



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited  
18 February 2016

Original: English

---

## Economic Commission for Europe

### Committee on Environmental Policy

#### Special session

Geneva, 23–25 February 2016

Item 3 (f) of the provisional agenda

**The Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference:  
draft provisional agenda**

## **Draft annotated provisional agenda for the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference**

**Note by the Bureau of the Committee with support from  
the secretariat\* \*\***

### *Summary*

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.

At its twenty-first session (Geneva, 27–30 October 2015), the Committee invited its Bureau to continue with the preparations for the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016). In particular, it invited its Bureau, with support from the ECE 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 session in February 2016 (see ECE/CEP/2015/2, forthcoming).

The present document was prepared by the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, in accordance with the above mandate. The proposed options for the format of the Conference session are included in a separate document presenting the organization of work of the Conference (ECE/CEP/S/2016/L.7). The Committee will be invited to consider the updated draft agenda for the Conference with a view to approving it.

---

\* This note was submitted on the above date owing to the need to consult with external partners.

\*\* This document was not formally edited.

## I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the Conference and adoption of the agenda.
2. [Getting the pan-European region ready for sustainable development] / [Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development]<sup>1</sup>:
  - (a) Multilateral environmental agreements, mechanisms, policies and institutions supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
  - (b) Keeping the pan-European environment under review.
3. Towards a new society: 10 years of education for sustainable development.
4. Greening the economy in the pan-European region.
5. Improving air quality for a better environment and human health.
6. Reporting on the outcomes of the thematic sessions.
7. Adoption of the Conference outcomes.
8. Closure of the Conference.

## II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. The Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference will be held in Batumi, Georgia, from 8 to 10 June 2016. The Conference is being organized in accordance with the provisions of the Reform Plan of the Environment for Europe process (ECE/CEP/S/152, annex I, and Corr.1). The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy is the convening body for the preparatory process. The organizational procedures for the Batumi Ministerial Conference presented in document ECE/CEP/2014/15, adopted by the Committee in 2014, serve to guide the preparations for the Conference.
2. The Batumi Ministerial Conference will conduct its work under the following slogan: “Greener, Cleaner, Smarter!”. The opening of the Conference could be preceded by a greening-the-Conference-related short interactive event for the heads of delegation, to be organized by the host country — e.g., walking or riding bicycles to the Conference venue. During the Conference there will be opportunities to network and organize bilateral meetings between ministers, including on topics that are not on the Conference agenda.
3. Documents and materials for the Conference will be made available on the ECE website dedicated to the Conference.<sup>2</sup> Other information related to the Conference, including the schedule of side events organized on the margins of the Conference, will be made available on the host country website.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> An alternative title for the agenda item 2 could be “Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, focused on the national level, subject to consideration and decision by the Committee.

<sup>2</sup> See [www.unecce.org/env/efe/batumi/welcome](http://www.unecce.org/env/efe/batumi/welcome).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://efebatumi.com/en/conference/batumi-ministerial-2016>.

## 1. Opening of the Conference and adoption of the agenda

*Wednesday, 8 June, 9–11 a.m.*

4. A high-level representative of Georgia will open the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference. Introductory remarks by the Chair of the Conference and welcoming speeches by high-level representatives of ECE and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will follow. A short opening event by the host country will be presented to the delegates. Also, a photograph of the heads of delegations will be taken during the opening session.

5. Delegates will be invited to adopt the agenda for the Eighth Environment for Europe Conference.

### Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda for the Conference (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/1)

Organization of work at the Conference (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/3)

List of documents and materials for the Conference (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/INF/1)

## 2. [Getting the pan-European region ready for sustainable development] / [Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development]<sup>4</sup>

### (a) Multilateral environmental agreements, mechanisms, policies and institutions supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

*Wednesday, 8 June, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.*

6. The session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of the Conference. Ministers will be invited to reflect upon the potential role of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), environmental performance reviews (EPRs), the Environmental Action Programme (EAP) Task Force, the Regional Environmental Centres (RECs) and other instruments in supporting countries' efforts and enhancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Also, the experience of the Astana Water Action (AWA) stakeholders in using this initiative since its launch in Astana in 2011 will be shared.

7. The session will be organized in the form of moderated interactive discussion between Ministers. High-level representatives of private sector and civil society will also be involved in the discussion. To facilitate the preparation for the discussion and the interaction during the session, Ministers will be invited to consider how will one or more of the above instruments be used to support efforts to achieve the SDG(s) at the national, transboundary, regional or global levels? Also, how does the instrument(s) strengthen integration and intersectoral cooperation? In that regard, Ministers will be invited to base their intervention on a concrete example of, as appropriate, a new action or initiative that illustrates how these instruments will be used to strengthen intersectoral cooperation to support achievement of the SDG(s).

