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Report of the Committee on Environmental Policy on its seventeenth session

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	1–12	3
A. Attendance	2–7	3
B. Organizational matters	8–10	3
C. Adoption of the agenda	11	4
D. Election of officers	12	4
II. Outcomes of the meeting of the Extended Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy	13–14	4
III. Environmental performance reviews	15–32	4
A. Environmental Performance Review of Azerbaijan	15–21	4
B. Environmental Performance Review of Bosnia and Herzegovina	22–30	5
C. Environmental Performance Reviews Programme: third cycle	31–32	6
IV. Sustainable development in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region	33–35	7
V. Preparations for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference...	36–75	7
A. Main outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific	36–40	7
B. Host country preparations	41–46	8
C. Draft agenda	47–55	9
D. Official substantive documents	56–59	10
E. Conference outcomes	60–64	10

F.	Europe's Environment Assessment of Assessments report	65–68	11
G.	Organizational issues	69–70	11
H.	Resource requirements.....	71–73	11
I.	Communication strategy	74–75	12
VI.	Environmental monitoring and assessment	76–80	12
VII.	Implementation of multilateral environmental agreements: strengthening synergies and capacity-building activities.....	81–92	13
VIII.	Cross-sectoral activities.....	93–107	15
A.	Education for sustainable development	94–96	15
B.	Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme.....	97–98	15
C.	Environment and security	99	6
D.	European Environment and Health Process.....	100–107	16
IX.	Calendar of meetings.....	108	17
X.	Summary of decisions by the Committee.....	109	18
XI.	Closure of the meeting	110	19
Annexes			
I.	Revised terms of reference for the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for 2011–2012		20
II.	Revised terms of reference for the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators for 2011–2012		22
III.	Time frame for and questions for discussion at the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference.....		25

I. Introduction

1. The seventeenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy was held from 2 to 5 November 2010 in Geneva.

A. Attendance

2. The session was attended by delegations from 39 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE): Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

3. From the United Nations system, representatives of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offices in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe attended.

4. Representatives of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe (GWP CEE) were present.

5. Representatives of the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Environment Agency (EEA) also attended the meeting.

6. Representatives from the five Regional Environmental Centres (RECs) also took part in the meeting: the REC for Central and Eastern Europe (REC-CEE); the REC for the Caucasus (REC-Caucasus); the REC for Central Asia (CAREC); the REC for the Republic of Moldova (REC-Moldova); and the REC for the Russian Federation (REC-Russia).

7. In addition, representatives of environmental civil society associations — the European ECO-Forum, the Eco-Accord, the European Environmental Bureau and Women in Europe for a Common Future — as well as of academia — the Global Institute for Water, Environment and Health — were in attendance.

B. Organizational matters

8. The session opened with a welcome address by the Director of the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division of UNECE, who highlighted that the major goal of the session was to agree on the agenda for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” (EfE) Ministerial Conference (Astana Ministerial Conference), to be held in Astana (Kazakhstan) from 21 to 23 September 2011. One particular challenge in organizing the Conference would be to ensure the active involvement of private sector representatives in the Conference.

9. The Chair of the Committee recalled that the main objectives of the meeting were to advance preparations for the Astana Ministerial Conference; consider recommendations for the environmental performance reviews of Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and consider progress in environmental monitoring; as well as deal with a number of cross-

sectoral issues, including the appointment of four members from the environmental sector to the newly established European Environment and Health Ministerial Board (EHMB).

10. The Chair also briefed the Committee about the main outcomes of the Bureau meeting, which had been held on 1 November 2010.

C. Adoption of the agenda

11. The agenda, as contained in the document ECE/CEP/160, was adopted.¹

D. Election of officers

12. The Committee elected Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia) as Chair. Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy), Mr. Bulat Yessekin (Kazakhstan), Ms. Jelena Knezevic (Montenegro), Mr. Adriaan Oudeman (Netherlands), Ms. Elisabete Quintas Da Silva (Portugal), Ms. Martine Rohn-Brossard (Switzerland) and Mr. John Michael Matuszak (United States of America) were elected as Vice-Chairs. A new representative of Ukraine to the Bureau would be nominated after the session, pending confirmation and election by the Committee.

II. Outcomes of the meeting of the Extended Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy

13. The Chair informed the Committee that the meeting of the Extended Bureau had taken place in Geneva on 16 and 17 March 2010 and noted that the outcomes of the meeting were presented in document ECE/CEP/2010/1.

14. The Committee took note of the meeting outcomes.

III. Environmental performance reviews

A. Environmental Performance Review of Azerbaijan

15. The rapporteur designated by the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) said that the Expert Group had reviewed Azerbaijan's environmental performance at its meeting of 28 October 2010. The country had made some progress in environmental protection during the seven years since its first EPR.

16. Progress had been achieved by Azerbaijan in its policymaking framework for environmental protection and sustainable development. The environmental authorities had been considerably strengthened, both institutionally and in terms of funding. Progress had also been made in the fields of monitoring, information, public participation and education. Azerbaijan had also made significant progress on international environmental cooperation, including in implementing international commitments under some multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

17. Azerbaijan had increased its efforts in the area of biodiversity conservation through considerable investments to create protected areas. Progress had further taken place in the

¹ Documents and other materials from the session are available on the UNECE website at <http://www.unece.org/env/cep/17thsession.html>.

use of economic instruments for environmental protection; in securing water availability; irrigation; developing the water and sanitation cycle; and in ensuring flood protection infrastructure. Some improvements had also occurred in the sewerage and wastewater sector.

18. However, the country still faced many challenges, such as strengthening institutional coordination and cooperation among ministries; developing secondary environmental legislation and a policy framework; integrating environmental concerns into economic and social sectors; developing environmental compliance and enforcement mechanisms; setting up institutional mechanisms to coordinate environmental monitoring and data collection; publishing a state-of-the-environment report; and developing a national strategy on education for sustainable development.

19. The representative of Azerbaijan then presented the current situation in the country, focusing on measures taken, the main environmental priorities and progress achieved since the first EPR in 2003.

20. In the ensuing discussion, delegates posed questions and provided some practical guidance on how to better implement the EPR recommendations.

