



FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE

KIEV, UKRAINE
21-23 May 2003

DECLARATION

**by the Environment Ministers of the region of
the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**



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Fifth Ministerial Conference
"Environment for Europe"
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Introduction

1. We, the Environment Ministers and Heads of delegation from 51 countries in the UNECE region and the Representative of the European Commission, met at Kiev, Ukraine, from 21 to 23 May 2003, in the fifth of a series of Ministerial Conferences held as part of the "Environment for Europe" (EfE) process.
2. We underline the importance of the EfE process as a tool to promote environmental protection and sustainable development in the region, thus contributing to wider peace and security. We reaffirm our commitment to cooperation on environmental protection among countries in Europe, North America, the Caucasus and Central Asia, taking into account the principles that were agreed in Dobruška, Czechoslovakia, in 1991; in Lucerne, Switzerland, in 1993; in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1995; in Aarhus, Denmark, in 1998; and here, today, in Kiev, Ukraine, in 2003.
3. We take note of the rapid political, economic and social changes that have taken place in the region since the establishment of the EfE process in 1991 and we underline our view that these changes call for efforts to strengthen cooperation within the region. In particular, we express our satisfaction that, with the enlargement of the European Union in May 2004, the EU will welcome as Member States the countries that were the initial focus of the EfE process when it was launched. We look forward in this context to new opportunities and challenges for strengthening environmental collaboration in the region.

4. As we move forward with the EfE process, we should emphasize our common goals with respect to the environment. We also wish to highlight our common dedication to cooperating in achieving high standards of environmental protection. In doing so, we should take advantage of the diversity each of us brings to the Conference. There are many approaches and solutions to the environmental issues faced by the UNECE region. We come to the Conference from different geographic regions with differing experiences, ideas and mechanisms for approaching these issues. Such diversity should be allowed to serve our common goals, with each of our efforts and experiences offering new lessons for facing the problems that impact us all.

5. We welcome the decisions taken at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002) and we commit ourselves to implementing these decisions to strengthen the environmental pillar of sustainable development at the global, regional, subregional and national levels taking into account the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development, recognizing that the three pillars are mutually reinforcing and interdependent, and to promote partnerships in support of the goals of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation as well as of the Ministerial Statement of the UNECE Regional Preparatory Meeting for WSSD (Geneva, 2001). The present Declaration adopted at the first ministerial environment conference in the region since WSSD represents a collective response to these decisions.

I. ACHIEVEMENTS

6. We acknowledge that the EfE process has been a unique multilateral process that brings all countries in the region together on an equal footing. We are encouraged that this process has evolved into the major high-level pan-European framework for discussing key environmental policy issues, developing programmes, launching negotiations on legally binding instruments and various partnerships and initiatives, including new institutional structures for the environment, in a balance between subregional and regional issues and openness to intensive intersectoral cooperation. We appreciate that the process has provided a wider political platform for the environmental initiatives of subregions, thus making them more effective and visible.

7. We note the results achieved under the Environmental Action Programme (EAP) for Central and Eastern Europe endorsed at the Lucerne Conference. The EAP Task Force has played an effective role in promoting environmental policy reform and capacity building in countries with economies in transition, particularly in reforming policy instruments, environmental financing, environmental management in enterprises and urban water sector reform. The Project Preparation Committee (PPC) has been instrumental in mobilizing and channelling external financing to resolve priority environmental problems in countries with economies in transition, as well as in ensuring coordination among clients, host Governments, donors and international financial institutions (IFIs). We recognize the achievements of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Regional Environmental Center (REC) for Central and Eastern Europe in implementing the work programme of the EAP Task Force.

8. We recognize that the UNECE programme of environmental performance reviews (EPR), also initiated at Lucerne, as well as other analytical and advisory work of partners in the EfE process, have made it possible to assess the effectiveness of the efforts of countries with economies in transition to manage the environment, and to offer the Governments concerned tailor-made recommendations on improving environmental management to reduce pollution loads, to better integrate environmental policies into sectoral policies and to strengthen cooperation with the international community.

