



United Nations

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## ALL EYES ON ASTANA

Less than 2 weeks remain until the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” will open in Astana. More than 800 participants will discuss the two main themes for the Conference: [Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems; and Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development.](#)

Astana-2011 will be the place to share experiences, discuss challenges and work on cooperative solutions. From governments and international organizations to businesses and NGOs, the “Environment for Europe” partners and stakeholders will work together under a common motto - “[Save Water, Grow Green!](#)”. The Declaration to be approved by the ministers of environment will become a pledge for action to bring the conference discussions and outcomes into reality.

The two reports produced for the Astana Conference – [Europe’s Environment – An Assessment of Assessments](#) prepared under the leadership of the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the [Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters](#) developed under the auspices of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) – provide the decision and policy makers with food for thought, as well as stimulus for further action by Governments, the international community, including donors, NGOs and other partners.

The [Assessment of Assessments](#) report shows that we need to further strengthen the link between policy and information. Based on the findings of the Assessment of Assessments report, it is expected that in Astana Ministers will decide to establish a regular process of environmental assessment and to develop the Shared Environmental Information System – a collaborative initiative of the European Commission, EEA and EEA member and cooperating countries – across the region.

Covering more than 140 transboundary rivers, 25 transboundary lakes and about 200 transboundary groundwaters, the [Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters](#) highlights the diversity in the natural availability of water resources, pressures, status and responses in the different transboundary basins. Such differences and specificities also reflect the great economic and social

differences within the region, which strongly influence both the pressures and status of the water resources as well as the capacity of countries to implement management responses. Characteristics and specificities of five UNECE subregions: Western and Central Europe; South-Eastern Europe; Eastern and Northern Europe; the Caucasus; and Central Asia are highlighted together with recommendations focusing on these subregions. The Astana Water Action – an initiative developed in the framework of the Water Convention – suggests policies and actions to progress towards sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems and to ensure sustainable management of water and greening the economy. It invites countries and other stakeholders to commit in Astana to implementing some of the actions.



Whilst the Astana Ministerial Conference is expected to address environmental issues of common concern in the UNECE region, it provides an important opportunity to address priority environmental issues in the Central Asian sub-region. The sub-region has witnessed one of the greatest man-made disasters – the Aral Sea tragedy and therefore has a number of lessons to share with the rest of the region.

The [Green Bridge](#) – an initiative of host country Kazakhstan – aims to establish a wide international and cross-sectoral framework for regional and inter-regional cooperation and collaboration among countries of Asia, the Pacific and Europe, international organizations, NGOs and business on the way to a green economy. Developed into the “[Green Bridge](#)” Partnership Programme, it covers such key areas as strengthening national and international governance, informational infrastructure of partnership, awareness raising and education, promotion of green business and green technologies, financial and economic mechanisms, improving standards for a green economy and developments in the relevant sectors.

The Astana Conference is the first one prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Reform Plan of the “Environment for Europe” process adopted in 2009. Marking the 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the “Environment for Europe” process, Astana-2011 is expected to pave the way for strengthened Pan-European cooperation on environment and sustainable development. □

**The Conference will be a paper-less event. All Conference documents are being made available on the UNECE website at: <http://www.unece.org/env/efe/Astana/documents.html>.**

## SECOND INTERNATIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY FORUM

DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN - 12-14 SEPTEMBER

UNECE, jointly with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Government of Tajikistan, is organizing the Second International Energy Efficiency Forum in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 12-14 September 2011.

The Forum will include Plenary Sessions on the first day, two parallel **Workshops** on the second day, one on the **Development of Energy Efficiency Policy Frameworks and Investments in Energy Efficiency (EE) and Renewable Energy (RE) Projects** and another one on **Attracting Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in Advanced Fuel Technologies**. Finally, a **Roundtable Discussion on the Role of EE and RE in Market Transformation for Central Asia** will take place on the third day.

The objective of the Forum is to contribute to sharing progress made in enhancing countries' policies and legislation for facilitating market formation in EE and RE.

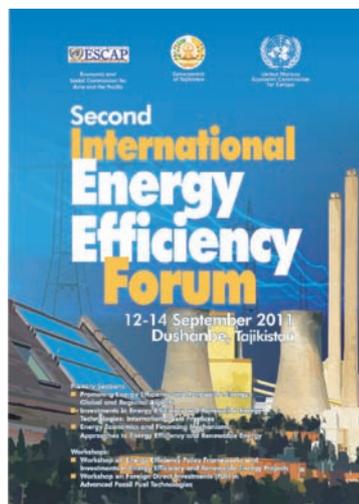
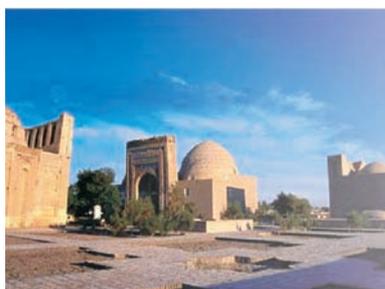
The Forum will:

- focus on policy reforms to promote investments in EE and RE projects and on the potential for such investments with specific examples;

## UNECE MEETS WITH TURKMENISTAN TO REVIEW ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Representatives of the Government of Turkmenistan met with a delegation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) secretariat on 30 August 2011 to exchange information and discuss cooperation in the field of the environment. As Turkmenistan is developing its international economic and environmental relations, it considers adopting international standards, such as the UNECE environmental conventions, as a priority.

The meeting was an opportunity to take stock of the many cooperation initiatives that UNECE and the Government of Turkmenistan are currently developing,



- discuss tools that will enable stakeholders to formulate a common vision and a set of strategies for the promotion of EE and clean energy technologies, particularly in North and Central Asia;
- identify the required changes to existing policy, legal and regulatory frameworks to create a more favourable investment climate for cleaner electricity generation projects;
- identify challenges and opportunities for market transformation and a need for a study on market potential in EE in Central Asia. □

*For more information, please visit:*

<http://www.unece.org/energy/se/eneffic.html>  
and [www.feei.info](http://www.feei.info)

or contact: [viktor.badaker@unece.org](mailto:viktor.badaker@unece.org)  
or [oleg.dzioubinski@unece.org](mailto:oleg.dzioubinski@unece.org)

including participation in the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference being held at the end of the month in Astana, progress on the Environmental Performance Review for Turkmenistan and the future of the National Policy Dialogue on Water.

The review meeting was proposed by the Government of Turkmenistan. The deputy ministers of nature protection, water economy, foreign affairs and "adalat" (justice) participated in the meeting. The Turkmen side confirmed its interest in acceding to the Water Convention and that it is considering accession to the Espoo Convention and the Convention on Industrial Accidents.

It also announced that a working group under the Ministry of Justice had been established to ensure implementation of the Aarhus Convention. The Government supports UNECE environment activities, which it perceives as part of an integrated effort. □

*For more information on UNECE environmental activities, please see:*  
<http://www.unece.org/env/welcome.html>

Information Service  
United Nations  
Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)  
CH-1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland

Tel.: +41 (0) 22 917 44 44  
Fax: +41 (0) 22 917 05 05  
E-mail: [info.ece@unece.org](mailto:info.ece@unece.org)  
<http://www.unece.org>



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