21. The Committee concluded the peer review by adopting the recommendations in the second review of Azerbaijan. The Committee expressed appreciation to the Governments of the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland for their financial support to the EPR Programme, which had made Azerbaijan's second EPR possible. It also thanked the Governments of Germany and Portugal for providing experts for the review.

B. Environmental Performance Review of Bosnia and Herzegovina

22. The rapporteur designated by the EPRs Expert Group said that the Expert Group had reviewed Bosnia and Herzegovina's environmental performance at its meeting of 29 October 2010. The country was still struggling with the consequences and destructive effects of the war. Furthermore, it had a complex constitutional structure, with four administrative levels, and environmental protection was best regulated at the level of entities (the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina).

23. Since the first EPR in 2003 some progress in environmental protection had been achieved. In the framework of pre-accession to the European Union (EU), Bosnia and Herzegovina had made a considerable effort in aligning its legislation to that of the EU, with a view to transposing, adapting and implementing EU regulations and standards.

24. Overall, Bosnia and Herzegovina had made good progress in some areas and needed to address challenges in other areas. One crucial challenge that had to be tackled as a priority was the general lack of environmental data. Water management was very fragmented and it required harmonization between the entities and the cantons.

25. The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina presented the current situation in the country, emphasizing that an important challenge hindering progress in environmental protection was the lack of adequate financial and human resources allocated for that purpose. At the same time, a number of programmes and projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of the country in environmental protection were ongoing or under development. The second EPR would provide a valuable support to the country's efforts to advance in environmental governance.

26. In the ensuing discussion, some delegates recommended the development and implementation of programmes on sustainable tourism, given the country's good potential in that sector, which would support a better integration of environmental, economic and social concerns.

27. The Committee concluded the peer review by adopting the recommendations in the second review of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Committee expressed appreciation to the Governments of Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland for their financial support to the EPR Programme, which had made Bosnia and Herzegovina's second EPR possible. It also thanked the Governments of Germany and the Netherlands, as well as UNEP, for providing experts for the review.

28. The secretariat reported on other activities of the EPRs Expert Group. Following a request by Turkmenistan, a preparatory mission would be carried out in November 2010. The expert mission for the second review of Tajikistan had been carried out in September 2010, and the expert mission for the second review of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would be conducted in January 2011. The secretariat had received a request from Morocco asking for help in carrying out a first EPR. As the mandate of the EPR Expert Group needed to be extended, the Expert Group had put forward a proposal for expanding/opening the Group to participation by relevant experts in addition to the Group's core members and observers.

29. The Committee agreed to extend the mandate of the EPRs Expert Group for another two years, i.e., until the end of 2012. The Committee agreed that participation in the meetings of the Expert Group on any reviewed country would be open to experts nominated by Committee on Environmental Policy delegates and agreed by the members of the Expert Group in consultation with the secretariat. (See annex I for the revised terms of reference for the Expert Group.)

30. The Committee welcomed the request of Morocco for a first EPR and asked the secretariat to prepare for the Committee's next meeting a paper presenting alternative options, including a set of criteria and cost implications for providing such help. Also, the Chair of the Committee in consultation with the Bureau would send a response letter to Morocco. The Committee thanked the Governments of Germany, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland and the United States of America for providing experts in-kind for the recent and upcoming EPRs.

C. Environmental Performance Reviews Programme: third cycle

31. The secretariat presented the background document on the third cycle of EPRs (ECE/CEP/2010/8), which outlined the proposed content for EPRs in line with the third OECD EPRs. The third cycle would aim to evaluate the state of environmental media with a view to further improve policies. EPRs would include the following components: (i) environmental situation and progress (water resources, air pollution, waste and chemicals, land and soils, mineral resources); (ii) environmental management (greening the economy, legal and policymaking framework, its enforcement and implementation, implementation of international agreements and commitments, environmental governance); and (iii) integration of the environment in dealing with selected sectors/issues (climate change, biodiversity conservation and nature protection, land management, waste management, health and environment).

32. The Committee agreed to provide additional comments to the secretariat on the background document by e-mail (to antoine.nunes@unece.org with a copy to efe@unece.org) before 31 December 2010. A revised version of the document would be prepared for the special session of the Committee in May 2011.

IV. Sustainable development in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

33. The Committee Secretary informed the meeting about activities related to promoting sustainable development in the region, including the regional contribution to the eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and gave an overview of progress in preparing the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio+20), to be held in Rio de Janeiro.

34. A number of global and regional preparatory meetings were already planned for Rio+20, and a Bureau had been established, which included four representatives from the UNECE region (Czech Republic, Croatia, Italy and the United States). The two themes of Rio+20 were: (a) green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and (b) the institutional framework for sustainable development. Given the green economy theme, a proposal was made to consider linking the regional preparations for Rio+20 with the preparations of the Astana Ministerial Conference, with a view to ensuring synergies between those processes.

35. The Committee took note of the information provided. It considered the pros and cons for joining the two preparatory processes and decided that a separate preparatory meeting for Rio+20 would be better. The secretariat should organize such a meeting in December 2011. At the same time, the Astana Ministerial Conference would also contribute to the Rio+20 preparations by addressing the issue of greening the economy. At its special session in May 2011, the Committee would further consider the preparations for Rio+20.

V. Preparations for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference

A. Main outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific

36. Representatives of Kazakhstan and ESCAP presented the main outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, organized in Astana from 27 September to 2 October 2010: (a) the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific; (b) the Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (2011–2015); and (c) the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative.

37. The main goal of the “Green Bridge” Initiative by Kazakhstan was to facilitate the establishment of a Europe-Asia-Pacific partnership that would outline the blueprint for a shift from the current conventional development patterns to green growth. The Initiative had the following thematic areas: (a) eco-efficient use of natural resources and investment in ecosystem services; (b) low carbon development and adaptation to climate change; (c) sustainable urban development; (d) green business and green technology; and (d) sustainable lifestyles and improving the quality of life.

38. The Initiative aimed to strengthen intraregional (ESCAP-UNECE) and interregional cooperation through: (a) high-level dialogues; (b) normative and analytical research; (c) capacity-building of policymakers to develop policies; (d) developing new and strengthening existing mechanisms for technology transfer; and (e) developing mechanisms to attract green investments and innovative management approaches. ESCAP would support a development, jointly with UNECE, of necessary mechanisms and tools to enable successful implementation of the Initiative.

