Economic Commission for Europe
Committee on Environmental Policy

Twenty-third session
Geneva, 14–17 November 2017

Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-third session

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 14 November 2017*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Outcomes of the work of the Bureau.
5. Follow-up to the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and preparation of the mid-term review of the Conference’s main outcomes.
7. Environmental performance reviews.

* 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 from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) website (https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/est/meeting-registration?id=8MjETO) 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 from the ECE website at http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 2682.
8. Cross-sectoral activities:
   (a) Education for sustainable development;
   (b) Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme;
   (c) European Environment and Health Process;
   (d) Environment and security;
   (e) Green building.

9. Programme of work of the Environment subprogramme:
   (a) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in environmental activities;
   (c) Programme of work and list of publications of the Environment subprogramme for 2018–2019;
   (d) Proposed strategic framework for the Environment subprogramme for 2020–2021;
   (e) Overview of resources for environmental activities and criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events.


12. Rules of procedure.


14. Calendar of meetings.

15. Other business.

16. Closure of the meeting.

II. Annotations


2. In addition, the Reform Plan of the Environment for Europe process (ECE/CEP/S/152, annex I and Corr.1) adopted by the Committee 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.
1. **Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

The Chair will open the twenty-third session. The Committee will then be invited to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document (ECE/CEP/2017/4). The provisional time schedule is presented in information paper No. 1.  

2. **Outcomes of the work of the Bureau**

At its twenty-second session (Geneva, 25–27 January 2017), 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 next session in 2017. In that regard, the Committee mandated its Bureau to carry out a number of activities, including: (a) to prepare the Committee’s twenty-third session; (b) to develop a short document on the Committee’s role in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda); (c) to prepare a proposal for the organization of the mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, June 2016) in 2018; (d) to assess the implications of establishing a joint secretariat between ECE and the World Health Organization (WHO) for servicing the European Environment and Health Process; and (e) to prepare a first draft of the Committee’s revised terms of reference. To fulfil the above mandates, the Bureau worked by means of electronic consultations and met in Lisbon on 28 and 29 June 2017.

3. **Sustainable development in the region**

The secretariat will inform the Committee about the main developments at the regional level regarding the 2030 Agenda, including the key outcomes of the ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Geneva, 25 April 2017) submitted as the contribution of the ECE region to the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2017 (New York, 10–19 July 2017). The Committee will also be informed about relevant outcomes of the sixty-seventh session of ECE (Geneva, 26–27 April 2017). At its sixty-seventh session, the Commission decided to establish the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the ECE region, which would serve as a regional mechanism to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to convene it annually in the years 2018 and 2019, in close cooperation with the entities of the regional United Nations system. The Regional Forum will focus on practical value added, taking into account the work of existing regional bodies and mechanisms, including peer review mechanisms, while avoiding additional reporting burdens for member States (E/ECE/1480, decision B (67)).

At its last session, the Committee welcomed the information shared by Belarus, Czechia and Kazakhstan on their experience in identifying practical ways and means of approaching national implementation of the 2030 Agenda and relevant Sustainable Development Goals from an environmental perspective, and invited its members to continue such exchanges of experience and good practice on that topic at its future meetings.

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1 Information and materials for the meeting are available on a dedicated web page on the ECE website (www.unece.org/index.php?id=45618).
3 See www.unece.org/index.php?id=45294.
meetings. Also, the Committee invited relevant partners to share information on their activities in support of the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals that would be reviewed by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2017.

8. Following up on those decisions, interested countries and organizations are invited to use the Committee’s platform to share their experience to date in identifying practical ways and means of approaching national implementation of the 2030 Agenda and relevant Sustainable Development Goals from an environmental perspective. Of particular interest is information on steps taken to foster the integration foreseen in the 2030 Agenda. Such an exchange of information will facilitate the sharing of practical experience among the environmental constituency in addressing the Goals from the environmental perspective. Taking into account the cluster of Goals to be reviewed in-depth by the high-level political forum in 2018, namely Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation), Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 15 (life on land) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals), it is suggested to focus the discussion on all of these Goals. Interested countries are invited to inform the secretariat in advance of the Committee’s session of their interest in sharing their practical experience in the implementation of Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17.

