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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment
(Fifth session, 2-3 June 2005)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIFTH SESSION

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
starting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 2 June*

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the report of the fourth session.
4. Strengthening environmental information and observation capacity in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA):
 - (a) Electronic networking and databases;
 - (b) Environmental indicators;
 - (c) Enterprise environmental monitoring and reporting;
 - (d) Second Tacis monitoring project for EECCA.

* New accreditation procedures have been introduced for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to complete the registration form, also available from the web site of the UNECE/ENHS Division (<http://www.unece.org/env/cep/welcome.html>), and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat, at the latest two weeks prior to the meeting, by fax (+41-22-917-0107) or by e-mail to the following address: france.font-verot@unece.org. Before the meeting, delegates are requested to present themselves at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Villa Les Feuillantines, 13, Avenue de la Paix (a map is attached) to pick up their identification badge. In case of difficulty, please contact the UNECE secretariat by telephone (extension 71204).

5. Preparations for the fourth assessment report on the state of the environment:
 - (a) Draft content, working method and timetable for the “Belgrade assessment;”
 - (b) Related international environmental assessment and data collection activities.
6. Work plan of the Working Group for the period up to the Belgrade Conference.
7. Other business.

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

The Working Group is open to all member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Other Member States of the United Nations, specialized agencies of the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may also participate in a consultative capacity, according to the terms of reference of UNECE (E/ECE/778/Rev.3, paras. 11, 12 and 13). In addition to the regular circulation, meeting documentation will be uploaded on the Working Group's web site: <http://www.unece.org/env/europe/monitoring/>.

Thursday, 2 June 2005

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda (10 – 10.10 a.m.)

The Working Group is invited to adopt its agenda.

Item 2: Election of officers (10.10 – 10.25 a.m.)

According to its revised mandate, adopted by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its tenth session on 21 October 2003 (ECE/CEP/116, para. 30 and annex I), the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment should elect its Chair and Vice-Chair(s).

Item 3: Adoption of the report of the fourth session (10.25 – 10.35 a.m.)

The Working Group is invited to adopt the report as contained in document CEP/AC.10/2003/2.

Item 4: Strengthening environmental information and observation capacity in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

Pursuant to its revised mandate, strengthening environmental information and observation capacity, including monitoring networks, in EECCA should be a priority for the Working Group.

(a) Electronic networking and databases (10.35 – 11.15 a.m.)

The Working Group will discuss the outcome of, and the progress made since, the Workshop on Electronic Databases for Environmental Reporting, which was organized in cooperation with the Russian Federal Environmental Information Agency and the European Environment Agency (EEA) near Moscow on 13-14 May 2004. It may provide guidance for the further development, on its web site, of an online catalogue of national periodicals on the environment and environmental reports submitted to international bodies following the ReportNet system of EEA (CEP/AC.10/2005/3).

(b) Environmental indicators (11.15 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

The Working Group will discuss the outcome of the Workshop on the Application of Environmental Indicators, which was organized in cooperation with the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) Moldova and with the assistance of EEA in Chisinau on 5-6 July 2004. It is expected to decide on the approach to finalize and test the manual on the application of the core set of environmental indicators in EECCA (CEP/AC.10/2005/4).

(c) Enterprise environmental monitoring and reporting (3 – 6 p.m.)

The Working Group may wish to discuss opportunities for improving environmental data collection and reporting in EECCA through strengthened self-monitoring by polluters and their better reporting to environmental authorities. A note will be prepared by the secretariat, drawing from the recent and ongoing environmental performance reviews of EECCA countries, to facilitate the discussion (CEP/AC.10/2005/5).

According to its updated terms of reference, the Working Group should conduct its work in cooperation with the private sector. Modalities for such cooperation need to be established. At the time of preparing this agenda, the secretariat was contacting a number of companies active in environmental monitoring and assessment to ascertain their practical interest in being involved in the Working Group's activities and, more specifically, in building capacities in EECCA. A possibility of organizing a round table with the participation of members of the Working Group from EECCA countries, experts from other countries and representatives of interested companies was being discussed. Should the round table be held on 1 June 2005 at the Palais des Nations, the Working Group members will be invited to participate and, subsequently, to decide on follow-up.

Friday, 3 June 2005

(d) Second Tacis monitoring project for EECCA (9.30 – 11 a.m.)

Representatives of EEA will be invited to report on the planned content, time schedule and implementation method of the second European Union (EU)/Tacis project (€1 million) to strengthen environmental information and observation capacity in EECCA in 2005-2006. The members of the Working Group from EECCA countries may wish to comment on these plans, presenting, in particular, their countries' priorities.

Item 5: Preparations for the fourth assessment report on the state of the environment

The Working Group will discuss the preparations by EEA of the assessment report for the 2007 Belgrade Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" and its role in these preparations. It will also consider environmental assessment and data collection activities that have been initiated in other international forums and that may need to be coordinated or associated with the Belgrade assessment report.

**(a) Draft content, working method and timetable for the “Belgrade assessment”
(11 a.m. – 12.30)**

Representatives of EEA will inform the Working Group about the proposed content of the report, the international databases and other assessments to be used in preparing the report, the specific data collection to be undertaken, the prospective role of national focal points in data collection, the timetable and other issues of the report's preparation. The Working Group is expected to comment on these proposals and to specify the type of support that it will provide at various stages of the report's preparation.

**(b) Related international environmental assessment and data collection activities
(2.30 – 4 p.m.)**

Representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will be invited to report on the preparation of the fourth Global Environment Outlook report (GEO-4). Representatives, of the World Health Organization (WHO)/Europe will be invited to report on the development of a pan-European environment and health information system. Representatives of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) will be invited to report on UNSD/UNEP data collection on the basis of the 2004 Questionnaire on Environment Statistics. Finally, representatives of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will be invited to report on its intention to prepare a report for the Belgrade Conference to assess progress in the implementation of the EECCA Environment Strategy and on the preparation of a second OECD Environment Outlook in 2007. Representatives of other international organizations may also wish to provide information on activities relevant to the fourth assessment report on the state of the environment.

**Item 6: Work plan of the Working Group for the period up to the Belgrade Conference
(4 – 5.15 p.m.)**

In the light of the discussions on other agenda items and taking into account its revised mandate, the Working Group will prepare a work plan for the period up to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference. To facilitate the discussion, the secretariat will circulate a draft work plan (CEP/AC.10/2005/6). The work plan will be submitted to the Committee on Environmental Policy for information and possible amendments.

Item 7: Other business (5.15 – 5.30 p.m.)

At the time of writing, the secretariat had no points to propose under this item.



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