39. Kazakhstan said that the Initiative suggested a number of implementation activities, the key activity being the development of a 10-year “Green Bridge” Partnership Programme and establishment of a “Green Bridge” Investment Fund, including a package of investment projects. While the ESCAP Conference had endorsed the Initiative, the EfE Ministerial Conference was expected to adopt the Partnership Programme that Kazakhstan planned to develop jointly with interested partners and submit it to the Committee on Environmental Policy for consideration and possible transmission to the EfE Conference.

40. The Committee took note of the information provided and requested that a detailed proposal for a “Green Bridge” Partnership Programme be prepared by Kazakhstan jointly with interested partners for consideration at the special session in May 2011.

B. Host country preparations for the Conference

41. A representative of Kazakhstan informed the Committee that national preparations to host the Astana Ministerial Conference from 21 to 23 September 2011 were well under way.

42. The inter-ministerial task force under the leadership of the First Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan was working to prepare the Conference. The Advisory Council — a working group composed of representatives of relevant ministries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academia, as well as observers from other Central Asian countries — was continuing its work with CAREC, serving as its secretariat. A tripartite memorandum of understanding had been signed between the Ministry of Environmental Protection, CAREC and the Association of Nature Users for Sustainable Development with a view to support Conference preparations. The UNDP Office in Kazakhstan was also actively engaged in the preparatory process in the host country.

43. The Ministry of Environmental Protection was developing an action plan to guide the national preparatory process. Planned activities included side events, an exhibition of achievements and projects in the fields of environment and development, a presentation of the movie “The Concept of Environmental Safety”, and a special visual campaign.

44. The costs of organizing the Conference would be covered by the State budget; the host country had allocated some US\$ 2.5 million for the purpose. However, in accordance with the national legislation, the allocated funds could be spent only for costs directly related to running the Conference; costs for the preparatory process were not covered and Kazakhstan had asked countries for financial and in-kind support for that. A detailed budget would be prepared and circulated by the end of January 2011 for the Committee’s consideration.

45. The Committee Secretary briefed the meeting on the UNECE mission to Astana from 29 September to 6 October 2010 to participate in the ESCAP Conference and to conduct a preparatory mission for the organization of the EfE Conference. She thanked the Government of Kazakhstan for the well-prepared, constructive discussions and the warm hospitality. The secretariat had held meetings with representatives of the Ministry of the Environmental Protection, ESCAP, UNDP, the EU representation in Astana and CAREC, and had inspected the Conference premises. It was noted that if there were a large number of side events, they would need to be organized in the nearby Palace of Peace and Reconciliation (also known as the Pyramid of Peace) due to space limitations in the Independence Palace. A number of national focal points had been appointed to work with the secretariat on specific organizational issues, and the host country and the secretariat had agreed on a number of preparatory activities.

46. The Committee welcomed the idea of a fair on “green” innovation and technologies with a view to attracting the private sector and suggested to the host country to organize such a fair on the margins of the Conference. The host country was requested to upload on its relevant website, well in advance, detailed information on the venues of the Conference and side events, the availability of hotels, including prices, and on organizational issues related to side events.

C. Draft agenda

47. The Chair of the Committee presented the draft annotated provisional agenda for the Astana Conference as contained in document ECE/CEP/2010/3. The document included a time frame for the Conference and a set of questions shaping the discussions during the interactive Conference sessions.

48. Participants welcomed the document and decided to narrow down the possible questions for discussion to 3–4 questions per theme. For that purpose, the Committee established an ad hoc drafting group with the Bureau member from Portugal as Chair, which drafted a set of 10 questions for the three thematic discussions at the Conference. The Committee welcomed the new set of questions and approved them.

49. The Committee agreed that the thematic sessions should start with a short plenary kick-off session, followed by a multi-stakeholder round table organized in three parallel sessions. Each parallel session would address the same questions and bring different perspectives. The results of those discussions would be presented on the last day of the Conference at a plenary session and would serve as input into the Chair’s Summary of the Conference. Participants agreed that the Astana Ministerial Conference should send a strong message on greening the economy to the Rio+20 preparatory process.

50. The Committee furthermore adjusted the time frame of the Conference in accordance with the approved questions. (The agreed framework is contained in annex III.)

51. The Committee agreed to Kazakhstan’s proposal to include the “Green Bridge” Initiative in the draft agenda for the first day of the plenary session, and invited interested stakeholders to actively participate in the process of development of the Partnership Programme of Work of the Initiative, which might become one of the Conference outcomes.

52. With regard to the involvement of the private sector in the Conference, the secretariat informed the Committee about its recent consultations with private sector representatives and presented a proposal to launch a UNECE public-private round table series on green economy. A series of round tables would be organized in 2011 leading up to the Astana Ministerial Conference, which it was hoped would lead to the development of an initiative to be launched at the Conference.

53. The Committee requested the secretariat to revise the Conference’s annotated agenda for the special session in May 2011. In addition, the secretariat, in consultation with EfE partners and the Bureau, was asked to develop the organizational concept for the multi-stakeholder round tables for the Committee’s consideration.

54. Members and observers were invited to submit to the secretariat concrete suggestions for private sector representatives that would be interested in participating in the Conference, as well as eminent persons who could then be invited to have a prominent role in the Conference. Alternatively, interested eminent persons could be invited to promote the EfE process and the Conference, e.g., in the form of a statement to be disseminated before and/or at the Conference.

55. Representatives of EfE partners and stakeholders participating in the meeting reiterated their commitment to actively participate in the preparatory process and in the Conference itself.

D. Official substantive documents

56. In accordance with the EfE Reform Plan, two thematic substantive documents would be prepared for the Astana Ministerial Conference, i.e., on sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems, and on greening the economy: streamlining the environment into economic development.

57. The secretariat presented the draft outlines of these two documents (ECE/CEP/2010/6 and ECE/CEP/2010/7). The documents were prepared by the UNECE secretariat in close cooperation with relevant partners and in consultation with the Bureau of the Committee. The outlines were based on the set of questions proposed by the Bureau earlier for the interactive discussions at the Conference. Given that the list of questions had been revised at the current meeting, the drafts would also need to be revised accordingly.