9. Furthermore, at its twenty-second session, the Committee invited countries to consider the Committee’s role in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and to continue to discuss the matter at future meetings. In that regard, the Committee requested the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to prepare a short background document to facilitate further discussion on the topic. Following up to that request, document ECE/CEP/2017/15 presents information on the role of the Committee in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

10. One suggested activity is to strengthen the cooperation with other ECE sectoral committees by organizing dedicated discussions during the sessions of the Committee on Environmental Policy with the participation of chairs of other ECE sectoral committees. Taking into account the Goals to be reviewed in 2018, chairs of the following ECE committees will be invited to participate in the discussion during the twenty-third session of the Committee on Environmental Policy: the Committee on Sustainable Energy; the Committee on Housing and Land Management; the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry; and the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships. The initial discussion will focus on sharing information, experience and challenges in adapting the work and activities of the respective committees to support the 2030 Agenda. To facilitate the discussion, the secretariat will compile an information paper providing links to relevant documents and materials mapping the work of these committees in support of the 2030 Agenda.

11. The Committee may wish to consider the information provided and to discuss the role of the Committee in supporting the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

4. **Multilateral environmental agreements**

12. At its twenty-second session, the Committee appreciated the opportunity to have an open exchange of views during the Committee session with the participation of the chairs and other representatives of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements. The Committee welcomed the interactive discussion on efforts made thus far under the ECE multilateral environmental agreements to define their role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and took a number of decisions in that regard. In particular, the Committee recognized the importance of transparency, including easy access to information, for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and underlined that cooperation at the national and
international levels between relevant sectors (e.g., a nexus approach), including effective engagement of stakeholders, was key to the coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

13. The Committee will be invited to continue reviewing efforts under each of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements to define their role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on Goals 6 (clean water and sanitation), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals). The treaty chairs will be invited to provide recent examples of such efforts and to share their activities and experiences carried out thus far. The Committee could also consider effective approaches to enhance cooperation at the national and international levels between relevant sectors, including effective engagement of stakeholders.

14. Based on the experience of the past sessions, the discussion on the multilateral environmental agreements could be organized in the form of a moderated round-table discussion to deliberate on the above issues with the participation of the treaty chairs or other representatives and the Committee delegates.

15. Furthermore, the Committee will be informed of the main outcomes of the informal joint meeting between the representatives of the governing bodies of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements and the Committee on Environmental Policy (Geneva, 13 November 2017).

16. The Committee may wish to consider the information provided.

5. Follow-up to the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and preparation of the mid-term review of the Conference’s main outcomes

17. At its twenty-second session, the Committee took a number of decisions regarding the follow-up to the Batumi Conference, including: conducting a forward-looking survey to assess lessons learned from the preparation, organization and running of the Batumi Conference with a view to improving the preparation of the next conference; preparing a proposal on the scope, format and modalities for organizing a mid-term review of the Batumi Conference main outcomes; sharing experience, promoting and further implementing the two Batumi initiatives — the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E) and the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (BACA); and continuing to review the activities of the Green Economy and Environment (GREEN) Action Programme Task Force (GREEN Action Task Force) hosted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

18. The Committee will be invited to consider the outcomes of the survey on the Batumi Conference as presented in document ECE/CEP/2017/17. Furthermore, the Committee will be invited to consider the proposed scope, format and modalities for organizing a mid-term review of the Conference’s main outcomes as presented in document ECE/CEP/2017/16.

19. Regarding the implementation of the two Batumi initiatives, the ECE secretariat jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will report to the Committee on activities to promote and implement the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and Batumi Initiative on Green Economy. The ECE secretariat will also report on activities to promote and implement the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air. Following the successful “Batumi Talk Show: Scoring SDGs through action on green
economy and clean air” hosted by the ECE secretariat together with UNEP on the margins of the ECE session in April 2017, another Batumi Talk Show will be organized during the Committee session to discuss the two Batumi initiatives in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Countries and organizations are invited to inform the secretariat of their interest to participate as guests in the Batumi Talk Show to share their experience and lessons learned in implementing their voluntary commitments under the two Batumi initiatives and to announce new commitments.

