



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Committee on Environmental Policy

#### Special session

Geneva, 23–25 February 2016

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

#### Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda

### Annotated provisional agenda for the special session

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on  
Tuesday, 23 February 2016\*

#### I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda.
2. Sustainable development in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region.
3. The Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference:
  - (a) Host country preparations;
  - (b) Official substantive documents;
  - (c) Developing the Shared Environmental Information System and keeping the pan-European environment under review — the European regional assessment of the Sixth Global Environmental Outlook;
  - (d) Assessment report under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution;

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\* There are accreditation procedures for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to complete the online registration form, available on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) website from [www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=gmgcog](http://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=gmgcog), no later than two weeks before the meeting. On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva's Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see map and other practical information available on the ECE website at <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 2682.



- (e) Astana Water Action;
  - (f) Draft provisional agenda;
  - (g) Proposed Conference outcomes;
  - (h) Communication activities;
  - (i) Resource requirements;
  - (j) Side events;
  - (k) Private sector involvement;
  - (l) Registration.
4. Programme of work of the Environment subprogramme: overview of resources for environmental activities.
  5. Presentation and exchange of views on the second United Nations Environment Assembly.
  6. Calendar of meetings.
  7. Other business.
  8. Closure of the meeting.

## **II. Annotations to the provisional agenda**

1. The Reform Plan of the Environment for Europe process (ECE/CEP/S/152, annex I, and Corr.1) adopted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy in 2009, and subsequently endorsed by ECE, mandated the Committee to act as the convening body for the preparatory processes for the Environment for Europe ministerial conferences. In accordance with the Reform Plan, which stipulates that special sessions of the Committee could be scheduled, if needed, in the year prior to the Conference, the Committee agreed at its twenty-first session in October 2015 to organize a special session in Geneva from 23 to 25 February 2016.

### **1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda**

2. The Chair will open the special session. The Committee will then be invited to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document (ECE/CEP/S/2016/1). The provisional time schedule is presented in information paper No. 1.<sup>1</sup>

### **2. Sustainable development in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region**

3. The secretariat will inform the Committee about the main developments at the regional level regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the planned contribution of the ECE region to the fourth meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (New York, 11–20 July 2016).

4. The Committee may wish to consider, as appropriate, the information provided.

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<sup>1</sup> Information and materials for the meeting are available on a dedicated web page on the ECE website ([www.unece.org/index.php?id=41720](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41720)).

### 3. The Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

5. At its twenty-first session in October 2015, the Committee invited its Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to continue with preparations for the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016). In that regard, the Committee requested the revision and development of a number of documents by the secretariat and relevant Environment for Europe partners so as to advance the preparations for the Conference.

6. The Committee will be invited to consider progress in preparing the Conference with regard to a number of issues and activities presented below, and to provide further guidance with a view to finalizing all the preparations in due time. The organizational procedures for the Conference, adopted by the Committee at its last session, are set out in document ECE/CEP/2014/15.<sup>2</sup>

#### (a) Host country preparations

7. At its twenty-first session, the Committee welcomed the preparations of Georgia for hosting the Conference, and invited interested countries to consider supporting the host country in the organization of the event.

8. The representative of Georgia will be invited to inform the Committee about developments in its preparations for the hosting of the Batumi Ministerial Conference.

9. The Committee on Environmental Policy will be invited to consider the information provided.

#### (b) Official substantive documents

10. In accordance with the Environment for Europe Reform Plan, two thematic substantive documents are being prepared for the Batumi Ministerial Conference on the Conference's two main themes: greening the economy in the pan-European region; and improving air quality for a better environment and human health. The Committee, at its previous session, welcomed draft versions of both documents and invited Committee members and observers to submit to the secretariat possible additional comments by 15 November, with a view to revising the drafts for consideration at the Committee's special session in February 2016.

11. The Committee will be invited to consider approving the drafts of these two documents (ECE/CEP/2016/S/L.2 and ECE/CEP/2016/S/L.3).

#### (c) Developing the Shared Environmental Information System and keeping the pan-European environment under review — the European regional assessment of the Sixth Global Environmental Outlook

12. At its October 2015 session, the Committee welcomed the work of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in assessing the progress in developing the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) across the pan-European region, and mandated the Working Group to work with the countries and the European Environment Agency (EEA) 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.

<sup>2</sup> The document is available on the ECE website from [www.unece.org/index.php?id=35032](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35032) (see documents table at the bottom of the web page, "official documents" tab, agenda item 10 (f)).