58. The Committee requested the secretariat to revise the draft outlines by 30 November 2010 and to circulate the revised draft to the Committee for comments to be submitted not later than 7 January 2011. The secretariat should provide a Russian version of the revised outlines for Russian-speaking delegates. The secretariat would then revise the outlines in light of comments received and prepare full drafts of the documents for consideration of the Committee at its May session.

59. Observer organizations at the meeting expressed their interest in contributing to the preparation of the two documents for the Conference.

E. Conference outcomes

60. Following the request by the Extended Bureau, the secretariat had prepared a draft framework of the agreed outcome of the Conference (ECE/CEP/2010/4). The Chair presented the document and invited the Committee to consider the content and the process for preparing the draft agreed outcome.

61. The Committee welcomed the framework as a good basis for drafting a two-page ministerial declaration. It agreed to establish a drafting group during its May 2011 with a view to finalizing the draft ministerial declaration then.

62. The Chair of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) presented a proposal from its Bureau for a "Toolbox for Action" on Sustainable Management of Water and Water-related Ecosystems to be developed by all interested stakeholders to guide and support Governments' efforts in addressing that issue.

63. The Committee welcomed the Water Convention Bureau's proposal to develop a toolbox for action as one of the possible outcomes of the Astana Ministerial Conference. It encouraged the Water Convention Bureau to further develop the proposal for submission at the Committee's meeting in May 2011. All interested UNECE countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders were invited to participate in the development of the proposal and to nominate by 20 December 2010 one expert to participate in the drafting process, to be conducted via e-mail exchange through the UNECE Water Convention secretariat.

64. The Conference remained open to other similar initiatives and policy tools at both the regional and subregional levels.

F. Europe's Environment Assessment of Assessments report

65. The EEA Co-Chair of the UNECE Steering Group on Environmental Assessments (SGEA) gave an overview of progress in preparing Europe's Environment Assessment of Assessments (EEAoA) report, including the outcomes of two meetings of the SGEA that had taken place in March and November 2010.

66. The EEAoA report focused on an assessment of national and international assessments in the areas of water and related ecosystems and of the green economy. The report had a three-phase preparation process: during phase I, countries and organizations built a knowledge base by filling the virtual library with relevant assessments; phase II focused on analysing the assessments using a review template; and phase III would be dedicated to preparing the EEAoAs based on the results of the review template and relevant conclusions and recommendations. Currently, the report was in phases I and II.

67. The next steps in preparing the report would include strengthening the engagement of countries and organizations involved in preparing the EEAoA, and developing a prototype report. Additional financial support was required for a smooth and efficient finalization of this project.

68. The Committee took note of the progress in preparing the EEAoA. EEA was invited to submit a prototype report as soon as possible before the May meeting so that it could be used in preparing the first draft text of the Astana Conference declaration.

G. Organizational issues

69. The Chair informed the Committee that the Extended Bureau had considered the draft document regarding organizational issues for the Astana Ministerial Conference. The secretariat had revised the document to reflect comments by the Extended Bureau (ECE/CEP/2010/2).

70. The Committee approved the document with one amendment: in paragraph 6 (a) the word "environmental" should be deleted before the word "NGO".

H. Resource requirements

71. The Committee Secretary presented a document indicating the resource requirements for both the preparatory process and the Conference to ensure smooth and efficient preparations (Information paper No. 2). The core requirements for the preparatory process and for the Conference itself (e.g., supporting the participation of representatives from eligible countries with economies in transition in preparatory meetings and in the Conference; consultancy related to the preparation of the Conference; the participation of UNECE staff in preparatory meetings and in the Conference; and additional professional staff one year before the Conference) would require raising about US\$ 260,000.

72. The representative of the host country reiterated that its State budget allocated for the Conference did not allow for payments for the preparatory process. A detailed budget of host country expenditures would be prepared and circulated to the Committee in January 2011.

73. The Committee discussed resource requirements and requested the secretariat to circulate by the end of January 2011 to the Bureau, and subsequently to the Committee, an updated version of the secretariat's budget and the host country budget for fund-raising purposes.

I. Communication strategy

74. In accordance with the EfE Reform Plan, the secretariat, in consultation with the host country, prepared a draft communication plan for the Astana Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2010/5). The Committee Secretary presented the document, highlighting key communication activities planned for preparing the Conference.

75. The Committee welcomed the document and approved the communication plan for the Conference. Regarding a slogan for the Conference, the secretariat had made two suggestions: "Save water, grow green! Managing water and greening the economy for a sustainable future", and "Our vision 2020: blue water, green economy". Delegates opinions were divided, but a slight preference was given to a shorter slogan "Save water, grow green!". As a number of communication materials need to be prepared well in advance of the Conference, the secretariat would use the shorter slogan.

VI. Environmental monitoring and assessment

76. The Chair of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) informed the Committee about the outcomes of its eleventh session (Geneva, 2–3 September 2010; ECE/CEP/AC.10/2010/2). It had reviewed progress made by Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the implementation of recommendations on environmental monitoring and information management emanating from the respective countries' EPRs, and had provided guidance on how to better implement the recommendations. WGEMA had also considered the latest developments in environmental monitoring and assessment at the national, subnational and company levels, and had prepared guidelines for developing national strategies to use water-quality monitoring as an environmental policy tool for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as interested South-Eastern European countries. The guidelines would be submitted to the next session of the Committee for adoption.

77. The WGEMA Secretary presented progress in the work of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators and the results of the Task Force's second and third meetings (Geneva, 3–4 May 2010 and 1–2 September 2010, respectively; ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2010/2 and ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2010/7).

78. The Joint Task Force had noted that methodological discrepancies in producing the indicators required further examination with the aim of achieving data comparability and providing a better basis for making informed decisions on environmental policy. There was a need to continue the Task Force's work, in particular, to review the remaining indicators from the Indicator Guidelines and to clarify definitions and develop detailed guidance, possibly in the form of data tables (see information paper No. 4).

79. The Director of the Statistical Division presented the outcomes of the discussion by the Bureau of the European Committee of Statisticians on the activities of the Joint Task Force. The Bureau had agreed that the Joint Task Force's mandate should be extended for two more years.

80. The Committee considered the information presented, welcomed the progress achieved by the WGEMA and by the Joint Task Force, and agreed to extend the mandate of

the Joint Task Force through 2011–2012. It recommended that the Executive Committee of UNECE endorse the updated terms of reference of the Joint Task Force (contained in annex II).

