

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Expert Group on Environmental Performance

Twenty first session

Ashgabat, 13–15 March 2012

**Minutes of the twenty-first session held at the Grand Turkmen Hotel,
Ashgabat on 13 -15 March 2012**

The meeting was attended by members of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance (EGEP) from: Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. Representatives of various ministries and institutions of Turkmenistan participated in the meeting. The list of participants is annexed to these minutes.

1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of Expert Group

The EGEP elected Mr Harry Liiv as Chair and Ms Martine Rohn-Brossard as Vice-Chair, in accordance with the EGEP Terms of Reference (para. 8).

2. Designation of rapporteurs

The EGEP designated the following rapporteurs to report to the eighteenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP):

- Mr Harry Liiv and Ms Martine Rohn-Brossard - on the results of the review of the first EPR of Turkmenistan.
- Ms Ann-Sophie Israelson - on the results of the review of the second EPR of Albania.
- Mr Adriaan Oudeman - on the results of the review of the second EPR of Romania

3. Self-evaluation

The EGEP considered a self assessment report on the efficiency of the process of carrying out ECE's Environmental Performance Reviews. The report was prepared by the secretariat with the assistance of an external consultant.

The EGEP expressed its appreciation for the self evaluation exercise undertaken by the secretariat. Certain findings of the self evaluation report were discussed extensively. Following these discussions, the EGEP:

- Supported the idea to organise launch events in Geneva when the EPR report is published in English, along the lines proposed in the self-evaluation report;

- Supported the idea of circulating the Executive Summary in advance;
- Invited the secretariat to re-establish a web-based tool to facilitate the exchanges between the secretariat and the international experts who participate in the review of a country.

The EGEP also discussed the issue of the capacity of the secretariat in relation to the high demand for EPR reviews by the eligible countries, as outlined in the self evaluation report. The EGEP took note of the current state of affairs in this regard, in particular the low probability of acquiring additional resources from within the Environment Division. EGEP considered additional ways of supporting the work of the EPR team, for example through the potential assignment of Junior Professional Officers to the EPR programme or the use of national experts from Member States. One concrete example that was discussed was the outsourcing of professional editing of outreach materials prepared by the secretariat.

The EGEP invited the secretariat to present the main findings and recommendations of the self-evaluation report to the CEP at its 18th session.

4. Third cycle of EPRs

The EGEP discussed and proposed amendments to the content of the third cycle of EPRs based on a note circulated by the secretariat. Discussions covered the introductory chapter, Part I and Part II. Part III chapters on Water Management, Waste Management and on Energy were also discussed. Due to lack of time, the structure of other Part III chapters was not discussed.

The EGEP agreed that once the secretariat has revised the chapters' content and circulated it among the EGEP members, they would organise in their countries the collection of comments and proposals for amendments on all chapters, including those that were not discussed, and send them to the secretariat within one month.

The EGEP invited the secretariat to make a short presentation on the proposed content of the 3rd cycle reviews to the upcoming CEP meeting.

5. Review of the first EPR of Turkmenistan

The EGEP and the delegation of Turkmenistan discussed draft recommendations in individual chapters of the first EPR of Turkmenistan. The meeting started with introductory remarks by the EGEP Chair, followed by an introductory statement by the Head of the delegation of Turkmenistan on the country's expectations from the EPR.

The delegation of Turkmenistan covered a wide range of expertise. Officials from various ministries and agencies participated actively in the discussions.

The meeting came up with a series of amendments to draft recommendations. The agreed text of the amended recommendations will be peer reviewed by the CEP during its 18th session to take place on 18 April 2012 in Geneva.

The EGEP took note of the willingness and preparedness of the delegation of Turkmenistan to submit to the secretariat by the time of the 18th session of the CEP updates on the analytical parts of the EPR to reflect new developments on various chapters that took place after September 2011 and not reflected, therefore, in the review.

6. Other business

The EGEP considered the information by the secretariat on next country reviews. In this context, the EGEP took note of:

- Results of the secretariat preparatory mission to Morocco in March 2012 and preparations for the main mission in September 2012;
- Request of Croatia to the secretariat to conduct in second review;
- Reminder letters sent by the secretariat to Armenia, Latvia and Lithuania with regard to possible 2nd review of these countries;
- Preliminary expression of interest for a third cycle review by Belarus and the Republic of Moldova.