8. The Ministers will be invited to reiterate their commitment to participating in and implementing these various instruments and processes. The session will conclude with a festive event to celebrate 20 years of successful implementation of the ECE EPR

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 1.

Programme, and looking forward to getting it ready to support the achievement of the SDGs.

#### **Documentation**

Final report on the implementation of the Astana Water Action: fostering progress towards improved water management (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/13)

Mapping of the Environment subprogramme processes and activities that support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/INF/3)

#### **(b) Keeping the pan-European environment under review**

*Wednesday, 8 June, 3–4.30 p.m.*

9. The session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of the Conference. Progress in developing the Shared Environmental Information Systems (SEIS) across the pan-European region and the establishment of a regular environmental assessment process to keep the pan-European environment under review will be discussed in response to the commitment made by ministers in Astana in 2011.

10. Delegates will consider key findings of the European regional component of the Sixth UNEP Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6). The session will be organized in the form of a moderated interactive discussion. To facilitate the interaction, a few questions for discussion will be prepared based on the key findings of the regional GEO-6.<sup>5</sup>

11. Ministers will be invited to renew their commitment to establishing a regular process of environmental assessment based on SEIS, also as an efficient tool to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### **Documentation**

Regular environmental assessment process based on the Shared Environmental Information System (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/9)

Report on progress in establishing the Shared Environmental Information System in support to regular reporting in the pan-European region (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/10)

European regional component of the Sixth Global Environment Outlook: Summary for policy-makers (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/11)

### **3. Towards a new society: 10 years of education for sustainable development**

*Wednesday, 8 June, 4.30–6 p.m.*

12. The High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries will open with introductory remarks by the co-Chairs of this segment dedicated to education for sustainable development (ESD). Delegates will consider progress achieved in ESD as a result of 10 years of implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD.

13. Ministers of education and environment will decide on the next steps to be taken to advance ESD in the region, as a contribution to the Global Action Programme on ESD as

---

<sup>5</sup> The key findings will be finalized by mid-April 2016.

well as to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>6</sup> The session will be organized in a plenary and interactive format.

14. The session will conclude with Ministers of education and the environment being invited to adopt the Batumi Ministerial Statement on ESD, including the Framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD.

#### **Documentation**

Draft Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/L.2)

Framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/15)

Learning from each other: achievements, challenges and ways forward. Third evaluation report of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/14)

Ten years of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/INF/8)

## **4. Greening the economy in the pan-European region**

*Thursday, 9 June, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.*

15. The session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of the first thematic segment, on greening the economy in the pan-European region. An opening video with testimonials on green economy will be screened. The meeting will be addressed by a prominent person highlighting the importance of green economy in practice. The Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy will be presented by the Chair of CEP as a tool to advance the transition to green economy in the region. Ministers will be invited to adopt<sup>7</sup> the Strategic Framework.

16. The Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E)<sup>8</sup> — an initiative comprising voluntary commitments by interested countries and organizations, both public and private, with a view to make operational the Strategic Framework — will be launched in a festive ceremony. Ministers will be invited to welcome the initiative and to invite countries and other stakeholders to implement their commitments and report progress to the Committee on Environmental Policy.

17. Following the plenary part, the Conference will break into two parallel sessions for interactive moderated discussions on greening the economy in the pan-European region. The discussions will be held in the form of a multistakeholder interaction around the table. Both sessions will focus their work on the same questions for discussion, organized in two consecutive parts. The first part will focus on discussing opportunities and challenges in greening the economy, and on identifying best paths to sustainability, including through green incentives in accordance with the set of questions listed under points (a)–(c) of

<sup>6</sup> The Steering Committee on ESD will discuss the organization of the session on ESD at its eleventh meeting (Geneva, 15–16 February 2016). The Batumi agenda item 3 will be updated accordingly. The Committee on Environmental Policy will be informed of the main outcomes of the Steering Committee's meeting.

<sup>7</sup> To adopt or endorse is subject to consideration and decision by the Committee at its special session in February 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Subject to consideration and decision by the Committee at its special session in February 2016.

paragraph 18 below. The second part will address the issue of cooperation guided by the set of questions under point (d) of paragraph 18. Each parallel session of the roundtable will address the same questions but, given the different participants involved, different perspectives may emerge in the discussions. The consolidated results of discussions will be presented on the last day of the Conference and will serve as input into the Chair's Summary of the Conference.

