

Belgrade “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference
Agenda item 5: Capacity Building
Progress and Perspectives in Implementation of the Environmental Strategy for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

Main Keynote Address
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(On behalf of Mr Nurlan Iskakov, Minister of Environmental Protection, Kazakhstan and Co Chair of the EAP Task Force)

Chairman, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure and honour for me to address you today. I must begin, however, by conveying the apologies of my Minister, Mr Nurlan Iskakov, who is not able to be with us. It was in his capacity as Co Chair of the EAP Task Force that he was scheduled to give this keynote address.

Kazakhstan has served as the Co Chair of the EAP Task Force since the 2003 "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference in Kiev when the EECCA Environment Strategy was adopted. One year after the Kiev Conference, Environment Ministers from the EECCA region, and their partners, met in Tbilisi, Georgia to take stock of where EECCA countries stood in relation to the EECCA Environment Strategy. The EAP Task Force produced a Stocktaking Report for that meeting which has served as a baseline against which progress can be measured.

Since then, as Mr Lorentsen has described, the EAP Task Force has organised a unique process of collaboration among EECCA countries, international organisations and NGOs. The resulting report which we are discussing today documents the actions taken by EECCA countries to achieve the objectives of the EECCA Environment Strategy. By focussing on the policy actions taken by EECCA governments, it complements the analysis contained in the European Environment Agency's report, "The Belgrade Assessment", and the report prepared by UNDP on "Environment Policy in South-Eastern Europe."

From the perspective of an EECCA country, we welcome the identification of good practices, the benchmarking of performance, and the analysis of progress and trends.

This work will be helpful to us in Kazakhstan as we continue to reform our environmental policies and legislation. In this connection, I would mention two key aspects of Kazakh experience that I think would be of interest to other EECCA countries.

First, **strong political will to address environmental problems and better integrate Government's actions to achieve environmental sustainability.** To this end, a Council for Sustainable Development was established. The Council is chaired by the Prime Minister while secretariat functions are provided by the Ministry of Environment Protection. We have developed a Concept of Transition of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Sustainable Development for 2007-24, which, unlike previous policy documents, establishes specific targets to be gradually achieved by the country.

Second, **continued efforts to reform policy instruments and the legal framework.** In 2006, we developed a new Environmental Code. This has enabled us to bring together and streamline existing legislation and improve such tools as Environment Impact Assessment, environmental permitting, self-monitoring, and inspection. Consultations with the main stakeholders - the industry and NGOs- were an important element in this process. It is our intention to further align the regulatory framework with international benchmarks.

¹ The present document is a scanned copy of a statement received on 11 October 2007 during the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, 10-12 October 2007). The document has not been formally processed by the UNECE.

I would also like to acknowledge the support that the EAP Task Force has provided to Kazakhstan specifically in:

- Environmental inspectorate and developing its capacity, with valuable support provided by Norway;
- Improving self-monitoring by large industry, and
- Reforms of environmental permitting

This support and support of ADB, UNDP, UNEP, CAREC, donor countries and other organizations are very important for us and I think for other EECCA countries as well tacking into account transferring of best experience and know-khow. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with all our partners after the Belgrade Conference. We welcome a better cooperation between all partners with focus on practical implementation. We hope also that these can be complemented by more active sub-regional cooperation.

Thank you for your attention