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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Ninth session  
Geneva, 4–5 September 2008

**ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE NINTH SESSION**

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva  
starting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 4 September 2008\*

**I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the report of the eighth session.
4. Outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” and matters arising from the fifteenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy of concern to the Working Group.

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\* According to the accreditation procedures for meetings at the Palais des Nations, delegates are requested to complete the registration form available from the website of the Committee on Environmental Policy ([www.unece.org/env/cep/welcome.html](http://www.unece.org/env/cep/welcome.html)), and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat, *no later than two weeks prior to the meeting*, by fax (+41 22 917 0107) or by e-mail ([oksana.rott@unece.org](mailto:oksana.rott@unece.org)). On their way to the meeting, delegates 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 Committee’s website). In case of difficulty, please contact the UNECE secretariat by telephone +41 22 917 2447).

5. Pan-European assessment reports on the state of the environment and associated activities:
  - (a) Lessons learned from working with countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia on the preparation of the Belgrade report;
  - (b) Possible approaches to the preparation of the next pan-European assessment report;
  - (c) Assessment and data collection activities in other forums of relevance to the Working Group.
6. Developments in improving environmental observations, data collection and reporting:
  - (a) Implementation of recommendations on monitoring and information management from country environmental performance reviews;
  - (b) Round table on environmental monitoring and assessment at the national, subnational and company levels.
7. Appraisal of international monitoring and assessment requirements.
8. Preparation of the work programme for 2008–2010.
9. Other business.

## II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. According to its terms of reference, the Working Group is open to all UNECE member States and includes the European Environment Agency (EEA). Members of the Working Group are officials responsible in the UNECE countries for environmental monitoring and assessment. The Working Group will involve in its activities experts from statistical agencies and compliance control authorities and sanitary services as well as representatives of major groups, especially business and industry, the scientific community and environmental civil society organizations.
2. Other international forums and networks – such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD); the World Health Organization (WHO) European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH); relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), especially those of UNECE; the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS); and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – are also invited to participate.
3. In its operation, the Working Group will be guided by the procedures established by UNECE Executive Committee for teams of specialists (ECE/EX/2006/L/3). In addition to circulation through the normal channels, meeting documentation will be posted on the Working Group's website ([www.unece.org/env/europe/monitoring/](http://www.unece.org/env/europe/monitoring/)).

Thursday, 4 September

10:00 – 10:10

**Item 1: Adoption of the agenda**

4. The Working Group will be invited to adopt its agenda.

10:10 – 10:25

**Item 2: Election of officers**

5. The Working Group will be expected to elect its Chair and Vice-Chair(s).

10:25 – 10:35

**Item 3: Adoption of the report of the eighth session**

6. The Working Group will be invited to adopt the report as contained in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2007/2.

10:35 – 11:15

**Item 4: Outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” and matters arising from the fifteenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy of concern to the Working Group**

7. The Working Group will be informed about decisions taken at the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”(Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007) of relevance to environmental monitoring and assessment. It will also be informed about discussions held and decisions taken at the fifteenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) in April 2008 on the focus and main directions of the Committee’s future work on environmental monitoring and assessment (ECE/CEP/2008/6), on the mandate of the Working Group (ECE/CEP/148, annex III) and on the reform of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process.

11:15 – 12:15

**Item 5: Pan-European assessment reports on the state of the environment and associated activities:**

**(a) Lessons learned from working with countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia on the preparation of the Belgrade report**

8. The European Environment Agency (EEA) will present its report on the matter (EC/CEP/AC.10/2008/3).

9. The Working Group is expected to comment on the EEA report and to discuss opportunities, inter alia, for:

- (a) Further strengthening and harmonizing environmental data collection, and producing pan-European environmental indicators;
- (b) Promoting comparability of environmental statistics through the cooperation with national statistical offices in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and interested countries in South-Eastern Europe; UNSD; the Conference of European Statisticians of UNECE; and the Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the basis of the Indicator Guidelines;
- (c) More widely communicating the findings of pan-European assessments to the public;
- (d) Creating a common environmental information system for the pan-European region.

12:15 – 13:00

**(b) Possible approaches to the preparation of the next pan-European assessment report**

10. Representatives of EEA will be invited to present preliminary views on the outline and the method of the preparation of the pan-European assessment for the next EfE Ministerial Conference, taking into account in particular the CEP discussions on the reform of the EfE process.