20. The OECD GREEN Action Task Force secretariat will be invited to inform the Committee about developments in the work of the Task Force, focused on activities in the area of green economy.

21. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided.

6. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

22. At its twenty-second session, the Committee adopted the renewed mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment until 2021 (see ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II). At its meeting in March 2017, the ECE Executive Committee approved the renewed mandate. In addition, the Committee invited ECE member States and relevant organizations to participate actively in the activities and meetings of the Working Group and asked the Working Group to take into account the financial and human resources available in developing its yearly detailed plans of activities and to develop a more detailed outline of activities leading up to 2021.

23. The Committee will be informed about the outcomes of the Working Group’s nineteenth meeting (Geneva, 27–28 June 2017), and invited to consider the outline of activities leading up to 2021 (ECE/CEP/2017/13) and the proposed modalities for establishing a regional environmental information and assessment network-of-networks (ECE/CEP/2017/14).

24. In addition, at its twenty-first session in October 2015, the Committee adopted the renewed mandate of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (2016–2017). At its twenty-second session, the Committee expressed its great appreciation for the work of the Joint Task Force. The Committee will be invited to consider the progress of work of the Joint Task Force resulting from its thirteenth and fourteenth meetings (Geneva, 29–30 June 2017 and Rome, 5–6 October 2017, respectively) and the renewed mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force (ECE/CEP/2017/12), with a view to its prospective adoption and transmission to the ECE Executive Committee for approval.

7. Environmental performance reviews

25. At its twenty-second session, the Committee took a number of decisions on activities under the Environmental Performance Review Programme. Inter alia, the Committee approved the draft document “Role of environmental performance reviews in supporting the achievement and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals in the pan-European region” prepared by the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews, and requested the secretariat to process it in its final edited version for the next session of

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4 More information about the Batumi Talk Show is available on the ECE website (www.unece.org/index.php?id=45675).
the Committee. The final version presented in document ECE/CEP/2017/11 will support activities under the Environmental Performance Review Programme on integrating relevant Sustainable Development Goals and targets in the country reviews.

26. At its present session, the Committee will conduct peer reviews of the environmental performance of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Mongolia. The Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews will have finalized the recommendations for the three reviews at a meeting to be held from 23 to 27 October 2017. The Committee will be invited to consider the recommendations presented in the information papers Nos. 2, 3 and 4 with a view to their prospective adoption. The drafts of the three Environmental Performance Reviews are being made available on the ECE website.7

27. Furthermore, the Committee will be invited to consider the recent and planned activities under the Environmental Performance Review Programme.

28. Building on the successful organization of interactive discussions on the environmental performance reviews during the Committee’s twenty-first and twenty-second sessions, it is proposed to organize the discussions at the current session in a similar manner, in accordance with the following programme:

(a) Overview of activities;
(b) Environmental Performance Review of Mongolia;
(c) Third Environmental Performance Review of Albania;
(d) Third Environmental Performance Review of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
(e) Reporting on the implementation of recommendations of reviews concluded several years ago;
(f) Interactive discussion on enhancing awareness-raising activities on environment and sustainable development, and in particular the Sustainable Development Goals, to reach out to civil servants and the public at large: good practices from environmental performance reviews.

8. Cross-sectoral activities

29. There are a number of cross-sectoral activities under the auspices of the ECE Environment subprogramme, mostly carried out jointly or in partnership with other ECE subprogrammes and other partner organizations. The Committee will be invited to consider recent developments and plans for the future under these cross-sectoral activities.