VII. Implementation of multilateral environmental agreements: strengthening synergies and capacity-building activities

81. The secretaries of the UNECE environmental conventions in turn presented their activities related to the implementation of the conventions and their protocols, with a particular focus on capacity-building activities.²

82. The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution had undertaken a strategic review of ongoing activities and future priorities. A long-term strategy had been developed to reaffirm priorities and identify important emerging issues to be addressed in the framework of the Convention and its Protocols. Among emerging issues were hemispheric transport of air pollution and black carbon. Three Convention Protocols — on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), on Heavy Metals and the Gothenburg Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol) — were being revised. At its December 2010 meeting the Convention's Executive Body was expected to adopt the long-term strategy and to decide on the Convention's priorities with regard to its core activities, the review and revisions of Protocols, compliance, capacity-building activities and on a workplan for 2011. As decided by the Executive Body in December 2009, the Convention secretariat reported on Spain's continuous non-compliance with the Protocol on Volatile Organic Compounds.

83. Capacity-building activities had focused on implementing a number of projects, including a project on implementation and ratification of the Gothenburg Protocol in the Republic of Moldova, a project on implementation and ratification of the POPs, Heavy Metals and Gothenburg Protocols in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and a similar project for Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

84. The Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, which had 40 Parties to date, had held its sixth meeting of the Conference of Parties in The Hague from 8 to 10 November 2010. The Parties had adopted a long-term strategy with a view to continuing work on industrial safety across the UNECE region with greater effectiveness and efficiency. The strategy prioritized five areas of work: (a) communication and outreach; (b) exchange of information; (c) creation of strategic partnerships; (d) sustainable financing; and (e) enhanced cooperation and assistance. The Parties also adopted a set of indicators and criteria to benchmark progress in implementing the Convention, as an important step in helping countries to self-assess the implementation progress and adjust it as needed.

85. Capacity development had been carried out under the framework of an Assistance Programme aimed at enhancing efforts to implement the Convention. During 2009–2010, Assistance Programme projects had included, among others, a project to improve safety reporting in Croatia, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; a project to improve crisis management on transboundary rivers in Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia; and a project to enhance the environmental legal framework for implementing the Convention in Georgia.

² The PowerPoint presentations made are available at <http://www.unece.org/env/cep/17thsession.html>.

86. The Water Convention now had 38 Parties, with Serbia's accession in August 2010. Work in 2010 had focused on promoting implementation and compliance, preparation of the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters, and projects to promote the Convention's implementation on the ground. The National Policy Dialogues, carried out in the framework of the EU Water Initiative and aimed at supporting water governance in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, were continued and extended; they were now implemented in 9 out of 12 countries of the subregion. In addition, several capacity-building workshops had been organized to promote the Convention in Central Asia.

87. The second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health to the Water Convention (Bucharest, 23–25 November 2010), was expected to adopt a broad programme of work for 2011–2013, which included several capacity-building activities.

88. The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) continued to grow in 2010, with the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of Malta. To date, the Convention had 45 Parties. The Convention had also celebrated the entry into force of its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment on 11 July 2010 and it already had 20 Parties. Two back-to-back Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and to the Protocol, to take place in June 2011, were under preparation. Recent capacity-development activities under the Convention had included work on: (a) compliance and implementation (e.g., assistance to Ukraine in implementation, and pre-accession assistance to Tajikistan); (b) subregional cooperation and capacity-building (e.g., a pilot project in Belarus and subregional workshops); (c) exchange of good practices (seminars on legislation in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, on climate change and on nuclear energy); and (d) outreach (related to the Mediterranean Sea, the Caspian Sea, Mongolia, Iraq and Viet Nam).

89. The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) continued to focus in 2010 on exchange of information, sharing experience and building capacity. To date, the Convention had 44 Parties. Preparations for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties, scheduled for June 2011 in the Republic of Moldova, were under way. Also this year, the Convention's Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers had held its first session of the Meeting of the Parties, during which the governing architecture of the Protocol, its Work Programme for 2011–2014 and other key decisions had been adopted. With ratifications by Austria, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the Protocol now had 27 Parties.

90. Among capacity-building activities undertaken under the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol, were thematic workshops, advisory missions and targeted trainings.

91. The secretariat then presented a proposal for a joint project, "Strengthening implementation and ratification of the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements and enhancing cross-border interaction in Central Asia" (Information paper 6).

92. The Committee took note of the information provided and made a number of comments on the proposal. The secretariat would revise the proposal accordingly and consult with the Governing bodies of the UNECE MEAs and report back to the next session of the Committee.

VIII Cross-sectoral activities

93. The Committee was informed about recent developments under a number of ongoing cross-sectoral activities undertaken under the leadership of UNECE, or in partnership with other organizations.

A. Education for sustainable development

94. Currently, the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was at the end of its second implementation phase (2008–2010). Two key priorities had been identified for advancing ESD in the region in phase II: developing and implementing national action plans for ESD; and developing competences in ESD. Twenty-three countries had either developed or were in the process of developing action plans. An Expert Group had been established to work on developing a range of core competences in ESD for educators and general recommendations for policymakers addressing that issue. The Expert Group was in the process of finalizing the document for submission to the next meeting of UNECE Steering Committee on ESD in April 2011. The national reporting on the implementation of the phase II of the Strategy for ESD was under way, on the basis of which a regional synthesis report would be prepared in early 2011.

95. To support the exchange of experience and the process of “learning from each other”, a collection of good practices was ongoing through a dedicated website. At the same time, a collection had been made of good practices in applying ESD to address sustainable consumption, production and transportation in the context of climate change. Some 60 good practices collected across the region had served as a valuable contribution to the Fourth Regional Implementation Meeting on Sustainable Development in the UNECE region. Also, a side event on ESD had been organized at the eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, held in May 2010. A coordination mechanism had been established under the auspices of the Steering Committee on ESD, with the participation of major ESD stakeholders in the region. The issue of resource requirements for carrying out ESD activities had been identified as a critical matter for a continuous and efficient realization of the ESD process. Currently the process was managed through voluntary contributions by member States and a continuing flow of contributions was required for enabling implementation activities.³

96. The Committee took note of the information provided.

B. Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme

97. The secretariat highlighted a few activities under the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP).⁴ The key activities in 2010 and those planned for 2011 included the continuation of THE PEP “Staffete” (relay race), passing the “baton” of best practices in sustainable transport through THE PEP workshop series, from Prague to Skopje and to Batumi. The Skopje workshop on Integrated Policy Approaches to Sustainable and Healthy Transport had been held in June 2010. The Batumi workshop on

³ More detailed information on the outcomes of the Steering Committee’s last meeting are available in the meeting report (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2010/2).

