



**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**  
**through its Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and**  
**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

**jointly with**

**UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION**

***JOINT MEETING ON ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS***

*31 August – 2 September 2009, Geneva*

**ANNOUNCEMENT AND LOGISTICS**

Background

Environmental indicators are a key tool for environmental assessment, reporting and policymaking. They can show trends and help describe the causes and effects of environmental conditions. They can also help in setting priorities, evaluating environmental policy implementation and assessing compliance with international commitments. Regular data collection on internationally-agreed indicators helps not only in national policymaking and raising public awareness, but also in comparing national environmental situations with those of other countries and data gathering for pan-European environmental assessment reports.

The Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 2007) endorsed the UNECE Recommendations on environmental indicators and indicator-based assessments<sup>1</sup> and invited the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, South-Eastern Europe and other interested countries to implement the *Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators*<sup>2</sup> prepared by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and other international organizations. The *Guidelines* cover 36 indicators that were evaluated as being the most important from the viewpoint of national and international requirements, the most understandable to the public, the best supported by international methodological guidance, and the most compatible with environmental indicator sets available at the international level.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/ece/ece.belgrade.conf.2007.11.add.1.e.pdf](http://www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/ece/ece.belgrade.conf.2007.11.add.1.e.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Published in the United Nations publication on *Environmental Indicators and Indicators-based Assessment Reports – Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. ECE/CEP/140 – Sales # E.07.II.E.9 – ISBN 978-92-1-116961-4 ([www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/ece/ece.belgrade.conf.2007.inf.6.e.pdf](http://www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/ece/ece.belgrade.conf.2007.inf.6.e.pdf)).

The *Guidelines* are intended for use primarily by officials in government agencies who have responsibility for environmental assessment, state-of-the-environment reporting and the publication of statistical compendiums and bulletins on environmental issues. To implement the *Guidelines* countries concerned will have to undertake effective measures for the adaptation of their systems for data collection and statistics. They will have to review and clarify responsibilities of public authorities to ensure that each indicator included in the *Guidelines* is backed by measurements, calculations and regular data collection. All institutions dealing with the collection and treatment of data and the publication of environmental and statistical reports will have to use international standard classifications.

### Meeting objectives

The Belgrade recommendations on indicators called for a strengthened inter-agency cooperation for a regular production of environmental indicators, the exchange of practical experience obtained in their application and for regular training of national experts on methodologies and standards developed by relevant international forums, and on new internationally-agreed indicators.

To promote the implementation of these recommendations, the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) agreed in 2008 to cooperate on methodological issues of environmental indicators. As a first step, a Joint meeting will be organized with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) to train experts of interested UNECE countries in producing environmental indicators. The joint meeting will take place on 31 August – 2 September 2009 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It will:

- (a) Discuss priorities and modalities of cooperation on methodological issues of environmental indicators between environmental experts and statisticians in 2009-2010;
- (b) Review in detail selected indicators covered by the *Indicator Guidelines* to provide practical recommendations on the use of statistical classifications, data collection methods and procedures for the production of indicators;
- (c) Exchange information on international developments related to environmental indicators that may be important but are currently not included in the *Guidelines* and provide references to available guidance materials;
- (d) Initiate discussions on modern presentation formats and tools for effective dissemination of environmental indicators including the use of modern information technologies.

### Participation

Officials from environmental institutions designated for the publication of assessment reports on the environment and representatives of statistical services working in the field of environmental statistics in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia<sup>3</sup>, and interested countries of South-Eastern Europe (SEE)<sup>4</sup> will be the target audience of the Joint meeting. Participation of experts from other UNECE countries will be most welcome to broaden the exchange of experiences and approaches. Furthermore, representatives of international organizations and institutions dealing with environmental indicators, namely the

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<sup>3</sup> Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

<sup>4</sup> Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Eurostat, EEA, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH), the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, will be invited to attend to present their views and achievements.

#### Registration form and logistics

Participants are requested to complete a registration form available online ([www.unece.org/stats/documents/2009.05.environ.htm](http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2009.05.environ.htm)), and to transmit it to the secretariat *no later than two weeks prior to the meeting*, by fax (+41 22 917 0107) or by e-mail ([nadiya.dzyubynska@unece.org](mailto:nadiya.dzyubynska@unece.org)). Upon the receipt of the participation form, the designated participants will receive individual invitations for entry visa support.

Information about Geneva, transportation, hotels and the Palais des Nations is available at the UNECE web page [www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm](http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm).