11. The Working Group may wish to comment on the subject.

15:00 – 16:00

**(c) Assessment and data collection activities in other forums of relevance to the Working Group**

12. Interested members of the Working Group and representatives of the EEA, UNEP, WHO/ECEH, UNSD, MEAs and other international forums may wish to report on ongoing and planned environmental assessment and data collection activities of relevance to the Working Group.

13. The Working Group may wish to comment on the information provided and put forward proposals for better coordination of multilateral and bilateral efforts in the area.

16:00 – 18:00

**Item 6: Developments in improving environmental observations, data collection and reporting**

**(a) Implementation of recommendations on monitoring and information management under country environmental performance reviews**

14. The Working Group is expected to consider progress made in and/or plans developed for the implementation by selected countries of recommendations on environmental monitoring and information management emanating from the second cycle of environmental performance reviews (EPRs) of these countries. Discussions will be based on the relevant sections of the review available on the UNECE EPR website ([www.unece.org/env/epr/publications.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/epr/publications.htm)) and presentations to be made at the session by members of the Working Group from the countries concerned.

15. The discussion will first cover the countries, as follows:

- (a) Belarus, which was reviewed by CEP in 2005. The English and Russian versions of chapter 3 (Information, Public Participation and Education) are available on the EPR website (see above);
- (b) Serbia, which was reviewed by CEP in 2007. The English version of chapter 2 (Information, Public Participation and Education) is available on the above EPR webpage. Sections of this chapter dealing with environmental monitoring and information management will be reproduced in English and Russian under document symbol ECE/CEP/AC.10/2008/4.

16. The Working Group may provide comments and guidance to these countries to aid better implementation of the EPR recommendations.

Friday, 5 September

9:30 – 10:30

**Item 6: Developments in improving environmental observations, data collection and reporting (continued)**

**(a) Implementation of recommendations on monitoring and information management under country environmental performance reviews (continued)**

17. The discussion will continue with Kazakhstan, which was reviewed by CEP in April 2008. The English version of chapter 3 (Information, Public Participation and Education) will be uploaded on the above EPR website. Sections of this chapter dealing with environmental monitoring and information management will be reproduced in English and Russian under document symbol ECE/CEP/AC.10/2008/5.

18. The Working Group may provide comments and guidance to Kazakhstan to aid better implementation of the EPR recommendations.

10:30 – 11:45

**Item 6: Developments in improving environmental observations, data collection and reporting (continued)**

**(b) Round table on latest developments in environmental monitoring and assessment at the national, subnational and company levels**

19. Members of the Working Group, experts from national statistical agencies and other central and subnational (e.g. oblast and city) authorities as well as representatives of business and industry, the scientific community and environmental citizens' organizations will be given an opportunity to briefly report on major recent, ongoing and planned actions in their countries, agencies, companies and organizations, regarding:

- (a) Modernization and upgrading of national monitoring networks;
- (b) Improvement of data management and use in decision-making;
- (c) The use of indicator-based environmental assessments;
- (d) The strengthening of environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises.

20. Written contributions (in English and/or Russian) to the round table should be provided to the secretariat before 15 August 2008 so as to ensure their distribution to all registered participants before the meeting.

11:45 – 12:30

**Item 7: Appraisal of international monitoring and assessment requirements**

21. The Working Group is expected to appraise the latest developments in international monitoring and assessment requirements, especially obligations under the UNECE environmental legal instruments. Representatives of relevant secretariats will be invited to report, in particular, on: (a) air and air-pollution effects monitoring and emission inventories under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution; (b) assessment of transboundary surface and groundwaters under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention); (c) indicators and reporting under the Protocol on Water and Health to the Water Convention; (d) environmental reporting under the Convention on the Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention); and (e) pollutant registers under the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Aarhus Convention.

22. The Working Group may consider practical ways and means to support the above activities.

14:30 – 17:00

**Item 8: Preparation of the work programme for 2008–2010**

23. In the light of the discussions on other agenda items and taking into account its revised mandate and the agreement of the CEP on the focus and main directions of future work on environmental monitoring and assessment, the Working Group will prepare a work programme for 2008–2010. To facilitate discussion, the secretariat will circulate a draft work programme (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2008/6). The work programme as prepared by the Working Group will be submitted to the CEP, at its special session to be held from 13 to 15 October 2008, for approval.

17:00 – 17:10

**Item 9: Other business**

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

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