⁴ Due to time constraints at the meeting, the Committee agreed that the secretariat would circulate detailed information by e-mail after the meeting. That information was circulated on 15 November 2010 and the PowerPoint presentation was posted on the UNECE website at <http://www.unece.org/env/cep/17thsession.html>.)

Safe and Healthy Walking and Cycling in Urban Areas had been held in September 2010, coinciding with the International Walk to School Month, and had launched the Walking School Bus, contributing to lower urban emissions and building community awareness of sustainable transport solutions. For the first time in THE PEP workshop series, a technical expert was sent (by the Dutch Government) in advance to Batumi, to work with local architects, urban planners and policymakers to assess the infrastructure, policies and legislation that could support or prevent safe and healthy walking and cycling and to make recommendations to the city.

98. Ongoing activities of THE PEP Clearinghouse, THE PEP Toolbox and THE PEP Partnership would continue to support the objectives of THE PEP and the four Amsterdam Goals adopted by the third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment. The eighth meeting of THE PEP Steering Committee would be held on 9 December 2010, and would be preceded by THE PEP 2010 Symposium, in line with Amsterdam Goal 1: “Green and health-friendly investment and jobs in transport”, being held on 8 December. The Symposium could form the basis of a possible side event on green economy and sustainable transport for the Astana Ministerial Conference. The next THE PEP workshop as part of the Staffete would be held in Ukraine in 2011 on the topic of “The Integration of Transport, Health and Environment for Healthy Mobility”.

C. Environment and security

99. The secretariat also drew the Committee’s attention to selected activities under the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative.⁵ The UNECE MEAs were an important pillar of ENVSEC activities and provided an added value to the partnership. The number of ENVSEC projects that UNECE was engaged in was increasing, highlighting the importance of the MEAs in conflict prevention, preventative diplomacy, confidence-building and regional cooperation to reduce conflicts. UNECE activities within ENVSEC would continue to focus on supporting implementation of its MEAs. Challenges and priorities for the future development of ENVSEC included: (a) further development of cooperation, achievement of synergies between ENVSEC Partners and outreach to a wider network of “Friends of ENVSEC”; (b) enhanced external and internal communication; and (c) improved fund-raising.

D. European Environment and Health Process

100. The current focus of the European Environment and Health Process was the follow-up to its Fifth Ministerial Conference (Parma, 10–12 March 2010). One of the Conference’s outcomes was the establishment of a European Environment and Health Ministerial Board (EHMB) to serve as a political driving force for the Environment and Health Process. The Board would be composed of eight ministers or their high-level representatives appointed by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe from the health sector and the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy from the environmental sector, so as to ensure equal sectoral and geographical representation. The Board would be accountable to the WHO Regional Committee for Europe and the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy.

⁵ Due to time constraints at the meeting, the Committee agreed that the secretariat would circulate detailed information by e-mail after the meeting. Such information was circulated on 15 November 2010 and a PowerPoint presentation was posted on the UNECE website at <http://www.unece.org/env/cep/17thsession.html>.

101. As a follow-up to that decision, the secretariat sent letters to the 56 ministers of environment in the region, inviting them to express their interest in serving a two-year term on EHMB. The provisions of the Institutional Framework for the European Environment and Health Process endorsed by the Parma Ministerial Conference supported the appointment process. Eight countries expressed their interest in serving on the first term of EHMB: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Turkey.

102. For the appointment of four members to EHMB, at its meeting on 1 November 2010, the Committee Bureau had recommended holding informal consultations among interested countries during the Committee's four-day session with a view to finding an agreement. Countries' informal consultations had resulted in a common agreement with a few conditions.

103. The Belgian delegation had asked the Committee on Environmental Policy to accept a solution crafted between Romania and Belgium, and supported by the EU, regarding selection of a candidate for EHMB from the EU "subregion". Belgium was ready to allow Romania to take up a seat in the 2011–2012 term of EHMB, insofar as that was considered as the first half of a split ticket, by virtue of which a seat was guaranteed for the Belgian candidate in the 2013–2014 term of EHMB, subject to reconfirmation of interest by that candidate.

104. Belgium had requested the Committee on Environmental Policy's acceptance of the foregoing arrangement. Belgium took note of the statement of the Chair, and subsequent agreement by the Committee, that a seat in the 2013-2014 EHMB would be available for the EU as a "subregion", and agreed with the Chair that that, combined with the internal understanding within the EU on the Romanian-Belgian split ticket, offered a sufficiently firm commitment in that respect. The Committee agreed with that solution.

105. Belarus and the Republic of Moldova agreed that Belarus should take up a seat on the 2011–2012 EHMB, with the understanding that the candidature of the Republic of Moldova for a seat in 2013–2014 EHMB would receive favourable consideration by the Committee, subject to reconfirmation of interest by that candidate. The Committee agreed with that solution.

106. The Committee appointed Ministers of Environment from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Romania and Turkey for the first term of the Board (2011–2012).

107. From the health sector, at its sixtieth session (Moscow, 13–16 September 2010), the WHO Regional Committee had elected by consensus the Ministers of Health of France, Malta, Slovenia and Serbia for the first term of EHMB. France offered to host the first meeting of EHMB in Paris in April 2011.

IX. Calendar of meetings

108. The Committee noted that its special session would take place in Geneva from 24 to 27 May 2011.⁶

⁶ The schedule of Committee's meetings is available on its website at <http://www.unece.org/env/efe/Astana/welcome.html>.