(a) Education for sustainable development

30. The Committee will be informed about developments under the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development since the Committee’s twenty-second session, including the main outcomes of the twelfth meeting of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (Geneva, 20–21 April 2017).8

31. The Committee may wish to consider the information provided.

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8 See www.unece.org/index.php?id=44478.
(b) **Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme**

32. The Committee will be informed about developments under the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme since the Committee’s twenty-second session, including the main outcomes of the fifteenth session of the Steering Committee of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (Geneva, 6–8 November 2017).9

33. The Committee may wish to consider the information provided.

(c) **European Environment and Health Process**

34. At its twenty-second session the Committee took note of the information provided and welcomed the developments under the European Environment and Health Process with regard to the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Ostrava, Czechia, 13–15 June 2017). In that connection, the Committee asked the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau to assess the implications of establishing a joint secretariat between ECE and the WHO Regional Office for Europe for servicing the European Environment and Health Process and to prepare a short information note for the Committee’s consideration at the current session.

35. Accordingly, the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau prepared a document containing possible arrangements for a joint ECE-WHO Regional Office for Europe secretariat for the European Environment and Health Process to facilitate the Committee’s discussion (ECE/CEP/2017/18).

36. In the light of the above, the Committee will be invited to consider developments under the European Environment and Health Process, including the main outcomes of the Ostrava Conference, and the possible arrangements for a joint secretariat with a view to reaching an agreement on the matter.10

37. In addition, at its previous session the Committee also decided to postpone the appointment of ministers from the environment sector to the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board to the current session of the Committee, pending the outcomes of the Ostrava Conference. At Ostrava, participants agreed on the “Institutional Arrangements for the European Environment and Health Process”, as set out in annex 2 to the Ostrava Declaration (EURO/Ostrava2017/8), which does not include the Board. Thus, in the light of the Conference outcomes, the Committee will be invited to consider this matter, as appropriate.

(d) **Environment and security**

38. At its twenty-second session, the Committee took note of the information provided with regard to the Environment and Security Initiative and the technical assistance provided to the member States within its framework. At its current session, the Committee will be invited to consider the ongoing contributions of ECE to the Initiative (information paper No. 5).

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(f) Green building

39. At its twenty-second session, 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 the work on energy efficiency in buildings and with regard to the forestry sector in the green economy, and welcomed a closer cooperation with those committees. At its current session, the Committee will be informed about developments in these areas.

40. The Committee may wish to consider the information provided. In addition, the Committee will be invited to consider possible areas and ways to enhance the cooperation with the two Committees.

9. Programme of work of the Environment subprogramme

(a) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in environmental activities

41. The 2005 ECE Reform Plan states that ECE “shall 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 Beijing+10 review” (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1, para. 79).11

42. In line with the Reform Plan, the ECE secretariat developed a new policy for gender equality and the empowerment of women, which elaborates further a gender mainstreaming strategy for all areas of work. The ECE Executive Committee welcomed the new policy in September 2016. The ECE policy for gender equality aims to support the achievement of equality between women and men while fostering economic integration at the subregional and regional levels, promoting the regional implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and supporting regional sustainable development in its member countries and subregions. A key element of the ECE policy is to mainstream a gender perspective in the substantive work of the sectoral committees.

43. The ECE Gender Action Plan 2016–2017 was developed as an implementation tool of the ECE gender policy. The Plan’s strategic actions include the promotion of a gender perspective and raising the importance of taking a gender perspective into account in the different activities and events under the Environment subprogramme, as appropriate.

44. At its past regular sessions, the Committee took note of the information provided by the secretariat with respect to gender mainstreaming in environmental activities carried out by the Environment Division. In particular, at its twenty-second session, the Committee noted the information provided with respect to gender mainstreaming across ECE activities and in environmental activities carried out by the Environment Division since the Committee’s twenty-first session, and:

(a) Recognized the importance of gender mainstreaming in environmental activities, particularly in the light of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and emphasized that gender equality was both a goal in itself and a means to contribute to achieving sustainable development;

(b) Supported international initiatives to promote gender equality, and welcomed continued cooperation and coordination with the United Nations bodies and other relevant international forums and actors to that end;

(c) Agreed to continue to mainstream a gender perspective in its activities.

45. The Committee will be invited to consider how to better mainstream a gender perspective in environmental activities carried out under its auspices, including in the light of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.


