regarding the implementation and monitoring of the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy<sup>16</sup> — a policy tool to support countries in their efforts to green the forestry sector. Implementation of the Action Plan was progressing well, with 313 actions undertaken by countries during the period of December 2013–October 2015. Ten countries had participated in the first monitoring exercise of the Action Plan (Austria, Georgia, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom). Several countries had expressed their strong commitment to sustainable green building practices by developing national green building standards and resource efficiency programmes, promoting wooden construction and raising awareness through exhibitions and contests. Also, a study on promoting sustainable building materials and the implications on the use of wood in buildings had been developed to support monitoring and assessment of developments in green building, encourage innovative and traditional wood use in construction and encourage legislators and the general public to see wood as an “ecologically, economically and technically preferred” construction material.

88. The Committee took note of the activities of the ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management and the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry, in particular the progress of work on green building and greening the forestry sector.

### **VIII. Programme of work of the Environment subprogramme**

#### **A. Streamlining the work on environmental monitoring and assessment**

89. A representative of the Environment Division presented the options for streamlining the work of the two bodies responsible for environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting — the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (see ECE/CEP/2015/12). Furthermore, the secretariat

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<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.unece.org/housing/eestandardsinbuildings>.

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=37180&L=0>.

informed the Committee about the main outcomes of the work of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators carried out since October 2014.<sup>17</sup>

90. The main recommendations regarding the streamlining of the two bodies' work were to:

- (a) Accomplish the SEIS-related mandate with a strengthened Working Group serving as an environmental knowledge and assessment network for the entire ECE region;
- (b) Maintain the Joint Task Force as a platform for the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe to address their specific challenges in establishing the necessary environmental knowledge and dealing with environmental indicators, and to discuss interlinkages between environmental and economic considerations in the context of sustainable development and green economy, in partnership with the Conference of European Statisticians.

91. The Committee greatly appreciated the work of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, and adopted the renewed mandate and terms of reference for the Working Group, as presented in annex I to document ECE/CEP/2015/12, with the following amendments:

- (a) The mandate was renewed for one year, until the Committee's twenty-second session;
- (b) In paragraph 3 of annex I, two additional mandates were given to the Working Group, i.e.:
  - (i) To further develop the methods and technical means for monitoring environmental pollution (including automatic monitoring stations) used by national monitoring systems;
  - (ii) To serve as the regional environmental information and assessment network of networks, bringing together the UNEP Global Environment Outlook expert teams and the European Environment Agency's European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) to formulate the regional priorities and scope for the pan-European assessments. The Working Group would also link with thematic networks, including those under the ECE multilateral environmental agreements.

The Working Group requested the secretariat to submit the renewed mandate, as amended, to the ECE Executive Committee for approval.

92. In that regard, the Committee requested the secretariat to prepare for the Committee's twenty-second session an updated proposal for the terms of reference for the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment. The updated proposal should take into account the outcomes of the Batumi Conference and further consultations with Committee members and observers on possible additional activities to be carried out by the Working Group, including to report on activities pursued to increase cooperation with the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators with a view to enhancing the coordination of activities and streamlining and reinforcing the work on environmental monitoring and assessment.

93. The Committee also greatly appreciated the work of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators, and adopted the renewed mandate of the Task Force, including the new name "Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators", as presented

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<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/environmental-monitoring-and-assessment/meetings-and-events>.

in annex II to document ECE/CEP/2015/12, for two years until the Committee's twenty-third session in 2017, and requested the secretariat to submit the renewed mandate, as amended, in coordination with the Conference of the European Statisticians,<sup>18</sup> to the ECE Executive Committee for approval.

94. Furthermore, the Committee invited member States and organizations to provide in-kind and financial support to the environmental monitoring and assessment programme, and in particular thanked the European Union, Norway, the Russian Federation and Switzerland for their financial support, and also UNEP and the European Environment Agency for their substantive support to the programme.

## **B. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into environmental activities**

95. The secretariat reported on activities carried out in 2015 to raise awareness and promote gender mainstreaming in environmental activities. In the ensuing discussion, one delegation recalled the relevant provisions of the 2005 ECE Reform Plan (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1, para. 79),<sup>19</sup> stating that the ECE should pay particular attention to the gender dimension of development, as a priority cross-cutting theme, by identifying good practice in further mainstreaming gender issues in its various subprogrammes and activities, taking into account the economic areas addressed by the regional review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

96. The Committee took note of the information provided with respect to gender mainstreaming in environmental activities carried out by the Environment Division since the Committee's last session.