X. Summary of decisions by the Committee

109. At its meeting, the Committee:

(a) Agreed on the agenda for the Astana Ministerial Conference, and requested the secretariat to revise the Conference's annotated agenda for the Committee's special session in May 2011;

(b) Requested the secretariat to revise the draft outlines of two thematic documents for the Conference, and invited delegations to provide comments to the revised drafts by 7 January 2011;

(c) Invited the secretariat to prepare full drafts of the documents for consideration of the May session of the Committee;

(d) Approved the document on organizational issues for the Conference with one modification;

(e) Approved the communication plan for the Conference;

(f) Requested the secretariat to circulate by the end of January 2011 to the Bureau and subsequently to the Committee an updated version of the secretariat's budget and the host country budget for fund-raising purposes;

(g) Invited interested stakeholders to actively participate in the process of development of the Partnership Programme of the Astana "Green Bridge" Initiative, and invited Kazakhstan to submit a detailed proposal for a Partnership Programme for consideration by the Committee at its May 2011 special session;

(h) Invited interested UNECE countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to participate in the development of the toolbox for action on sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems, and to nominate by 20 December 2010 one expert to participate in the drafting process by e-mail (to efe@unece.org with a copy to sonja.koeppel@unece.org);

(i) Invited its members and observers to submit to the secretariat the names of private sector representatives that would be interested in participating in the Conference, as well as the names of eminent persons to have a prominent role in the Conference;

(j) Welcomed the idea of a fair on "green" innovation and technologies with a view to attracting the private sector, and suggested to Kazakhstan to organize such a fair on the margins of the Astana Ministerial Conference;

(k) Reviewed the environmental performance of Azerbaijan, and adopted related recommendations;

(l) Reviewed the environmental performance of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and adopted related recommendations;

(m) Agreed to renew the mandate for the Expert Group on EPRs for two years, from 2011 to the end of 2012, as well as open the Group to additional experts;

(n) Agreed to provide comments to the proposal for a third cycle of EPRs to the secretariat by e-mail (to antoine.nunes@unece.org with a copy to efe@unece.org) before 31 December 2010;

(o) Welcomed the request of Morocco for a first EPR, and asked the secretariat to prepare for the Committee's next meeting a paper presenting alternative options, including a set of criteria and cost implications for providing such help. The Chair of the Committee in consultation with the Bureau would send a response letter to Morocco.

(p) Agreed to extend the mandate for the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators for another two years, until the end of 2012 on the basis of the revised terms of reference of the Joint Task Force (as contained in annex II to the present report);

(r) Appointed Ministers of Environment from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Romania and Turkey for the first term of the EHMB (2011–2012);

(s) Agreed with the solutions reached between Belgium and Romania and between Belarus and the Republic of Moldova concerning EHMB.

XI. Closure of the meeting

110. The Committee requested the Bureau of the Committee and the secretariat to follow up on the decisions of the meeting. The Chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting.

Annex I

Revised terms of reference for the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for 2011–2012

Membership

1. The core of the Expert Group should comprise 10 to 14 members, with due consideration to geographical balance among countries in the region. It is suggested that, when new members are chosen, due regard should be given to experts from countries that have recently been reviewed, as well as to those who have undergone or will soon undergo second reviews.
2. Participation, as observers, in the meetings of the Expert Group will be open to Committee on Environmental Policy delegates, who shall act as advisers to review the report and its recommendations.
3. In addition, participation in the meetings of the Expert Group on any reviewed country will be open to experts nominated by the Committee on Environmental Policy delegates, and agreed by the members of the Expert Group in consultation with the secretariat.

Terms of reference

4. The mandate of the core members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews is renewed for a period of two years for the purposes of:
 - (a) Carrying out the expert review process, prior to the peer review to be undertaken by the Committee on Environmental Policy;
 - (b) Providing guidance to the UNECE secretariat and the Committee on Environmental Policy on all substantive and organizational matters arising in the implementation of the UNECE programme of Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs);
 - (c) Assisting the UNECE secretariat in coordinating the UNECE EPR programme with processes under way in other international institutions that have a bearing on it, inter alia, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Asian Development Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) EPR programme and its work in the region of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.
5. The guidance of the Expert Group to UNECE and the Committee will include:
 - (a) Identification of opportunities and requirements for improving the conduct of the EPRs;
 - (b) Assessment of environmental trends relevant to the EPR process in countries in transition, including the organization of joint meetings, seminars and workshops at the regional and subregional levels, where these are demand-driven;
 - (c) Review and improvement of the data and information used for the EPR;

(d) Drawing up proposals on how to improve the adoption of the recommendations contained in the EPR country reports and their implementation.

6. The core members of the EPR Expert Group are elected by the Committee on Environmental Policy upon the recommendation of the Bureau. The secretariat will invite international institutions pursuing related work to participate in the work of the EPR Expert Group.

7. While taking decisions on an EPR report under review and its recommendations, the Expert Group shall take into consideration the inputs by the reviewing countries and Committee delegates who participate in the meeting.

8. The EPR Expert Group shall elect its Chair and Vice-Chair.

9. The EPR Expert Group will report annually on its activities to the Committee on Environmental Policy, and may raise any issue with the Committee that it deems necessary for the implementation of its mandate.

Timetable

10. The mandate of the Expert Group will cover a two-year period, from 2011 to the end of 2012.

Annex II

Revised terms of reference for the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators for 2011-2012

I. Background

1. The Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators was set up by the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) and the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in 2009 to improve environmental data collection and reporting in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe (SEE), and to promote comparability of environmental statistics and indicators in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region.
2. The Joint Task Force held three meetings in 2009–2010. It reviewed a total of 20 of 36 indicators covered by the Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (Indicator Guidelines) that were prepared by the CEP Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and endorsed at the Belgrade (2007) “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference. The Joint Task Force also considered indicators that are important but are currently not included in the Indicator Guidelines.
3. The Joint Task Force noted that methodological discrepancies in producing the indicators required further examination with the aim of achieving data comparability and providing a better basis for making informed decisions on environmental policy. Unanimous support was expressed to continue the work, in particular, to review the remaining indicators from the Indicator Guidelines, to clarify definitions and to develop detailed guidance, possibly in the form of data tables, on the production of indicators. Continuation of data reporting on indicators was considered of high importance for identifying gaps and opportunities for filling those gaps.

II. Mandate and reporting

4. The Joint Task Force will continue to report to its parent bodies, CEP and CES. It will submit a report on its accomplishments to both bodies.