The EGEP discussed the possibility of increasing its membership, in accordance with the EGEP Terms of Reference. The EGEP underlined that maintaining a restricted number of committed members of the EGEP was important and that to better manage the increased workload, in case of absence of individual members at EGEP meetings, it would be their responsibility to designate substitutes. It stressed that the criteria for the selection of new members should reflect the need for a geographical balance and acquiring competences in specific areas of environmental policy. To facilitate communications in-between EGEP members, fluency in English would be a highly desirable competency of prospective new members. The EGEP also proposed that gaps in expertise for the review of, mostly, sectoral chapters (e.g. biodiversity, climate change, environmental economics and agriculture) could be filled in with external expertise on a case-by-case basis.

Based on the very good experience of having an EGEP meeting in a country under review, the EGEP agreed that this approach might be followed in other countries, when it is cost-effective vis-à-vis costs of meetings held in Geneva. The EGEP proposed to organise the review meeting of Morocco in Rabat.

Annex: List of participants

Members of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance

1. Ms. Vanya Grigorova, Bulgaria
2. Mr. Hans-Joachim Hermann, Germany
3. Ms. Ann-Sofi Israelson, Sweden
4. Mr. Harry Liiv, Chair, Estonia
5. Ms. Mariam Marakova, Georgia
6. Mr. Adriaan Oudeman, the Netherlands
7. Mr. Martti Poutanen, Finland
8. Ms. Martine Rohn-Brossard, Switzerland

Representatives of Turkmenistan

1. Mr. Jumamurad Saparmuradov, Deputy Minister of Nature Protection (MNP)
2. Mr. Batyr Ballyev, Head of Environmental Protection Division, MNP
3. Mr. Paltamed Esenov Director, National Institute of Deserts, Flora and Fauna, MNP
4. Mr. Muhammet Durikov Head of Coordination of Environmental Programmes, MNP
5. Mr. Serdar Eeberenov Specialist Office of Coordination of Environmental Programmes, MNP
6. Mr. Murad Deryakuliev, Deputy Head of the Environmental Protection, MNP
7. Ms. Ludmila Danilova, Chief Specialist, Department of Environmental Protection, MNP
8. Ms. Sona Karryyeva Head of flora and fauna, MNP
9. Ms. Jemal Durdykova, Specialist Department of Environmental Protection, MNP
10. Ms. Lala Babaniyazova, Lawyer, MNP
11. Ms. Victoria Akopova, Chief Information, NPTSEM, National Institute of Deserts, Flora and Fauna, MNP
12. Ms. Amangul Ovezberdyeva, Senior Specialist, Environmental Expertise, MNP
13. Mr. Dovran Akhmedov Director, NPTSEM, National Institute of Deserts, Flora and Fauna, MNP
14. Ms. Gozel Orazdurdyeva, Caspian Environment Programme
15. Mr. Gurbangeldi Allaberdiyev, National contact point for the UNFCCC
16. Mr. Vladimir Verveda, Coordinator Ozone Office
17. Ms. Shirin Karryyeva ,Senior Technical Advisor Project PA
18. Mr. Sultan Veisov, Project Coordinator CACILM
19. Mr. Igor Naumov, Head of the agricultural sector of the Ministry of Economy and Development
20. Mr. Elbars Kepbanov, National expert on environmental law, MNP
21. Mr. Nazar Korpeev, National expert on climate change and renewable energy
22. Mr. Hilmar Foelmi, Project Manager GIZ «Forest management"
23. Mr. Kuliev Akmuhammed, National expert on forest resources
24. Mr. Nikolai Zverev, Head of the Laboratory of forests and pastures of the National Institute of Deserts, Flora and Fauna, MNP
25. Ms. Gozel Atamuradova, Project Officer for Sustainable Land Development
26. Ms. Victoria Saygusheva, Project Officer NEAP

UNECE secretariat

1. Mr. Mikhail Kokine, Chief, Operational Activities and Review Section
2. Mr. Antoine Nunes, EPR Programme Manager
3. Mr. George Georgiadis, EPR Programme