## **C. Performance assessment of the Environment subprogramme in 2014–2015 and performance plan for 2016–2017**

97. The Chair recalled the Committee's decision in 2014 to continue with the biennial performance assessment of the Environment subprogramme for another cycle, at least, and approved the biennial performance plan of the Environment subprogramme for 2014–2015. She informed delegates that based on the plan the secretariat had prepared an assessment of performance of the Environment subprogramme in 2014–2015, and invited the Committee to consider it for approval. Furthermore, she invited the Committee to consider for approval the performance plan of the Environment subprogramme for 2016–2017.

98. The Committee approved the biennial performance report of the Environment subprogramme for 2014–2015 (ECE/CEP/2015/6). It also approved the biennial performance plan of the Environment subprogramme for 2016–2017 (ECE/CEP/2015/5).

## **D. Programme of work and the list of publications of the Environment subprogramme for 2016–2017**

99. The Chair invited the Committee to consider for adoption the draft programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2016–2017, including the list of publications.

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<sup>18</sup> At its meeting on 21 and 22 October 2015, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians discussed the renewed terms of reference for the Joint Task Force (2016–2021). The Bureau supported the better alignment of the Task Force with the work on environmental accounting and approved the terms of reference for the Joint Task Force (ECE/CES/2016/15/Add.7).

<sup>19</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=24004>.

100. The Committee adopted the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2016–2017 (ECE/CEP/2015/4).

### **E. Proposed strategic framework of the Environment subprogramme for 2018–2019**

101. The Chair invited delegates to consider the proposed strategic framework of the Environment subprogramme for 2018–2019.

102. The Committee reviewed the proposed strategic framework of the Environment subprogramme for 2018–2019 (ECE/CEP/2015/7) and provided comments, in particular noting that, in paragraph 6, the wording “environmental democracy” should be replaced by “public participation”.

### **F. Overview of resources for environmental activities and criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events**

103. The Secretary to the Committee announced that he was unable to report on the status of resources of the Environment subprogramme for the biennium 2014–2015 at the present session, as requested, owing to the transition to the new United Nations “Umoja” enterprise resource planning system, which was being rolled out for ECE in November 2015.

104. The Committee requested the secretariat to provide information on the status of resources in the Environment subprogramme for the biennium 2014–2015 at the Committee’s special session in February 2016.

105. The Chair informed delegates that, at its June meeting, the Bureau had considered revised criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events. The Bureau had subsequently recommended submitting the criteria to the Committee as revised by the secretariat using the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita for 2013 unless in September 2015 the data on the GDP per capita for 2014 were available. At the end of September 2015, the data on GDP per capita had not been available for all countries with economies in transition in the ECE region, therefore the version considered by the Bureau in June 2015 had been submitted to the Committee for further consideration.

106. The Committee adopted the revised criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events, as included in information paper No. 7, and requested that the text be annexed to the report of the Committee’s twenty-first session (see annex).

## **IX. Presentation and exchange of views on the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly**

107. The Director of the UNEP Regional Office for Europe presented developments in the preparations for the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, to be held in Nairobi from 23 to 27 May 2016. The overarching theme of the session would be the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda. An interactive ministerial policy review on the topic “healthy environment — healthy people”, supported by a global thematic report, was planned. Participants would also discuss the Assembly’s role in the review framework for the 2030 Agenda, and a symposium would be held on mobilizing resources for sustainable investments.

108. The Committee welcomed the information provided on developments in preparing the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and invited the UNEP

Regional Office for Europe to continue informing the Committee about the preparations for that meeting, in particular at the Committee's special session in February 2016.

## **X. Rules of procedure**

109. The Chair reported that, as mandated by the Committee at its previous session, the Bureau with support from the secretariat had further revised the Committee's draft rules of procedure.

110. The Committee expressed appreciation to the Bureau and the secretariat for the work on the Committee's draft rules of procedure (ECE/CEP/2015/L.6), took note of the comments provided by delegations during the meeting, and decided to postpone the consideration of the draft rules of procedure until after the Batumi Conference, at the Committee's twenty-second session, on the basis of a revised proposal by the Bureau.

