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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Twenty-fourth session

Geneva, 29–31 January 2019

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth session

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on
Tuesday, 29 January 2019*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Outcomes of the work of the Bureau.
3. Sustainable development in the region.
4. Mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference:
 - (a) Greening the economy and cleaning the air, including the activities of the GREEN Action Task Force and the regional environmental centres;
 - (b) Developing the Shared Environmental Information System;
 - (c) 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://uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=_pYBeZ) 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.



- (d) Multilateral environmental agreements.
- 5. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting.
- 6. Environmental performance reviews.
- 7. Cross-sectoral activities.
- 8. Overview of resources for environmental activities and criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events.
- 9. Reform of the United Nations planning and budgeting process.
- 10. Presentation and exchange of views on the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.
- 11. Election of officers.
- 12. Calendar of meetings.
- 13. Other business.
- 14. List of decisions.
- 15. Closure of the meeting.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Chair of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy will open the twenty-fourth session. The Committee will then be invited to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document (ECE/CEP/2019/1). The provisional time schedule is presented in information paper No. 1.¹

2. Outcomes of the work of the Bureau

2. At its twenty-third session, the Committee mandated its Bureau to carry out a number of activities, including: (a) to seek the views of Committee members and observers on the format of Committee meetings and to discuss the format of the Committee's meetings; (b) to prepare the Committee's twenty-fourth session; and (c) to organize the mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, June 2016) in 2019. To fulfil the above mandates, the Bureau worked by means of electronic consultations and met in Geneva on 28 February 2018 and on 26 and 27 September 2018.

3. The Committee will be invited to consider the outcomes of the Bureau's work under the respective agenda items as presented in document ECE/CEP/2019/3.

3. Sustainable development in the region

4. The secretariat will inform the Committee about the main developments at the regional level regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the key outcomes of the ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Geneva, 1–2 March 2018) submitted as the contribution of the ECE region to the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2018 (New York, 9–18 July).

5. The Committee will continue its practice of inviting interested countries and organizations to share their experience in identifying practical ways and means of

¹ Information and materials for the meeting are available on a dedicated web page on the ECE website (<https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50063>).

approaching national implementation of the 2030 Agenda and relevant Sustainable Development Goals from an environmental perspective, in particular steps taken to foster the integration foreseen in the 2030 Agenda. It is suggested that the discussion focus on the cluster of Goals to be reviewed in depth by the high-level political forum in 2019, namely Goals 4 (quality education), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace and justice, strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals). 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 4, 13, 16 and 17.

6. Furthermore, at its twenty-third session, the Committee agreed to continue using the document on the role of the Committee in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (ECE/CEP/2017/15) at its next session to bolster the discussion on the contribution of the Committee in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

7. 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. Mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

8. At its twenty-third session, the Committee invited the secretariat, in cooperation with relevant partners, to organize a one-day mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Batumi Ministerial Conference as part of the Committee's twenty-fourth session, in line with the provisions for the review set out in document ECE/CEP/2017/16.

(a) Greening the economy and cleaning the air, including the activities of the GREEN Action Task Force and the regional environmental centres

9. In Batumi ministers endorsed the voluntary Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy — a tool supporting countries' efforts in transitioning to green economy and, at the same time, contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals — and invited ECE member States and other stakeholders to implement it. Ministers also welcomed the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy, which fosters voluntary commitments to operationalize the Strategic Framework. Ministers encouraged countries and other stakeholders to implement commitments under the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and to report on progress thereon to the Committee in accordance with the Strategic Framework's provisions. The Committee will review progress achieved in implementing the Strategic Framework and the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2019/4.

10. The ministers in Batumi also invited ECE and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in cooperation with other relevant international organizations, to support countries in their efforts to green their economies and achieve sustainable development. The Committee will consider a report on activities by ECE, UNEP, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other relevant partners to support countries in their efforts to green their economies and achieve sustainable development, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2019/5 and information paper No. 2.

11. To improve air quality, ministers in Batumi endorsed the voluntary Batumi Action for Cleaner Air and welcomed the initiatives launched by interested countries and other stakeholders aimed at improving air quality and protecting public health and ecosystems. Ministers invited countries and other stakeholders to implement the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air in close cooperation with the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, as appropriate. The Committee will review progress achieved in implementing the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2019/6.

12. Furthermore, in Batumi ministers welcomed the work of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force and invited OECD to continue its activities under its new name, the GREEN Action Task Force, in cooperation with relevant partners. The Committee will consider a report assessing the progress achieved prepared by the GREEN Action Task Force, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2019/10.

13. In the Batumi Declaration, ministers valued the role of regional environmental centres in implementing initiatives to improve environmental governance at all levels and encouraged them to strengthen their activities and to continue playing a valuable role in the pan-European region by supporting the needs of target countries. The Committee will review progress achieved in improving environmental governance and strengthening activities of the regional environmental centres to support the needs of the target countries prepared jointly by the regional environmental centres, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2019/13.