9. We note the three assessment reports on the state of the environment produced and published by the European Environment Agency (EEA) in 1995, 1998 and 2003 that have helped to identify major threats and challenges for the development of regional environmental policies, and in the first years to lay the ground for the preparation of the Environmental Programme for Europe, which was endorsed at the Sofia Conference as the first attempt to set long-term environmental priorities at the pan-European level and to make Agenda 21 more operational in the European context.

10. We note that the preparations for EfE ministerial conferences have stimulated the drawing-up of a number of legally binding instruments promoting environmental protection and sustainable development in the region such as the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, and the Protocols on Heavy Metals and on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Environmental agreements developed under the EfE process complement and strengthen the regional environmental legal infrastructure that has been built by the Conventions on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

11. We stress that other important policy tools have resulted from the EfE conferences, including strategies, policy statements and guidelines. These tools, together with the links established between the EfE process and other ministerial processes in the region – environment and health; transport, health and environment; and the protection of forests – help to promote the integration of environmental considerations into sectoral policies.

12. We note with satisfaction that the process has brought international organizations and institutions active in the region together to work in a unique cooperative setting. We also stress the success of the EfE process in involving civil society organizations in regional environmental policy-making and implementation. Positive examples are the active involvement of REC for Central and Eastern Europe and the establishment of new RECs in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and a structured dialogue with a broad coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

II. CHALLENGES

13. We reaffirm the important responsibility of our region to improve the global environment. We have to take action to confront the adverse impact of present development inside and outside the region. We stress the need to strengthen regional and subregional cooperation as well as to support partnership initiatives with countries outside the region particularly through interregional activities. We recognize the need to accelerate and coordinate our efforts to fight global environmental threats.

14. We are concerned that environmental degradation and the unsustainable use of natural resources may have significant social and economic consequences, such as increased poverty, cause health hazards, and aggravate insecurity and social tensions, possibly leading to political instability. We are also concerned that conflicts over shared natural resources and ecosystems could lead to tensions between States and have an adverse impact on other subregions, directly or indirectly. Instead, shared natural resources should be a catalyst for regional and subregional cooperation. We recognize that the EfE process should contribute to strengthening wider peace, security and human safety, and should continue its close cooperation with the Organization for

Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). We note the serious environmental consequences of armed conflicts in the region and welcome contributions made by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in undertaking post-conflict environmental assessments.

15. We welcome the Kiev Assessment prepared by the European Environment Agency (EEA) with the support of countries and UNECE and in cooperation with UNEP and other international organizations, which for the first time covers all countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia ^{1/} We, the Ministers and Heads of delegation of States covered by this assessment, are particularly concerned over its findings that in our countries:

(a) In terms of integration of environmental considerations into sectoral policies, only limited progress has been achieved to date and only in a few cases has there been significant decoupling of economic growth from associated environmental pressures. This progress has resulted mainly from one-off changes, technical substitutions (e.g. for leaded petrol and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)) or economic decline. Much of this progress is therefore unlikely to be sustained in the face of continuing or renewed economic growth;

(b) Important ecosystems continue to be at risk, including wetlands and species-rich agricultural habitats. Land-use conflicts from transport, urbanization and intensive agriculture continue to diminish the remaining semi-natural remote areas at unacceptable rates. Progress has been made in recovering several species; however, a number of the region's species continue to decline at an alarming rate, threatening biodiversity. Overexploitation of some fish stocks in particular is putting these species at a high risk of collapse;

(c) Water quality and water resources in many subregions are still under threat from a range of human activities. Problems are generally the most severe near hot spots;

(d) The continued growth of transport, with minimal progress in the use of non-fossil fuels and modal shift, is a major problem for the environment, due to further increases in greenhouse gas emissions and health impacts. The increasing demand for tourism transport forms an additional challenge to integrated transport policies;

(e) Alarming exceedances of World Health Organization (WHO) air quality standards continue in many urban areas. Exposure to particulate matter is now the largest threat to health from air pollution in cities;

(f) Emissions of some persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are still a concern. Concentrations of a number of newly identified chemical pollutants not classified as POPs are rising. Obsolete chemicals and contaminated sites continue to have a serious environmental and health impact in countries in transition;

(g) Total waste quantities are increasing in most countries, with only limited progress towards the decoupling of waste generation, particularly hazardous waste, from economic growth in some countries;

(h) Soil is being irreversibly lost and degraded as a result of increasing and often conflicting demands from nearly all economic sectors. The main problems are irreversible losses due to soil sealing and erosion, continuing contamination from local and diffuse sources, acidification, salinization, compaction and desertification.