18. To facilitate the work of the Conference a background thematic document on greening the economy in the region has been prepared jointly by ECE and UNEP in consultation with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe), as well as with organizations participating in the Regional Coordination Mechanism. The European ECO Forum will play an important role in the organization of the multistakeholder roundtables. The questions prepared by the Committee to focus the discussion under this thematic segment are the following:

(a) **Opportunities and challenges:** What are the pressing challenges to greening the economy in your country? What positive effects on, e.g., employment, human well-being, prosperity and natural capital are evident after introducing green economy policies? Have trade-offs been taken into account in policymaking — e.g., in terms of the impact on employment, social equity and private investment?;

(b) **Best paths to sustainability:** What approaches have proven most useful to promote a more efficient use of natural resources and to reduce pressures on them (e.g., circular economy, green innovation and initiatives in the fields of energy, building, transport infrastructure, water, fiscal reforms, standards and labelling)? What initiatives are working successfully or are planned to be introduced in your country to address challenges and major obstacles, including to sustainable consumption and production patterns?;

(c) **Green incentives:** What incentives concerning sustainable public procurement, environmental taxation and the removal of environmentally harmful subsidies, including fossil fuel subsidies, have been introduced, and what else can be done? What do you do to encourage green investment, including private and foreign direct investment and technology transfer in different sectors?;

(d) **Cooperation:** What steps could be taken to further promote cooperation among countries in the pan-European region to facilitate the transition to a green economy, including in the context of the post-2015 development agenda?

19. In addition, during the discussion of the above questions, a number of related issues will be addressed, as appropriate, such as: green agriculture, including its resource needs, possible loads on the environment and some good practices; how subnational and local authorities, business and civil society are involved in greening the economy in their countries; and environmental risk reduction as a key element in defining green economy.

### Documentation

Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/6)

Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E) (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/7)<sup>9</sup>

Greening the economy in the pan-European region (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/4)

---

<sup>9</sup> Due to the envisaged length of the document containing the initiatives committed by interested countries and organizations, the document would be processed in English only.

## 5. Improving air quality for a better environment and human health

*Thursday, 9 June, 3–6 p.m.*

20. The session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of the second thematic segment, on improving air quality for a better environment and human health. A five-minute video made to highlight the issue of air pollution will be shown. Up to three short keynote statements will be delivered.

21. The Batumi Action for Cleaner Air — an initiative to improve air quality for a better environment and human health prepared under the leadership of the Bureau of the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention) — will be presented by the Chair of the Air Convention.

22. Ministers will be invited to endorse the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air and to invite countries and other stakeholders to implement it and report progress to the Committee on Environmental Policy. Countries and organizations participating in the initiative will launch it by celebrating the commitments made.<sup>10</sup>

23. Following the first part of the session, the plenary will break into two parallel sessions for interactive moderated discussions on improving air quality for a better environment and human health. The discussions will be held in the form of a multistakeholder interaction around the table. Both sessions will focus their work on the same questions for discussion, organized in two consecutive parts. The first part will focus on discussing air pollutants and policies related to environment and human health and on identifying the most polluting sectors and the funding for relevant measures to reduce air pollution in accordance with the set of questions listed under points (a) and (b) of paragraph 24 below. The second part will address the issues of public awareness and participation as well as cooperation guided by the set of questions under points (c) and (d) of paragraph 24. Each parallel session of the roundtable will address the same questions but, given the different participants involved, different perspectives may emerge in the discussions. The consolidated results of discussions will be presented on the last day of the Conference and will serve as input into the Chair's Summary of the Conference.

24. To facilitate the work of the Conference a background thematic document on improving air quality for a better environment and human health has been prepared by ECE in consultation with the Bureau of the Air Convention and the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board, as well as EEA, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, OECD, UNEP and WHO. The questions prepared by the Committee's Bureau to focus the discussion under this thematic segment are the following:

(a) **Pollutants and policies:** Which air pollutants (indoor and outdoor) pose the highest risk to the environment and human health in your country, and how is this risk assessed (e.g., emission inventories, pollutants registers and air quality monitoring- and health-related data)? Which aspects of air pollution do you see as the most important to manage in the near future and in the longer term? How effective are current policies in addressing the impact of air pollution on public health, in particular in urban areas, as well as on ecosystems and crops? What can be done to make such policies more effective and how are the costs of inaction taken into account?;

---

<sup>10</sup> The template for submitting commitments by interested countries and organizations is included in the annex to the document presenting the initiative. Pending decision by the Committee, the deadline for submitting initiatives is by 13 May 2016, if feasible to facilitate the preparation of the festive part (initiatives can be submitted up until the Conference).