## **XI. Election of officers**

111. The Committee elected its Chair and Vice-Chairs, as follows:

*Chair:*

Ms. Elisabete Quintas da Silva (Portugal)

*Vice-Chairs:*

Ms. Martine Rohn Brossard (Switzerland)

Ms. Marie-Charlotte Delvaux (Belgium)

Mr. Nicolas Fairise (France)

Mr. Vladimir Ivlev (Russian Federation)

Mr. Alexander Mayer (United States of America)

Ms. Maria Nagornii (Republic of Moldova)

Ms. Gordana Petkovic (Serbia)

Mr. Lukáš Pokorný (Czechia)

Ms. Marina Philipiuk (Belarus)

Ms. Nino Tkhilava (Georgia)

Mr. Bulat Yessekin (Kazakhstan)

## **XII. Calendar of meetings**

112. The Chair presented the schedule of meetings of the Committee and its Bureau for the period until 2018.

113. The Committee approved the proposed schedule of Committee and Bureau meetings until 2018 (information paper No. 9), and agreed to organize the Committee's special session in Geneva from 23 to 25 February 2016, its special session in Batumi on 7 June 2016 and its twenty-second session in Geneva from 7 to 9 December 2016.

## **XIII. Other business**

114. The secretariat informed the Committee about a memorandum of understanding that had been concluded on 4 May 2015 between ECE and UNEP regarding cooperation on

environmental areas of mutual interest in accordance with mandates given by the member States.<sup>20</sup>

115. The Committee took note of the information provided on the Memorandum of Understanding between ECE and UNEP.

## **XV. Closure of the meeting**

116. Supported by the secretariat, the Chair compiled a summary of the outcomes of and decisions taken by the Committee at its twenty-first session, which was projected on the screen in the meeting room. Following a discussion, the draft summary was finalized and approved.<sup>21</sup>

117. The Committee requested the Bureau and the secretariat to follow up on the Committee's decisions, including by preparing the documents and reports necessary for the Committee's work at its sessions in 2016. Furthermore, the Committee expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for an excellent organization of the meeting.

118. The Chair informed the delegates that the report of the present meeting and the list of participants would be posted on the ECE website after the meeting. The Chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting.

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<sup>20</sup> Available on the ECE website from [http://www.unece.org/oes/mou/mou\\_toc](http://www.unece.org/oes/mou/mou_toc).

<sup>21</sup> The approved summary was circulated to the Committee by e-mail on Wednesday, 4 November 2015, and was also made available on the ECE website. The present report was prepared based on the approved summary. The text has been officially edited since adoption. Any changes are strictly editorial and do not affect the substance of the decisions.

## Annex

### Countries eligible for financial support to participate in meetings and events

1. For the purposes of this paper, “partial financial support” includes daily subsistence allowance (DSA) only; and “full financial support” includes DSA and travel expenses.
2. The lower threshold for financial support is US\$ 4,500. Representatives of member States with an annual GDP per capita below the lower threshold are entitled to full<sup>a</sup> financial support to participate in meetings and events to which the Committee on Environmental Policy decision applies.
3. The upper threshold for financial support is US\$ 5,500. Representatives of member States with an annual GDP per capita between the lower and upper thresholds are entitled to partial<sup>b</sup> financial support to participate in meetings and events to which the Committee on Environmental Policy decision applies. Other approaches may be applied under projects where donors have earmarked their contributions for a particular purpose.

#### List of countries eligible for financial support, showing category of assistance and gross domestic product per capita

<i>Country</i>	<i>GDP per capita, 2013 (US\$)<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Number of countries</i>
<i>Travel expenses and DSA</i>		
Tajikistan	1 036	
Kyrgyzstan	1 295	
Uzbekistan	1 962	
Republic of Moldova	2 244	
Armenia	3 460	
Georgia	3 597	
Ukraine	4 017	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4 232	
Albania	4 465	
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>9</b>
<i>DSA only</i>		
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	5 222	
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>

*Note:* Countries are listed in ascending order of GDP.

<sup>a</sup> Data source: Statistical Database of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Country GDP per capita in nominal United States dollars has been calculated by dividing the 2013 figure for “GDP per capita at current prices, NCUs” by the 2013 figure for “Exchange rate (XR), NCU per US\$”. Database was accessed on 12 October 2015.

<sup>a</sup> Travel expenses and DSA, subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources for this purpose.

<sup>b</sup> DSA only, subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources for this purpose.