^{1/} These countries are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The name of this group of countries does not constitute an internationally recognized term based on either geographical or socio-economic criteria.

16. As many environmental problems in the region remain unsolved, we need to raise the profile of environmental issues within Governments, to strengthen the involvement of sectoral ministries in environmental protection and to tackle these problems in closer cooperation.

17. We recognize that the WSSD outcome and the existing pressures on the region's environment call for refocusing pan-European policy-making on more effective integration of environmental considerations in other policy areas, in particular to establish positive trends to move the region towards greater sustainability. Sustainable development, in particular, should delink economic growth from environmental degradation so as to promote both economic growth and environmental protection. Care of the environment and proper management of natural resources must not be peripheral to, or in competition with, socio-economic development.

18. We note and continue to support the international legally binding instruments for environmental protection to which we are party; at the same time, we stress that greater emphasis should be placed on compliance with and national implementation of these instruments. In addition to political will and, in some cases, substantial financial resources, the development of appropriate human and institutional capacities is required, and this has not always been sufficiently recognized.

19. We further note that legally binding agreements alone will not suffice to guarantee environmental protection and a comparable level of their implementation throughout the region. Countries need to establish clear objectives, set realistic specific time frames and coherently apply the most cost-effective policy instruments. Economic instruments, voluntary approaches and information and participation instruments have to be more widely and effectively used to promote integration of environmental considerations across the region.

20. We stress the importance of environmental information and data for policy-making and public awareness, recognizing that not all countries use indicator-based mechanisms for their periodic environmental assessments and their evaluation of the effectiveness of environmental policies and decision-making. Better data collection in such areas as chemicals and biodiversity is needed. Improved coordination and optimization of environmental assessments, including outlooks, and reporting are another area for concerted action.

21. We note the over 220 partnership initiatives announced at the WSSD and the need to continue to engage business and industry on corporate social responsibility and accountability, as well as in public-private partnerships to achieve common environmental and sustainable development objectives including eco-efficiency. We recognize the need to further engage the commitment, creativity and resources of business and industry as well as research and innovation in these efforts. We take note of the reports on the Implementation of the Aarhus Policy Statement on Environmental Management in Enterprises prepared by OECD and the REC for Central and Eastern Europe.

22. We recognize the importance of developing new and reinforcing existing forms of cooperation for promoting environmental protection for the benefit of sustainable development within the UNECE region, and recognize the severity of existing environmental challenges, in particular in South-East and East European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries. Many of these countries face serious financial and other difficulties in achieving national environmental objectives. These countries like many others have to make difficult decisions about realistic priorities, establish better cooperation between Environment and Finance Ministries, improve national and local capacities, and use existing resources more efficiently. Further efforts are also needed at all levels to mobilize additional domestic and international finances for environmental purposes. An enabling domestic environment is vital for mobilizing domestic resources, increasing

productivity, reducing capital flight, encouraging the private sector and attracting and making effective use of international investment and assistance. These countries need a clear perspective regarding cooperation with other subregions.

III. RESPONSES: MAKING IT HAPPEN

A. Global commitments

23. We will support the work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other relevant United Nations agencies in following up WSSD results at the global and regional level, and in supporting the implementation of these results and the outcome of the Regional Ministerial Meeting for WSSD at the regional and national levels, as appropriate. In this regard, we invite UNECE, within its mandate, to collaborate with other regional and subregional organizations and bodies, as appropriate, as well as regional offices of funds, programmes, international and trade institutions and other organizations of the United Nations system in contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the decision of UNCSD at its 11th session regarding regional implementation, and providing inputs to the global sustainable development process as decided by UNSCD at its 11th session.

24. We call on all countries in the region to honour their global commitments in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). We welcome the agreement of WSSD to promote mutual supportiveness between the multilateral trading system and the MEAs, consistent with sustainable development goals, in support of the work programme agreed through the World Trade Organization, while recognizing the importance of maintaining the integrity of both sets of instruments. We will work towards the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We will promote regional coordination and cooperation among the relevant MEAs.