(b) **Sectors and funding:** What sectors contribute the most to air pollution in your country and how successful has your Government been in integrating air pollution reduction measures into financial and development policies, as well as other sectoral policies? What role can policymakers and financing institutions play in ensuring that projects that reduce air pollution receive funding?;

(c) **Public awareness and participation:** Are the prevailing problems with air pollution and its transboundary character generally known in your country? How can communication be improved? Which channels, messages and means work best in your country? How could enabling public participation in relevant processes (e.g., policy development) improve air quality and what measures work best in your country?;

(d) **Cooperation:** Has international cooperation led to an improvement in air quality? How can international cooperation strengthen the national work? Which international instruments are the most effective in your experience? Which activities should be further strengthened to promote ratification, implementation and possible development of the ECE Air Convention and its protocols?

25. In addition, during the discussion of the above questions, a number of related issues will be addressed, as appropriate, such as: green agriculture, including its resource needs, possible loads on the environment and some good practices; and how subnational and local authorities, business and civil society are involved in greening the economy in countries.

#### **Documentation**

Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/8)

Improving air quality for a better environment and human health (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/5)

Assessment report under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution: summary for policy makers (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/12)

## **6. Reporting on the outcomes of the thematic sessions**

*Friday, 10 June, 10–11.30 a.m.*

26. The Friday morning session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of the Conference. On the basis of reports from the interactive discussions, the Chairs of the thematic segments will present the outcomes under agenda items 4 and 5.

27. Each presentation will be followed by comments from the floor on the main results and findings of the interactive discussions.

## **7. Adoption of the Conference outcomes**

*Friday, 10 June, 11.30 a.m.–12.30 p.m.*

28. This segment will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of the Conference presenting a draft of the agreed outcome (Ministerial Declaration).

29. Also, interested countries and organizations will be given the opportunity to briefly present initiatives and policy tools. Respectively, the delegates will be invited to consider initiatives, agreements, pledges and policy tools on subjects related to the Conference themes that have been submitted to the Conference.

30. Participants will then be invited to adopt the Ministerial Declaration.

**Documentation**

Draft Ministerial Declaration (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/L.1)

**8. Closure of the Conference**

*Friday, 10 June, 12.30–1 p.m.*

31. The Chair of the Conference will present the results of the Conference in the form of a Chair's Summary.

32. The Conference will close at 1 p.m. on 10 June 2016.

## Annex

## Outline for the agenda and organization of work of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016

| <i>Wednesday, 8 June</i>   | <i>Thursday, 9 June</i>  | <i>Friday, 10 June</i>   |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>1. Opening of the Conference</b><br/>(<i>plenary, 9–11 a.m.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Opening ceremony</li> <li>– Adoption of the agenda</li> </ul> <p><b>2. [Getting the pan-European region ready for sustainable development] / [Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development]:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Multilateral environmental agreements, mechanisms, policies and institutions supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</b><br/>(<i>interactive discussion, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ECE MEAs, EPRs, EAP Task Force, RECs, AWA</li> </ul> <p><b>Lunch break/side events</b><br/>(<i>1–3 p.m.</i>)</p> <p><b>(b) Keeping the pan-European environment under review</b><br/>(<i>interactive discussion, 3–4.30 p.m.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– SEIS progress</li> <li>– Regional GEO-6 launch</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Towards a new society: 10 years of education for sustainable development</b><br/>(<i>plenary and round-table or panel discussions, 4.30–6 p.m.</i>)</p> <p><b>Official events/side events</b><br/>(<i>6.15–9 p.m.</i>)</p> | <p><b>4. Greening the economy in the pan-European region</b><br/>(<i>plenary and interactive discussion, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.</i>)</p> <p><i>Questions for discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Opportunities and challenges</li> <li>(b) Best paths to sustainability</li> <li>(c) Green incentives</li> <li>(d) Cooperation</li> </ul> <p><b>Lunch break/side events</b><br/>(<i>1–3 p.m.</i>)</p> <p><b>5. Improving air quality for a better environment and human health</b><br/>(<i>plenary and interactive discussion, 3–6 p.m.</i>)</p> <p><i>Questions for discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Pollutants and policies</li> <li>(b) Sectors and funding</li> <li>(c) Public awareness and participation</li> <li>(d) Cooperation</li> </ul> <p><b>Official events/side events</b><br/>(<i>6.15–9 p.m.</i>)</p> | <p><b>6. Reporting on the outcomes of the discussions under the thematic sessions</b><br/>(<i>plenary, 10–11.30 a.m.</i>)</p> <p><b>7. Adoption of Conference outcomes</b><br/>(<i>plenary, 11.30 a.m.–12.30 p.m.</i>)</p> <p><b>8. Closure of the Conference</b><br/>(<i>plenary, 12.30–1 p.m.</i>)</p> |