13. The Committee will be invited to consider the updated report on progress made in developing SEIS across the pan-European region (ECE/CEP/2016/S/L.9).

14. Furthermore, at its twenty-first session the Committee agreed to launch the European regional assessment of the Sixth Global Environmental Outlook as the regional environmental assessment at the Batumi Ministerial Conference. In that regard, the Committee 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.

15. The Committee will be briefed on progress in preparing the European regional assessment of the Sixth Global Environmental Outlook, and will be invited to consider the information provided, as appropriate.

**(d) Assessment report under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution**

16. The Chair of the Bureau of the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention) informed the Committee at its October meeting about the preparation of an assessment report under the Convention, including a summary for policymakers<sup>3</sup> that would be finalized in time for the Batumi Conference and could serve as a valuable additional resource to support the discussions under the air theme.

17. The Committee will be briefed about the progress in preparing the report and the summary for policymakers, and will be invited to consider the information provided, as appropriate.

**(e) Astana Water Action**

18. At its twentieth session, in October 2014, the Committee agreed with the Bureau recommendation that the Astana Water Action stakeholders should report to the Committee on progress in implementing actions at the Committee's special session in February 2016. In that regard, the Committee's Bureau, in consultation with the Bureau of the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of the Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), revised the template for the second and final reporting on the implementation of the Astana Water Action.

19. The secretariat, with the support of a consultant, prepared a draft progress report on the Astana Water Action based on the responses received from stakeholders (ECE/CEP/2016/S/L.8). In addition, following the Bureau's recommendation, the secretariat prepared a leaflet illustrating some of the Astana Water Action statistics and results with charts and diagrams.

20. The Committee will be invited to consider the draft report and the leaflet.

**(f) Draft provisional agenda**

21. At its twenty-first session, the Committee approved the framework for the Batumi Conference and 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.

22. At the same time, the Committee welcomed the proposal by the European ECO Forum to organize a round-table discussion between ministers and the non-governmental

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<sup>3</sup> A draft of the summary for policymakers is available on the website of the thirty-fourth session of the Executive Body of the Air Convention under the tab "informal documents" ([www.unece.org/index.php?id=38060](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38060)).

organizations (NGOs) under 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.

23. Concerning the segment on education for sustainable development (ESD) being prepared by the ECE Steering Committee on ESD, at its previous session the Committee invited the secretariat to provide an update on preparations at its special session.

24. The Committee will be invited to consider the updated draft agenda for the Conference (ECE/CEP/2016/S/L.1) with a view to approving it, as well as the draft organization of work (ECE/CEP/2016/S/L.7) of the Conference, with a view to agreeing on the proposed formats for the ministerial discussion. It will also be invited to take note of the information provided by the secretariat regarding the organization of the segment on ESD.

25. In addition, the secretariat prepared an information paper presenting an overview of documents being produced for the Batumi Conference (information paper No. 2), in accordance with the provisions of the Environment for Europe Reform Plan and the agreed organizational procedures for the Conference. The Committee will be invited to consider the list of documents.

**(g) Proposed Conference outcomes**

26. At its twenty-first session, the Committee approved the general framework and structure of the proposed elements for the draft ministerial declaration and 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.

27. The Committee will be invited to work on the draft ministerial declaration (ECE/CEP/2016/S/L.6) prepared by its Bureau with support from the secretariat, with a view to submitting it to the Batumi Conference for adoption.

28. Concerning other possible outcomes of the Conference, at its October 2015 meeting the Committee generally agreed the strategic part of the draft Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and invited Committee members and observers to submit additional comments by 15 November 2015. It also invited its members and observers to submit comments by the same deadline to the proposed actions to green the economy, and entrusted Switzerland to form and convene a group of experts to prepare a revised draft of actions to green the economy for the present special session.

29. The Committee will be invited to consider the revised draft of the Strategic Framework for prospective adoption at the Conference (ECE/CEP/2016/S/L.4), as well as the revised list of green economy actions (ECE/CEP/2016/S/L.10).

30. Also at its October session, the Committee welcomed the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air drafted by the Air Convention Bureau, which it agreed could serve as one of the relevant instruments to implement the Conference outcomes on clean air, and invited the Air Convention Bureau to submit an updated draft, taking into account comments by Committee members and observers as well as the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment.

31. The Committee will be invited to consider approving the revised draft of the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (ECE/CEP/2016/S/L.5) for submission to the Conference for endorsement.