25. Life on our planet is dependent upon the oceans. Sea and ocean resources are not inexhaustible and not of an infinite regenerative capacity. For this reason the world's leaders agreed on a set of actions at WSSD to help ensure the productivity, safety and overall health of our oceans. We will continue in existing forums to work toward sustainable fisheries, the conservation of biodiversity, the strengthening of marine science, improved coordination and cooperation, the reduction and elimination of marine pollution and greater maritime safety. We reaffirm the commitments made at WSSD to encourage the application of the ecosystem approach for oceans and seas by 2010, to make every effort to achieve substantial progress to protect the marine environment from land-based activities by the next Conference of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities in 2006, and to establish marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including representative networks by 2012. We welcome subregional cooperation around the seas in the region, and the efforts to address maritime transport safety and we welcome in this context the work of the subregions on particularly sensitive sea areas.

26. We will strengthen our efforts at the global, regional, subregional and national levels to promote good governance and to reverse the current trend of natural resource degradation as soon as possible, with a view to contributing to building social cohesion, reducing poverty and vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters, with mainstreaming of the gender perspective, and with a view to improving living conditions for children and vulnerable groups and to promoting sustainable development, peace and security. We welcome and support the initiatives and

partnerships designed to address these links to strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration and obtain better results.

27. We will encourage national efforts to promote sustainable production and consumption as well as corporate environmental and social responsibility and accountability. The integration of environmental considerations into sectoral policies, where appropriate, and the delinking of economic growth and environmental degradation, so as to promote both economic growth and environmental protection are crucial.

28. We underline the importance of the shift towards sustainable production and consumption patterns and encourage regions, subregions and countries, as appropriate, to devise programmes to accelerate this shift. As decided at WSSD, we will encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of this, taking them to our next conference. Countries should decide which tools will be of most use to them in these efforts. Some important programme elements to be considered are: the promotion of environmental policy integration, including continued promotion of the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the costs of pollution, with due regard to the public interest and without distorting international trade and investment; partnerships; voluntary programmes; regulatory reform; tradeable permits; encouraging the reform of subsidies that have considerable negative effects on the environment and are incompatible with sustainable development; increasing market access for environmental goods and services; public awareness; as well as specific objectives for sectoral policies, in particular transport, energy and agriculture, taking into account the ongoing work of OECD. The greening of government at all levels is imperative. We will continue to work on the adoption of public procurement policies that encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally sound goods and services.

29. Business and industry have an important role to play in the promotion of sustainable development. As our Governments stated in Johannesburg, governments, relevant international organizations, the private sector and all major groups should play an active role in changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns, including actions at all levels. Although governments and international organizations should establish a supportive and enabling environment for sustainable development, business and industry also have a responsibility and should take actions. We support continuing improvement in corporate practices in all countries and welcome efforts by multinational enterprises, in both developed and developing countries, to increase their contribution to the protection of the environment by continuing to develop methods to manage their operations in cleaner and more resource-efficient ways, initiating dialogues with all stakeholders and reporting publicly on their efforts to do so. With a view to enhancing corporate environmental and social responsibility and accountability, we, inter alia, encourage industry to improve environmental performance through voluntary initiatives, including environmental management systems, certification and public reporting on environmental and social issues, taking into account such initiatives as the International Standardization Organization and the Global Reporting Initiative, bearing in mind principle 11 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. We will continue to support frameworks for the better coordination of the initiatives of business and industry in the follow-up to WSSD under the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Compact Initiative, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and others.

B. Monitoring and assessment

30. We call on EEA to prepare the fourth assessment report for the next EfE ministerial conference building on new partnerships, especially with UNECE and UNEP. We encourage

international collaboration to enhance the international comparability of environmental information in priority areas such as air emissions, urban air quality, transboundary inland and groundwater pollution, marine pollution, chemicals, hazardous waste, waste management, human health and biodiversity. We recognize the importance of the document on Lessons Learned from Data Collection for the Kiev Assessment and invite the relevant organizations and institutions, including UNECE, EEA and UNEP, in accordance with their mandates, to join us in implementing the recommendations for improving monitoring capacities in the region.

