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Economic Commission for Europe**Committee on Environmental Policy****Special session**

Geneva, 24–27 May 2011

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

Preparations for the Seventh “Environment for Europe”**Ministerial Conference: provisional agenda****Draft annotated provisional agenda for the Seventh
“Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

Pursuant to a decision by Ministers at the Sixth “Environment for Europe” (EfE) Ministerial Conference (Belgrade, 2007), the Seventh EfE Ministerial Conference will be held from 21 to 23 September 2011 in Astana (Kazakhstan). The Astana EfE Ministerial Conference is being organized in accordance with the Reform Plan of the EfE process.

The secretariat has prepared this draft annotated provisional agenda for the Conference, in accordance with the Conference schedule approved by the seventeenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (ECE/CEP/161, annex I).

The present document is being submitted to the Committee on Environmental Policy for approval.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the Conference and adoption of the agenda.
2. The “Environment for Europe” process: 20 years of pan-European cooperation.
3. Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems.
4. Sustainable management of water and greening the economy.
5. Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development.
6. Reporting on the outcomes of the discussion under the thematic segments.
7. Adoption of Conference outcomes.
8. Closure of the Conference.

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Opening of the Conference and adoption of the agenda

Plenary session, Wednesday, 21 September 2011, 2–4 p.m.

1. A high-level representative of Kazakhstan will open the Conference. Introductory remarks by the Chair of the Conference and welcoming speeches by high-level representatives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will follow. An opening event by the host country will be presented to the delegates.
2. The Conference will be invited to adopt its agenda.

Document

Annotated provisional agenda for the Conference (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/1).

2. The “Environment for Europe” process: 20 years of pan-European cooperation

Plenary session, Wednesday, 21 September 2011, 4–6 p.m.

3. The session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of the Conference. A representative from the Czech Republic will address the Conference on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the EfE process, which began in Dobříš, Czech Republic, in 1991.
4. A representative of Kazakhstan will present the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative and a partnership programme to implement this Initiative.
5. The Executive Director of the European Environment Agency will present the key findings of “Europe’s Environment Assessment of Assessments” (EEAoA) report.
6. A representative of Finland will present the findings of the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in the UNECE region.
7. Following the presentations, the floor will be opened for discussion with an emphasis on the findings of EEAoA and the second Assessment. The Conference may decide on follow-up measures.

8. The Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative, aimed at establishing a Europe-Asia-Pacific partnership to facilitate a shift towards green growth, was adopted by the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (September/October 2010, Astana). The E/E Ministerial Conference may take decisions regarding this Initiative and a “Green Bridge” partnership programme developed by Kazakhstan jointly with interested partners.

Documents

Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative: Europe-Asia-Pacific Partnership for the Implementation of “Green Growth” (E/ESCAP/MCED(6)/13).

Partnership Programme of the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

Europe’s Environment Assessment of Assessments (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in the UNECE region (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

3. Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems

Plenary session and round-table discussion, Thursday, 22 September 2011, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

9. A one-hour plenary session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of this thematic segment of the Conference. Two keynote addresses will follow to kick-off the discussion.

10. Interested countries and organizations will be given the opportunity to briefly present initiatives and policy tools relevant to this item of the agenda. One such initiative is the Toolbox for Action on Sustainable Management of Water and Water-related Ecosystems, which has been prepared under the leadership of the Chair of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

11. Following the plenary session, the meeting will break into three parallel sessions of a multi-stakeholder round table on sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems. Each parallel session will address the same questions, but bring different perspectives. The questions are the following:

(a) Which policies proved to be effective to value and protect water-related ecosystems, including payment for ecosystem services? What are the main obstacles and gaps?

(b) What 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?

12. The consolidated results of discussions will be presented on the last day of the Conference and will serve as input into the Chair’s Summary of the Conference.

Documents

Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

Toolbox for Action on Sustainable Management of Water and Water-related Ecosystems (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in the UNECE region (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

Europe's Environment Assessment of Assessments (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

4. Sustainable management of water and greening the economy

Plenary session and round-table discussion, Thursday, 22 September 2011, 3–6 p.m.