III. Objective

5. The objective of the Joint Task Force is to assist national statistical agencies and institutions responsible for the production of national state-of-the-environment reports in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and SEE to further improve environmental statistics, strengthen environmental reporting and promote comparability of environmental statistics and indicators in the region.

IV. Planned activities and outputs

6. To achieve its objectives, the Joint Task Force will undertake the following activities:
 - (a) Review further the indicators covered by the Indicator Guidelines to better explain the methodologies, clarify concepts and definitions and develop detailed guidance, possibly in the form of data tables, on the production of indicators;

(b) Provide guidance on primary data collection, including statistical data, as a basis for indicators in the Indicator Guidelines through data exchange on indicators and the subsequent evaluation of gaps and opportunities to fill them;

(c) Propose additional environmental indicators to be included in the Indicator Guidelines;

(d) Continue strengthening, in cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and other relevant institutions, the capacity of the countries concerned to produce environmental data, including statistical data, and indicators through providing technical assistance and training;

(e) Provide and adapt to the needs of the countries concerned relevant guidance materials available at the international level;

(f) Maintain a network of environmental experts in statistical offices and Government agencies dealing with environmental assessments to further broaden the exchange of experiences and approaches.

7. The Task Force will prepare, in particular, the following outputs:

(a) Reviews of the application of environmental indicators from the Indicator Guidelines in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and SEE. Analysis of the results of these reviews will help to identify priority work areas where further improvement is most needed in these countries and where training courses and workshops may have a maximum effect. The reviews may also help international donors to identify potential areas for technical assistance;

(b) Further improvement of Indicator Guidelines on the texts of indicators not yet reviewed;

(c) Agreed texts of additional indicators that are not included in the Indicator Guidelines;

(d) Methodological documents, presentations and recommendations on data collection and production of indicators.

V. Timetable

8. The mandate of the Task Force will cover the period from 2011 to the end of 2012.

VI. Method of work

9. The Joint Task Force is expected, subject to availability of donor support, to have three face-to-face meetings during its mandate. The Joint Task Force will also work via e-mail and other electronic means. Donors will be invited to provide voluntary contributions to support the Joint Task Force.

VII. Membership

10. The Joint Task Force will be open to all UNECE countries. Other interested countries are also welcome to participate. The EEA, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the United Nations Statistics Division, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the International Energy Agency, the World Health Organization European Centre for Environment and Health, the Statistical

Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States and other institutions will be invited to participate.

VIII. Secretariat support

11. The Environment, Housing and Land Management Division and the Statistical Division will jointly service the Task Force. This will include:

(a) Servicing the Joint Task Force meetings (with interpretation and translation), including the preparation of meeting agendas and reports;

(b) Preparing background documents and compilation papers for the Joint Task Force at its request;

(c) Arranging for financial support for members of the Joint Task Force from countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and SEE, so that they can participate in the Joint Task Force meetings;

(d) Helping the above-mentioned countries, under projects with EEA and other interested institutions, to improve their capabilities for producing indicators.

Annex III

Time frame for and questions for discussion at the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference

Astana, 21–23 September 2011

(As agreed by the Committee on 4 November 2010)

<i>Tuesday, 21 September</i>	<i>Wednesday, 22 September</i>	<i>Thursday, 23 September</i>
<i>Registration (9 a.m.–2 p.m.)</i> <i>Greening-the-conference-related events for the Heads of Delegation organized by the host country, such as planting trees, riding bikes, etc. (11 a.m.–noon.)</i>	<u>3. Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems</u> <i>(one-hour plenary followed by two-hour round-table discussions, organized in three parallel sessions, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.)</i> <u>Questions for discussion:</u> (a) Which policies proved to be effective to value and protect water-related ecosystems, including the payment for ecosystem services? What are the main obstacles and gaps? (b) Which policies proved to be effective in addressing human health issues related to water quality and quantity? What are the main obstacles and gaps? (c) What are the priorities/challenges in adapting management of water and water-related ecosystems to extreme weather events and to climate change? (d) What are the experiences and lessons learned from the cooperation in transboundary basins to improve water quality, manage water quantity and protect ecosystems?	<u>5. Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development</u> <i>(one-hour plenary followed by two-hour round-table discussions, organized in three parallel sessions, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.)</i> <u>Questions for discussion:</u> (a) What policy mixes have the potential to secure the achievement of a green, inclusive, and competitive economy, through an integrated approach, including sectors such as transport, housing, energy, agriculture and education? (b) How can resource efficiency improve sustainability and competitiveness in local, regional and global markets? (c) How can research, innovation and investment help the transition towards a green economy? (d) How could the “Environment for Europe” process contribute to outcomes on green economy in the context of Rio+20?
Lunch break / side events: noon–2 p.m.	Lunch break / side events: 1–3 p.m.	Lunch break / side events: 1–3 p.m.

Tuesday, 21 September

1. Opening of the Conference

(plenary, 2–4 p.m.)

- Opening ceremony
- Adoption of the agenda

2. The EfE process: 20 years of pan-European cooperation

(plenary, 4–6 p.m.)

- History of the EfE process (20th anniversary)
- Astana Green Bridge Initiative
- Presentation of EEAOA
- Presentation of the Second Assessment of Transboundary Waters
- Statements by Ministers and high-level representatives of private sector and civil society, with an emphasis on the findings of EEAOA

Official events / side events: 6–9 p.m.

Wednesday, 22 September

4. Sustainable management of water and greening the economy

(one-hour plenary followed by two-hour round-table discussions, organized in three parallel sessions, 3–6 p.m.)

Questions for discussion:

- (a) What policy mixes and practical tools, such as IWRM, pricing, standards, and water users associations, can be most effective to improve water efficiency by different water users, especially in agriculture, households and industrial operations?
- (b) How can we encourage investments to take into account the impacts on water quantity and water quality, energy and resource efficiency, and vulnerable populations?

Official event — establishment of Environmental Information System (SEIS) / side events: 6–9 p.m.

Thursday, 23 September

6. Reporting on the outcomes of the discussions under the thematic sessions

(plenary, 3–4.30 p.m.)

7. Adoption of Conference outcomes

(plenary, 4.30–5.30 p.m.)

8. Closing of the Conference

(plenary, 5.30–6 p.m.)

Official events / side events: 6–9 p.m.