31. We support the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring in its activities, particularly on strengthening environmental information and observation capacity in the 12 countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and we endorse the Recommendations on Strengthening National Environmental Monitoring and Information Systems, and the Guidelines on the Development of State-of-the-Environment Reports in these countries. We recognize that, at the regional level, further development of the cooperation framework provided by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring is required. We invite donors to support the Working Group and the work for the fourth assessment report by EEA.

C. Environmental performance reviews

32. We welcome the report “Environmental policy in transition: Lessons from 10 years of EPRs” and support the implementation of its recommendations. We reaffirm our support for the EPR programme of UNECE, which was initiated at the Lucerne Ministerial Conference, and we note that it has been an important instrument for countries with economies in transition. The UNECE and OECD programmes of EPRs should continue to assist individual countries to assess progress, to promote policy dialogue through peer reviews, to help stimulate greater accountability and to offer the Governments concerned tailor-made recommendations on how to reduce the overall pollution burden.

D. Strategic environmental assessment

33. We recognize the importance of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in the region, which offers a way to assess the impact of plans and programmes on a broad scale and facilitates timely environmental assessment of specific actions that have been addressed at the programmatic level. We invite all countries in the region to consider adopting, if they have not already done so, domestic procedures for the preparation of environmental assessment documents that can address plans and programmes.

34. In this regard, we, the Ministers and Heads of delegation of States adopting and signing the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, welcome it. This Protocol underlines the cross-sectoral approach by integrating environmental, including health, considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans, programmes, and, to the extent appropriate, policies and legislation and thus further contributes to sustainable development. We invite all interested UNECE States to sign this Protocol and to work actively for its ratification and implementation. We recognize the close cooperation between the governing bodies of the Espoo and Aarhus Conventions and the active participation of the health sector and NGOs in the negotiations of the Protocol on SEA, and we encourage these organizations to support its implementation. We also invite all interested UNECE States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Espoo Convention to do so at the earliest opportunity.

E. Civil liability and compensation

35. We recognize the importance of civil liability regimes at the national, regional and, in certain cases, even the global level, to serve as mechanisms for internalizing the effects of industrial accidents and environmental harm. We emphasize the importance of insurance and other financial instruments to making these regimes work effectively.

36. We, the Ministers and Heads of delegation of States adopting and signing the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters to the 1992 Conventions on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, welcome it. This new Protocol may prove to be an important tool for ensuring adequate and prompt compensation for damage caused by transboundary effects of industrial accidents on transboundary watercourses and for preventing industrial accidents. We invite all States that are eligible to do so to become parties to the new instrument. We also invite all interested UNECE States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Conventions to do so at the earliest opportunity.

F. Public participation

37. We encourage all States to take steps to promote good governance, transparency and accountability and to enhance the role of the public in decision-making processes, inter alia through capacity-building measures aimed at implementing principle 10 of the Rio Declaration. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to that principle and underscore the importance of having legislative and regulatory frameworks in place to provide access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision-making, and effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings in environmental matters at the national level.

38. In this respect, we, the Ministers and Heads of delegation of Signatories and Parties to the Aarhus Convention, welcome its entry into force; invite all interested States that have not yet ratified or acceded to this Convention to do so at the earliest opportunity; underline the importance of effectively strengthening the implementation of the Aarhus Convention as outlined in the Lucca Declaration of the first meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention; and, in this regard, welcome also the innovative compliance procedures agreed at that occasion, which reflect the special nature of this Convention, allowing the public to play a role directly in compliance by having the right to address the Compliance Committee, and inviting NGOs to nominate candidates for this Committee.

39. We endorse the value of national pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs) as important mechanisms to facilitate both access to environmental information and the reduction of potentially harmful releases and transfers of pollutants. Governments in the region should ensure that they have the legislative and regulatory frameworks necessary to operate effective PRTRs at the national level.

