

WECF INTERVENTION- 12 October 2007

Session 12 October 2007: Item 7. The Future of the Process

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I am speaking on behalf of Women in Europe for a Common Future.

- 1) We welcome the idea to continue the "Environment for Europe" process and even to go forward and develop the process by introducing a reform process taking into account cross-cutting issues, such as biodiversity, health and environment and gender.
- 2) We welcome the idea to focus the future process on priorities - biodiversity is such an issue! Women in Europe experiences in its daily work how agro-diversity is supporting the livelihoods and the culture of many rural areas across the pan-European region, but sees with concern the threats by GMOs and nano-technologies. Human life is depending on the integrity of the bio-sphere; we can not forget this and thus must act accordingly. We urge the Governments to establish concrete measures and instruments to protect biodiversity and mainstream them in all sectors.
- 3) Policies and instruments are still needed to ensure that all citizens in this region have access to safe water and sanitation and safe energy, without neglecting the poor, which are often female-headed households. In the EECCA region 100 million people are without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Some countries have guaranteed the right to water in their constitution, and have found different ways to implement this, for instance via income support for poor households. We need affordable and sustainable water and sanitation policies now! And we need to ensure that energy is safe and affordable to all. Nuclear is not an option!
- 4) We welcome that the reform should be focussed on attracting the broader interest and more active engagement of all stakeholders. In particular those groups have to be engaged that are not yet well represented at all decision-making levels, such as local people, women, youth and minorities. Their views are needed to develop sustainable policies that will have broad public support and truly meet the needs of the people. In this context, we welcome the idea to strengthen "environmental governance" and to aim for "broader interest and more active engagement of all stakeholders". We want to call upon Governments to use this opportunity of the reform process to guarantee real public participation and to respect the principles of environmental justice.

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<sup>1</sup> The present document is a scanned copy of a statement received on 12 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.