According to the accreditation procedures for meetings at the Palais des Nations, participants should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the above UNECE website). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone (+41 22 917 2364).

#### Organization of work

The discussions will take place during the plenary sessions where the simultaneous interpretation from/into English and Russian languages will be provided. Plenary sessions will generally include presentations by keynote speakers followed by question-and-answer period and exchange of experiences and views. Keynote speakers or other participants will facilitate the discussions as moderators.

Nominated participants are invited to prepare jointly and submit to the UNECE secretariat ([mikhail.kokine@unece.org](mailto:mikhail.kokine@unece.org) and [vania.etropolska@unece.org](mailto:vania.etropolska@unece.org)) by 20 August at the latest, for the circulation among the registered participants prior to the Joint meeting, national reviews (8-10 pages in English and Russian, if possible, in Times New Roman, font 12, line-spacing 1,5 intervals) describing achievements, problems and perspectives regarding:

- (a) The application of indicators from the *Guidelines* in national assessment reports, statistical compendiums and other publications;
- (b) The use of modern presentation formats and tools for dissemination of environmental indicators;
- (c) The application of additional indicators, especially those measuring the effectiveness of environmental policy.

Meeting documentation including national reviews, presentations and the list of participants will be uploaded as they become available online at: [www.unece.org/stats/documents/2009.05.environ.htm](http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2009.05.environ.htm).

#### Joint meeting results

The meeting report will be submitted to the WGEMA, at its tenth session to be held on 3-4 September 2009 in Geneva, and to the CES Bureau in fall 2009.

### Financial support

UNSD will provide funding for travel and daily subsistence allowance for the participation in the Joint meeting of one environmental statistician per country from the national statistical offices of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

UNECE has obtained donor funds to support travel and stay in Geneva for officials from environmental institutions that are responsible for the publication of assessment reports on the environment in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

Eurostat will provide financial support to officials from environmental institutions that are responsible for the publication of assessment reports on the environment in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Other participants will be covering their travel and related costs from the budgets of their institutions. There will be no participation fee.

## ***Preliminary programme of the Joint Meeting***

### ***31 August, Monday***

#### **10:00 Opening statements**

- *United Nations Statistics Division*
- *UNECE*

#### ***Session 1: Cooperation framework on environmental indicators for environmental experts and statisticians***

**10:15 – 13:00 Discussion of priorities and modalities of cooperation on methodological issues of environmental indicators between environmental experts and statisticians in 2009-2010<sup>5</sup>**

#### ***Session 2: Review of the UNECE Guidelines on the Application of Environmental Indicators***

The Joint meeting will discuss selected indicators covered by the *Indicator Guidelines* to provide practical recommendations on the use of statistical classifications, data collection methods and procedures for the regular production of indicators. The selection of indicators for

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<sup>5</sup> In the light of the approval by the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and the the CES Bureau of the Terms of Reference for a joint intersectoral task force on environmental indicators (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.33/2009/3.e.pdf>), this session 1 will be actually the first meeting of the Joint Intersectoral Task Force to discuss its work plan, method of work and time-schedule for its activities.

the review has been made on the basis of proposals received from the interested countries and the gaps in data collection in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and SEE identified by UNECE in its environmental performance reviews and by WGEMA in developing environmental indicators and supporting pan-European environmental assessments.

15:00 – 18:00

*Session 2A: Indicators on air: emissions of pollutants into the atmosphere and greenhouse gas emissions*

***1 September, Tuesday***

***Session 2: Review of the UNECE Guidelines on the Application of Environmental Indicators (cont'd)***

09:30 – 11:00

*Session 2B: Indicator on energy: final energy consumption*

11:00 – 12:30

*Session 2C: Indicators on water: household water use and drinking water quality*

14:30 – 17:30

*Session 2D: Indicators on land: land uptake and fertilizer consumption*

***2 September, Wednesday***

***Session 2: Review of the UNECE Guidelines on the Application of Environmental Indicators (cont'd)***

09:30 – 12:30

*Session 2E: Indicators on waste: waste generation, waste reuse and recycling, and final waste disposal*

***Session 3: Briefing on additional indicators not covered by the Guidelines***

14:30 – 16:30

Presentations by OECD, Eurostat, EEA and other international forums

***Session 4: Modern presentation formats and tools for effective dissemination of environmental indicators***

16:30 – 17:15

17:15 – 17:30 *Conclusions and closing.*

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