40. In this respect, we, the Ministers and Heads of delegation of States adopting and signing the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Aarhus Convention welcome this new instrument, which will provide an important mechanism for generating information on potentially polluting activities and bringing it into the public domain. The implementation of this new Protocol is expected to increase corporate accountability. We invite all interested States to sign, ratify and implement the Protocol at the earliest opportunity and to work towards its early entry into force. We note that the active and constructive participation of environmental NGOs and industry has

been an important feature in the negotiation of the Protocol and urge these main groups to remain involved in its implementation and further development.

41. We welcome work on PRTRs in other international forums, including the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety and the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

G. Transboundary air pollution

42. We, the Ministers and Heads of delegation of Signatories and Parties to the 1998 Protocols on Heavy Metals and on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the 1999 Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, are pleased to note that the Protocols on Heavy Metals and on Persistent Organic Pollutants will soon be entering into force, but are concerned about the low number of ratifications of the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone. We invite Signatories to all three Protocols that have not yet ratified them to do so as soon as possible. We take note of the statement addressed to our Conference by the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and we welcome its decision to facilitate funding from Parties for its core activities and ask Parties to take action to facilitate the necessary contributions, in cash or in kind, for this important work. We encourage the Executive Body to continue its work on identifying areas where concerted action could lead to a significant reduction of air pollution.

H. Compliance and implementation

43. We endorse the Guidelines for Strengthening Compliance with and Implementation of MEAs in the UNECE Region as an important tool to strengthen compliance with and implementation of regional environmental conventions and protocols, recognizing that each agreement is negotiated in a unique way and enjoys its own independent legal status. We will support countries with economies in transition, as appropriate, to build their capacities to comply with the obligations arising from MEAs.

44. We welcome the continuing development of compliance procedures under many UNECE environmental instruments, recognizing that such procedures provide useful and effective tools to address and solve compliance difficulties.

45. We welcome the efforts of the various enforcement and compliance networks within the region to share experience and develop best practices. We also welcome the Guiding Principles for Reform of Environmental Enforcement Authorities in Transition Economies of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia developed within the EAP Task Force. We invite the environmental enforcement authorities in these countries to implement the Guiding Principles and donor countries to help them to do so.

I. Energy for sustainable development

46. We recognize the variety of initiatives undertaken for integrating environmental aspects and sustainable development into energy policy in the region including multilateral initiatives such as the European Union (EU)-Russia Energy Dialogue, the Energy Charter process, the EU Northern Dimension, the Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the Field of Energy, UNECE Energy Efficiency 21, the Global Village Energy Partnership, the United States Clean Energy Initiative and the EU Energy Initiative "Energy for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development".

47. We welcome the elements of the Plan of Implementation adopted at the WSSD concerning a sustainable energy future and stress the need to implement them, including the goal of diversifying energy supply by developing advanced, cleaner, more efficient, affordable and cost-effective energy technologies, such as fossil-fuel technologies and renewable energy technologies, hydro included. With a sense of urgency actions should be taken to substantially increase the global share of renewable energy sources with the objective of increasing its contribution to total energy supply, recognizing the role of national and voluntary regional targets as well as initiatives, where they exist. In this respect, States in the region are invited to work towards establishing clear and ambitious time-bound national targets and/or other policies, programmes and instruments in order to increase their contribution to the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. We will support energy partnerships to work together to remove barriers to renewable and energy-efficient technology. We welcome the offer of Germany to host a global conference on renewable energy and energy efficiency in June 2004. We, the Ministers and Heads of delegation of States that adopted the Joint Declaration on "The Way Forward on Renewable Energy" at Johannesburg, invite all countries to do so.

48. We endorse the Guidelines on Reforming Energy Pricing and Subsidies prepared jointly by the UNECE Committees on Environmental Policy and on Sustainable Energy as a means of implementing the energy-related provisions of the Aarhus decisions, in particular the decision supported by most countries which relates to the promotion of action to progressively reduce and, where possible, remove energy price subsidies which counteract an efficient use of energy and/or have harmful effects on the environment. We encourage States to consider implementation of these Guidelines. We support the use of market-based and economic instruments, as appropriate, which can provide incentives and flexibility to delink economic growth and energy use, so as to promote both economic growth and environmental protection through improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes. We invite both Committees, as a follow-up, to examine the role of economic instruments in promoting the use of renewable energy taking into account the work of OECD and other international organizations.