46. At its twentieth session in 2014, the Committee agreed to continue with the biennial performance assessment of the Environment subprogramme for another cycle, at least. At its twenty-first session in 2015, the Committee approved the biennial performance report of the Environment subprogramme for 2014–2015 (ECE/CEP/2015/6) and the biennial performance plan of the Environment subprogramme for 2016–2017 (ECE/CEP/2015/5).

47. Based on the plan, the secretariat prepared an assessment of performance of the Environment subprogramme in 2016–2017 (ECE/CEP/2017/8) for consideration by the Committee for approval.

48. Furthermore, the Committee will be invited to consider for approval the performance plan of the Environment subprogramme for 2018–2019 (ECE/CEP/2017/9).

(c) Programme of work and list of publications of the Environment subprogramme for 2018–2019

49. The Committee will be invited to consider for adoption the draft programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2018–2019, including the list of publications (ECE/CEP/2017/7).

(d) Proposed strategic framework for the Environment subprogramme for 2020–2021

50. The Committee will be invited to review the proposed strategic framework for the Environment subprogramme for 2020–2021 (ECE/CEP/2017/10).

(e) Overview of resources for environmental activities and criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events

51. At its twenty-second session, the Committee took note of the information provided about problems in reporting on the status of resources for environmental activities, and expressed concern about the difficulties arising from the fact that Umoja was not fully operational. In that regard, the Committee requested the secretariat to provide information on the status of resources in the Environment subprogramme for the biennium 2016–2017 at the Committee’s next session. Furthermore, the Committee invited countries and other stakeholders to consider making voluntary contributions to the Environment for Europe trust fund to support participation of eligible participants in the meetings of the Committee and its Bureau.

52. The secretariat will submit the requested information if it is made available through Umoja in time for the twenty-third session. Consequently, 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. 6). Donor countries will be invited to pledge further contributions to the trust funds.

53. In addition, at its previous session the Committee adopted the revised criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events as presented in annex I to the report of the meeting (see ECE/CEP/2017/2). At its current session, the Committee may consider updating the criteria for financial support or continuing to use the recently adopted criteria for another year, on the basis of the Bureau’s recommendation.
10. **Presentation and exchange of views on the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly**

54. At its twenty-second session, the Committee welcomed the information provided by UNEP about developments in preparing the third session of United Nations Environment Assembly and invited countries and organizations to promote at that session the work of ECE related to the third session’s themes, including, inter alia, the ECE multilateral environmental agreements and recent initiatives launched under the Environment for Europe process, namely, the Astana Water Action, the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air and the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy. In addition, the Committee invited UNEP to continue informing the Committee about the preparations for the third session of the Assembly, in particular at the Committee’s current session.

55. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided by UNEP and exchange views on preparations for the third session the Environment Assembly (Nairobi, 4–6 December 2017).

11. **Terms of reference**

56. At its twenty-second session, the Committee mandated the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to prepare a first draft of the Committee’s revised terms of reference for the Committee’s consideration at its present session. In line with the request, the draft revised terms of reference are presented in document ECE/CEP/2017/19.

57. The Committee will be invited to consider its revised terms of reference with a view to submitting them to ECE for prospective adoption at its sixty-eighth session in 2019.

12. **Rules of procedure**

58. In accordance with a decision taken at its twenty-second session, the Committee will be invited to further consider the need for specific rules of procedure.

13. **Election of officers**

59. The Committee will be invited to elect a chair and other members of the Bureau. A preliminary list of proposed candidates will be circulated by email in August 2017 (information paper No. 7). Taking into consideration information paper No.7 and following a recommendation by the Bureau to set a deadline for any additional nominations, members of the Committee are invited to put forward their candidates for the Bureau and inform the secretariat of this by 30 September 2017 to allow sufficient time for consultations before the Committee’s twenty-third session.

14. **Calendar of meetings**

60. At its twenty-second session, the Committee approved the proposed schedule of Committee and Bureau meetings until 2019. The Committee will be invited to review its schedule of meetings for 2018–2020 (information paper No. 8).
15. **Other business**

   61. 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.

16. **Closure of the meeting**

   62. 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.