32. Furthermore, at its previous meeting the Committee 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 February special session.

33. The Committee will be invited to consider any other proposals for similar initiatives and policy tools at both the regional and subregional levels that might be put forward by interested countries and partners. To facilitate the discussion, interested Environment for Europe actors should make available such initiatives in three languages (English, French and Russian) prior to the meeting.

**(h) Communication activities**

34. At its previous session, the Committee approved the communication plan for the Batumi Conference (ECE/CEP/2015/13), including using the short slogan “Greener, Cleaner, Smarter!”, and invited countries and other stakeholders to actively promote the Conference and participate in the communication activities for it. The Committee 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 providing International Institute for Sustainable Development daily news bulletins.

35. The Committee will be invited to consider progress in implementing the communication plan for the Conference. In particular, participants will be invited to identify innovative green activities for engaging the ministers and heads of delegations on the margins of the Conference.

**(i) Resource requirements**

36. Also at its October 2015 session, the Committee 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 asked the host country and the secretariat to keep the Committee and its Bureau informed about progress in funding the preparations.

37. The Committee will be invited to consider the resource requirements for the preparatory process and the Batumi Ministerial Conference (information paper No. 3), as well as ways to ensure smooth and efficient Conference preparations. Interested countries and organizations may inform the Committee of envisaged contributions for the preparation of the Conference.

**(j) Side events**

38. The agreed organizational procedures for the Batumi Conference include provisions for the organization of side events (ECE/CEP/2014/15, paras. 36–41).

39. The Committee will be invited to consider for information purposes the list of side events provided by the host country secretariat (information paper No. 4).

**(k) Private sector involvement**

40. The Environment for Europe Reform Plan calls for the engagement of the private sector, inter alia, through the possible organization of a session of private sector representatives and ministers in a round-table format as an integral part of the conference. In Astana this provision was addressed by allocating four places to the representatives of the private sector in each of the nine round tables. Participation of private sector representatives was incentivized by the host country organizing a business fair on the margins of the Conference.

41. The Committee will be invited to consider effective ways to engage the private sector representatives in the Batumi Conference, and to submit to the secretariat before the February session concrete suggestions for private sector representatives that would be interested in participating in the Conference. In that regard, the organizational procedures

for the Conference contain provisions inviting Governments to include representatives of non-governmental organizations and business in their national delegations, as appropriate.

**(1) Registration**

42. The Committee will be briefed on the status of the registration process for the Conference. Delegations are invited to register for the Conference as soon as possible and not later than the deadline of 29 February 2016. Provisions for the registration process and the forming of national and other delegations are set out in the organizational procedures for the Conference.

43. In particular, given that the registration will be done via an online registration form, which is similar to the online registration for the Committee meetings, the submission by the national focal point of the list of nominated delegates for the Conference to the ECE secretariat is crucial to enable the secretariat to validate the registrations.

**4. Programme of work of the Environment subprogramme: overview of resources for environmental activities**

44. The Committee, at its previous session, adopted the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2016–2017 (ECE/CEP/2015/4) and 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.

45. The Committee will be invited to consider, on the basis of information received in advance, the regular and extrabudgetary resources for activities relating to the Environment subprogramme (information paper No. 5 and addendum). Donor countries will be invited to pledge further contributions to the trust funds.

**5. Presentation and exchange of views on the second United Nations Environment Assembly**

46. At its twenty-first session, the Committee invited the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Europe to continue informing it about preparations for the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (Nairobi, 23–27 May 2016).

47. The Committee will be invited to consider information provided by UNEP and to exchange views on the second session of the Environment Assembly.

**6. Calendar of meetings**

48. At its previous session, the Committee approved the proposed schedule of its meetings until 2018 (information paper No. 9), and agreed on the dates of two special sessions — its present special session as well as a special session in Batumi on 7 June 2016 — as well as its twenty-second session in Geneva from 7 to 9 December 2016. An updated schedule of meetings until 2019 will be prepared for the Committee's consideration at its twenty-second session.

## **7. Other business**

49. The Committee will be invited to discuss any other business that might be brought to its attention. Delegations wishing to propose items are invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

## **8. Closure of the meeting**

50. The Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, will sum up the conclusions and decisions of the Committee and close the meeting. The report of the meeting and the list of participants will be finalized by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau for circulation to the Committee after the meeting. These documents will be posted on the meeting website.

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