49. We support further efforts to improve energy efficiency and promote renewable energy sources as a means of meeting environmental objectives. Our Statement on Energy Efficiency reaffirms these goals. We also note the progress report by the Energy Charter Secretariat on implementing the provisions in the area of energy efficiency and invite it, in cooperation with other relevant international organizations, to report on further progress on energy efficiency efforts at our next conference.

J. Water for sustainable development

50. We are committed to the goals of the WSSD on water, in particular to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water and the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation, and to develop integrated water resource management (IWRM) and water efficiency plans by 2005. We welcome the recent decision of UNCSD to have water, sanitation and human settlements as a priority thematic cluster for 2004-2005, and to invite the United Nations regional commissions and other regional groups to focus on these issues.

51. We welcome water-related initiatives and partnerships from all donors and the support that they will provide to the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, including: the "Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development" launched at the WSSD by the EU and the 12 countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia,

aiming at urban water supply and sanitation including work on innovative financing mechanisms for water infrastructure and water resources management, including transboundary river basin and regional seas issues among countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia; the United States Water for the Poor initiative launched at WSSD, focusing on increasing access to clean water and sanitation services, improving watershed management, and increasing the productivity of water; the United States initiatives on:

- Central Asian transboundary water planning for water management,
- Caucasian data for integrated water management, and
- The Infrastructure Development Facility.

We further welcome the Statement on the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development – East European, Caucasian and Central Asian Component of the EU Water Initiative. We invite other countries in the region and other interested parties to consider joining these important initiatives so that a critical mass of resources can be mobilized to achieve their goals. We look forward to the multi-stakeholder conference that will be organized in 2005 within the framework of the EAP Task Force to promote the implementation of the 2000 Almaty Ministerial Conference on Urban Water Sector Reform.

52. We welcome the initiatives and intentions of the countries of South-East Europe and the Mediterranean to promote peaceful and productive cooperation for the introduction of integrated water resource management approaches for transboundary waters. In this context, we note the outcomes of the International Conference on “Sustainable Development for Lasting Peace: Shared Water, Shared Future, Shared Knowledge”, organized by Greece and the World Bank, in May 2003, as a building block of the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative.

K. Transport, environment and health

53. We will work to implement effectively the newly established Transport, Environment and Health Pan-European Programme, as a successful example of the integration of the environment and public health into sectoral policies, carrying out the activities under the rationalized priorities as outlined in its work plan and ensuring adequate participation of representatives of South-East and East European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries in accordance with the eligibility criteria adopted within WHO and UNECE.

L. Chemicals

54. We recognize the essential role of sound management of chemicals for sustainable development and for the protection of human health and the environment. We invite all interested States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade to consider doing so.

55. We welcome the adoption in December 2002 of the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. We encourage countries to implement this System without delay to improve the protection of human health and the environment through the sound management of chemicals, with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008. We also note with satisfaction that the WSSD adopted clear targets on chemicals aiming to achieve, by 2020, that chemicals are used and produced in ways that do not lead to significant adverse effects on human health and the environment; and called for actions to further develop a strategic approach to chemicals management by 2005, and to promote a reduction of the risks posed by heavy metals and obsolete pesticides that are harmful to human health and the environment. We

are fully committed to continuing this work, reflecting the decision taken by the UNEP Governing Council earlier this year. We encourage Parties to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to prepare for the entering into force of the Protocol on POPs.

M. Biodiversity

56. We recognize the efforts made so far by the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) in its emerging role as an important instrument for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the pan-European region and as a vehicle for promoting the integration of biodiversity and landscape concerns in all relevant horizontal and sectoral policies. We, the Ministers and Heads of delegation of States participating in the PEBLDS process, endorse the Resolution on Biodiversity submitted by the PEBLDS Council and we commit to achieving the nine targets for halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 through national efforts and regional cooperation. In doing so we highlight as key issues for Europe: forests and biodiversity, agriculture and biodiversity, the Pan-European Ecological Network, invasive alien species, financing of biodiversity, biodiversity monitoring and indicators, and public participation and awareness.