13. The afternoon one-hour plenary session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of this interlinking thematic segment. Two keynote addresses will follow to kick-off the discussion.

14. Interested countries and organizations will be given the opportunity to briefly present initiatives and policy tools relevant to this item of the agenda.

15. Following the plenary session, the meeting will break into three parallel sessions of a multi-stakeholder round table on sustainable management of water and greening the economy. Each parallel session will address the same questions, but bring different perspectives. The questions are the following:

(a) What policy mixes and practical tools, such as integrated water resources management (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?

16. The consolidated results of discussions will be presented on the last day of the Conference and will serve as input into the Chair's Summary of the Conference.

Documents

Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in the UNECE region (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

Europe's Environment Assessment of Assessments (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

5. Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development

Plenary session and round-table discussion, Friday, 23 September 2011, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

17. The Friday morning one-hour plenary session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of this thematic segment on greening the economy. Two keynote addresses will follow to kick-off the discussion.

18. Interested countries and organizations will be given the opportunity to briefly present initiatives and policy tools relevant to this item of the agenda. One such initiative is the Partnership Programme of the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative prepared under the leadership of Kazakhstan.

19. Following the plenary session, the meeting will break into three parallel sessions of a multi-stakeholder round table on greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development. Each parallel session will address the same questions, but bring different perspectives. The questions are the following:

(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 the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) 2012 (Rio+20)?

20. The consolidated results of discussions will be presented on the last day of the Conference and will serve as input into the Chair’s Summary of the Conference.

Documents

Greening the Economy: Mainstreaming the Environment into Economic Development (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

Europe’s Environment Assessment of Assessments (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative: Europe-Asia-Pacific Partnership for the Implementation of “Green Growth” (E/ESCAP/MCED(6)/13).

Partnership Programme of the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

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

Plenary session, Friday, 23 September 2011, 3–4.30 p.m.

21. The Friday afternoon session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of the Conference. On the basis of reports from the round-table discussions, the Chairs of the thematic segments will present summaries of the discussions under agenda items 3, 4 and 5.

22. Following the presentations, the floor will be opened for discussion.

7. Adoption of Conference outcomes

Plenary session, Friday, 23 September 2011, 4.30–5.30 p.m.

23. The session will open with introductory remarks by the Chair of the Conference presenting a draft of the agreed outcome (Ministerial Declaration).

24. The Conference will be invited to consider initiatives, agreements, pledges and policy tools by interested ministers and stakeholders on subjects related to the Conference themes that may have been submitted to the Conference.

25. The Conference will also be invited to consider its contribution to the UNCSD to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.

26. The Conference will then be invited to adopt the Ministerial Declaration.

Documents

Draft Ministerial Declaration (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/...).

8. Closure of the Conference

Plenary session, Friday, 23 September 2011, 5.30–6 p.m.

27. The Chair of the Conference will summarize the results of the Conference and circulate them in the form of a Chair's summary.

28. The Conference will close at 6 p.m. on 23 September 2011.

Annex

Schedule and questions for discussions for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference

Astana, 21–23 September 2011

Wednesday, 21 September

Registration (9 a.m.–2 p.m.)

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.)

Lunch break / side events:
noon–2 p.m.

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 the private sector and civil society, with an emphasis on the findings of EEAOA

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

Thursday, 22 September

3. Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems

(one-hour plenary followed by two-hour round-table discussions, organized in three parallel sessions, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.)

Questions for discussion:

- (a) Which policies proved to be effective to value and protect water-related ecosystems, including payment for ecosystem services? What are the main obstacles and gaps?
- (b) What 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?

Lunch break / side events: 1–3 p.m.

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.

Friday, 23 September

5. Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development

(one-hour plenary followed by two-hour round-table discussions, organized in three parallel sessions, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.)

Questions for discussion:

- (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 UNCSD 2012 (Rio+20)?

Lunch break / side events: 1–3 p.m.

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. Closure of the Conference

(plenary, 5.30–6 p.m.)

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