



"Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference

## CONCLUDING REMARKS OF THE SIDE EVENT

(Closed meeting: by invitation only)

### To elaborate a work programme for the proposed Initiative on Strategic Environmental Assessment

Thursday 11 October 2007, 13:00-14:30

Chaired by Violeta Ivanov, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Moldova

#### Purpose of the side event

Brainstorming the work programme and the initiation of implementation of the proposed Initiative on Strategic Environmental Assessment (further referred to as Initiative)

#### Expected results

- I. Elaborate the work programme, adding detail to that outlined in the proposed Belgrade SEA Initiative
- II. Clarify the roles of the different countries and organizations in the Initiative
- III. Estimate the budget required for the Initiative and the work programme activities
- IV. Clarify the criteria for inclusion in the initiative (countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia that "demonstrate serious interest in ratification of or accession to the Protocol", according to the Initiative)
- V. Prepare a presentation of this information to the open workshop (side event) on *SEA Protocol Implementation: From Kiev to Belgrade and beyond*

#### Participants

Violeta Ivanov, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Moldova

Ruzana Davtyan, Ministry of Nature Protection, Armenia

Alexandr Rachevsky, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus

Oreola Ivanova Nacheva, Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

Beata Wiszniewska, Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

Ausra Jurkeviciute, Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

Nick Bonvoisin, UNECE

Henrieta Martonakova, UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and the CIS

**I do not have the name of the others. Could you add please?**

#### Concluding remarks

Representative of REC has presented the draft work programme. This has followed by the very active and long discussion what have not made it possible to present and discuss also the other items of the agenda (role of countries and organizations and criteria for inclusion of countries into the Initiative). This has however, not been found as the negative factor since to develop the final work programme is the most crucial for initiating fund raising for implementing the Initiative.

All the participants have agreed that the most challenging issue for developing effective national systems for SEA application is alignment of the current environmental assessment system used in EECCA countries with the internationally applied practice and with requirements of the UNECE SEA Protocol and EU SEA



Directive. Therefore it has been proposed that initial activities of the Initiative shall focus on addressing this as a priority and the very initial activities are related to this subject.

UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and the CIS has allocated US\$ 60,000 for 2008 to start the implementation of the Initiative. Additional resources for its full implementation and for running its secretariat have to be mobilized.

The EAP Task Force representative has suggested to arrange the Initiative's work plan around topics rather than around activities and all the participants have agreed that it will be better to focus on less (let's say two) most relevant topics and address them properly rather than to focus on too many minor issues. Effective legislation development and 'PR' for SEA have been identified as a need by the countries' representatives. Relevant documents and publications (e.g. OECD DAC Guidance on SEA in Development Cooperation) shall be translated to Russian, at later stage also to other languages (e.g. Armenian, Moldovan, etc.).

Representatives of the countries have suggested focus also on representatives of other sectoral ministries, to develop their understanding of SEA, since they are supposed to be the ones responsible for SEA application. Representative of Armenia has pointed out that meetings for discussing challenges and sharing experience are also needed at national level.

Country representatives pointed out that the Initiative will have no results and impact in case its implementation is not related to and supported by the Espoo Convention secretariat, what may strengthen countries' commitment to be actively involved in the Initiative.

#### **Suggested follow-up steps**

- The discussion on the Initiative work programme will continue during the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment (21-23 November 2007).
- The final work programme will be developed and put in the format appropriate for resource mobilization. UNDP representative suggests transfer the work programme into the UNDP Project Document format.
- The final work programme will be submitted to the member countries for its official endorsement. Such endorsement will demonstrate countries' ownership and thus support resource mobilization for its implementation and the implementation per se.
- Member countries will assign the national focal point for the Initiative.
- First agreed activities will be implemented by using the available UNDP funds.
- The final and officially endorsed Work Programme of the Initiative will be submitted to different potential donor organizations.

#### **Open question:**

Shall other EECCA countries be allowed to participate as observers if interested? In case yes, it has to be made clear that activities funded under the Initiative will only target the member countries of the Initiative.