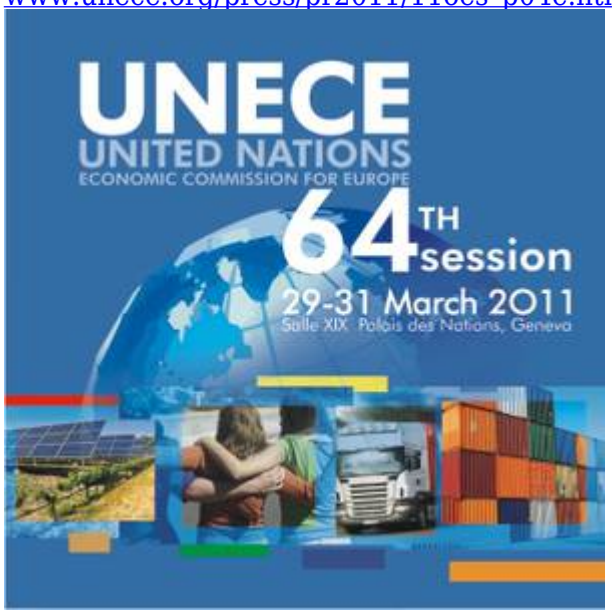
www.unece.org/press/pr2011/11oes_p04e.html



Geneva

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will hold its 64th session on 29-31 March 2001 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The Commission is responsible for making strategic decisions on the UNECE programme of work and provides a forum for policy dialogue on the economic developments in the region.

The first two days of the session will be dedicated to two issues which are at the core of UNECE's activities and members States' priorities:

- **Economic integration in the UNECE region: developments and new challenges in light of the economic crisis**. The session will discuss in particular the region's overall global competitiveness, its progress in recovering from the recent financial and economic crisis and other technological, environmental or social developments that might impact its economic situation.
- **The role of regional integration and cooperation for promoting sustainable development in the UNECE region**. Debates will be centered on two key components:

1. Transport and trade infrastructure
Regional and subregional transport infrastructure constitutes a pillar of regional integration. Good quality, well developed and safe infrastructure fosters and facilitates trade flows and individual mobility between countries of the region, and has a special importance for landlocked countries. It opens new markets and increases access to employment, education and health services, thus promoting economic and social development. It also has an environmental impact since appropriate design and regulation reduce traffic congestion and CO2 emissions.

Discussions will address the following issues:

a) What are the most prominent best practices, and most striking challenges for sustainable transport development in UNECE countries?

b) Which tools and policies are necessary to mitigate climate change effects and reduce transport related CO2 emissions? What will be the implications for making the transport sector more environmentally sustainable?

c) How can the transport infrastructure networks across the UNECE region be further developed in the global context? Which modes of cooperation could best assure coordination in the planning of international transport routes and infrastructure? Which financing methods would be the most effective in meeting the needs of the region and individual UNECE countries? How can the particular needs of landlocked countries in the UNECE region be met?

d) Which are the best approaches to further facilitate international transport and simplify border-crossing procedures, while taking into account security concerns?

e) What further steps need to be taken to enhance the legal framework, transport regulations and standards for international transport, with a view to achieving better connectivity and economic

sustainability in the region?

f) Is it important for small and medium-sized companies to participate in international supply chains? If yes, what are the principal obstacles they face when attempting to do so?

g) Can international standards and recommendations support access to international trade and supply chains?

2. Energy cooperation

This session will discuss how to best shape the energy sector, which is clearly at the interface of economic and environmental sustainability and security.

A first panel will discuss issues related to improving energy networks in the UNECE region. It will explore major elements of extension and interconnection, the challenges of infrastructure financing, including through public-private partnerships (PPPs), the establishment, management and financing of power plants producing electricity in a transboundary context, and the development of a regulatory framework and compliance with access rules and security norms;

A second panel will address ways of promoting energy efficiency development from source to service, including through resource efficient policies, market formation, harmonization of norms and technology transfers. Energy efficiency investments are important in various sectors such as energy production, conversion, transport and distribution, housing, public buildings and industry. Reduction of their cost through efficient financing is essential. The panel will also address diversification of energy sources. Key challenges in this direction are innovation in the field of new technologies, the development of new mechanisms of investment financing and pricing policies, along with fiscal, regulatory and contractual measures for the exploitation and use of renewable and other sources of energy.

The session will also include a round table on “Empowering women for sustainable development in the UNECE region” on 30 March 2011, 14:00-15:00.

The Roundtable will focus on the core question of how women can be empowered to fully participate in the process of identifying solutions and developing strategies and policy responses to achieve sustainable development. It will be looking at initiatives at the global, regional and national level, and will address the role of the international community, national governments and civil society.

At the end of both days, the Executive Secretary will provide a summary of the proposals made for possible follow-up action by UNECE’s Executive Committee.

The session and discussions are open to the public. For a detailed timetable and background documents on the various topics to be discussed, please see:
http://www.unece.org/commission/2011/64th_index.htm

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