(b) Developing the Shared Environmental Information System

14. In Batumi ministers invited countries to continue their efforts and to further develop their national information systems to have the Shared Environmental Information System in place in the countries of Europe and Central Asia by 2021. The Committee will consider a report on progress achieved in developing the Shared Environmental Information System prepared by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2019/7.

(c) Environmental performance reviews

15. At the Batumi Conference, ministers acknowledged the important contribution of the ECE Environmental Performance Review Programme over the past 20 years as an effective and practical policy tool and highlighted the role it could play in supporting the achievement and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in the pan-European region. The Committee will consider a report assessing progress achieved in the third cycle of reviews, including in support of the achievement and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2019/8.

(d) Multilateral environmental agreements

16. Ministers in Batumi appreciated progress achieved under the ECE multilateral environmental agreements and recognized the need to strengthen the participation of civil society and the private sector in their implementation. The Committee will review progress achieved in implementing the ECE multilateral environmental agreements in support of the 2030 Agenda, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2019/9.

5. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

17. At its twenty-third session, the Committee requested the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment to revise and streamline the outline of its activities up to 2021, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2017/13, by including measurable outcomes and giving priority to its core activities in accordance with the financial resources available.

18. The Committee will be informed about the outcomes of the Working Group's twentieth session (3–4 September 2018).

19. In addition, at its twenty-third session, the Committee adopted the renewed mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators for 2018–2021. The Committee will consider the progress of work of the Joint Task Force resulting from its fifteenth session (25–26 October 2018).

6. Environmental performance reviews

20. At its present session, the Committee will conduct peer reviews of the environmental performance of Kazakhstan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews will finalize the recommendations for the two reviews at a meeting to be held from 9 to 11 January 2019. The Committee will consider the recommendations presented in the information papers Nos. 3 and 4 with a view to their prospective adoption.

21. At its twentieth session in October 2014, the Committee renewed the mandate of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for the period 2015–2018 (ECE/CEP/2014/13). Document ECE/CEP/2019/12 contains a review of the Expert Group's achievements for the mandated period and presents, in an annex, a draft decision on the renewal of the Group's mandate for a further four-year period. The Committee will be invited to adopt the mandate and terms of reference for the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for 2019–2022 and to transmit them to the ECE Executive Committee for approval.

22. Furthermore, the Committee will consider the recent and planned activities under the Environmental Performance Review Programme.

7. Cross-sectoral activities

23. The Bureau of the Committee on Environmental policy, meeting in an extended format (Geneva, 28 February 2018), requested the secretariat to prepare a briefing note on all cross-sectoral activities under the auspices of the ECE Environment subprogramme. Following up on that request, the Committee will be invited to consider document ECE/CEP/2019/11, prepared by the secretariat and detailing the recent developments, plans for the future and the expected decisions by the Committee with regard to cross-sectoral activities.

8. Overview of resources for environmental activities and criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events

24. At its twenty-third session, the Committee took note of the information provided concerning persisting problems in reporting on the status of financial resources for environmental activities and expressed concern about the difficulties arising from the fact that the Umoja administrative system was still 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.

25. The Committee will be invited to consider the regular and extrabudgetary resources for activities relating to the Environment subprogramme (information paper No. 5). Donor countries will be invited to pledge further contributions to the trust funds.

26. In addition, at its previous session the Committee agreed to continue with the criteria for financial support as adopted by the Committee at its twenty-second session in January 2017 (using data for 2015) and, at the same time, asked the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to verify the availability of data for 2016 and, if available for all countries with economies in transition, to prepare revised criteria for financial support for approval by the Committee by email through a silence procedure. The revised criteria were prepared following the Bureau meeting in September and sent by email to the Committee at the end of October 2018. 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.

9. Reform of the United Nations planning and budgeting process

27. In December 2017, at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, Member States approved the change from a biennial to an annual budget period on a trial basis beginning from 2020 onwards. The Committee will be informed of the implications for the work of the Committee and the progress in the preparation of the proposed programme budget for 2020. Members will be invited, as appropriate, to provide comments on the draft proposed programme budget of the Environment subprogramme (information paper No. 6).

10. Presentation and exchange of views on the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

28. At its twenty-third session, the Committee invited UNEP to continue informing it about relevant developments under the United Nations Environment Assembly. The Committee will be invited to consider information provided by UNEP and exchange views on preparations for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (Nairobi, 11–15 March 2019).

11. Election of officers

29. At its twenty-third session the Committee decided to postpone the election of officers to the next session of the Committee, with the current Bureau continuing until then. 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 November 2018 (information paper No. 7).

12. Calendar of meetings

30. At its twenty-third session, the Committee approved the proposed schedule of Committee and Bureau meetings until 2020. The Committee will be invited to review its schedule of meetings for 2019–2021 (information paper No. 8). The twenty-fifth session of the Committee is scheduled for 12 to 14 November 2019.

13. Other business

31. The Committee will be invited to discuss any other business that might be brought to its attention. Delegations wishing to propose subjects for discussion under this item are invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

14. List of decisions

32. Every morning the Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, will sum up the conclusions and decisions of the Committee from the previous day. The list of decisions will be finalized before the closure of the meeting.

15. Closure of the meeting

33. The Chair will 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.