57. We reiterate our commitment to effective national and international regulatory frameworks in the field of genetically modified organisms (GMO) and to cooperating further on this matter. In this regard, we, the Ministers and Heads of delegation of States that have ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, recall the invitation issued in Johannesburg to all States that have not already done so to ratify this Protocol.

N. Environmental education

58. We recognize that education is a fundamental tool for environmental protection and sustainable development and that environmental education has increasingly addressed a wide range of issues included in Agenda 21. We invite all countries to integrate sustainable development into education systems at all levels, from pre-school to higher education and non-formal as well as informal education, in order to promote education as a key agent for change. We welcome the proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly, at its 57th session (December 2002), of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development starting in 2005, and will take the lead in promoting it regionally in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other relevant organizations. We endorse the Statement on Education for Sustainable Development and invite Education and other relevant Ministers to take an active part in the development, in close cooperation with UNESCO, of the Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development by 2005.

O. Environmental expenditure

59. We welcome the Good Practices of Public Environmental Expenditure Management in Transition Economies developed within the EAP Task Force and encourage countries with economies in transition to use them as a tool to strengthen environmental expenditure programmes. We also call on donors to support these efforts and to cooperate with countries with economies in transition to draw up realistic environmental investment and financing plans at national and local level. Further efforts are particularly needed to strengthen local finance and investment capacity by improving fiscal arrangements with higher levels of government, better budget management and multi-year investment plans in municipalities. We also call on donors and recipients to ensure that all funding arrangements respect environmental requirements and promote sustainable

development. We invite donors to consider devoting a substantial part of their assistance to countries with economies in transition to environmental programmes.

60. We note the reports on Trends in Environmental Expenditure and International Commitments for the Environment in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia prepared by OECD and in Central and other East European countries prepared by REC for Central and Eastern Europe. The environmental financing challenge in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia is particularly great, although the proportion of their national income that some are allocating for environmental purposes is comparable with that of West European countries. In this connection, we welcome the recent initiative by Georgia to develop a debt-for-environment swap. Other poor, indebted countries of the region may want to consider working with their creditors to develop similar initiatives.

P. Environmental Partnerships Strategy

61. We adopt the "Environmental Partnerships in the UNECE Region: Environmental Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Strategic framework" intended to contribute to improving environmental conditions and to implementing the WSSD Plan of Implementation in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia by strengthening the efforts of these countries in environmental protection and by facilitating partnership and cooperation between these countries and other countries of the UNECE region, including all stakeholders. We welcome the Strategy's key objectives and areas of action to:

- (a) Improve environmental legislation, policies and institutional framework;
- (b) Reduce the risks to human health through pollution prevention and control;
- (c) Manage natural resources in a sustainable manner;
- (d) Integrate environmental considerations into the development of key economic sectors;
- (e) Establish and strengthen mechanisms for mobilizing and allocating financial resources to achieve environmental objectives;
- (f) Provide information for environmental decision-making and promote public participation and environmental education;
- (g) Identify and address transboundary environmental problems and strengthen cooperation within the framework of international conventions, as applicable.

62. We consider the Strategy as an important basis for developing action plans and partnerships and call upon UNECE member States, international organizations and institutions, RECs, NGOs and the private sector to support initiatives to achieve its objectives. We invite the Global Environment Facility (GEF), within its mandate and focal areas, and in accordance with its procedures, to support project proposals from the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The responsibility for achieving the objectives of the Environmental Partnerships Strategy lies with the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia with support from their partners.

Q. Water, environment and security in Central Asia

63. We applaud the efforts of the Central Asian States, through their Ministries of Environment and Water, non-governmental and international organizations to develop the Central Asian Initiative on Environment, Water and Security, "Invitation to Partnership". Contributions by donors and other interested parties will be central to supporting the efforts of the Central Asian countries to strengthen cooperation to protect water basin ecosystems, use water rationally and improve governance to ensure this subregion's sustainable development and its security. Pursuing

the recommendation to start preparing a partnership agreement on transboundary water problems, environment and security in Central Asia, as proposed in the report on environment, water and security, would constitute a concrete follow-up to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and an important step in contributing to the EU Water Initiative and other water initiatives in the region.

R. Mountains

64. We welcome the progress made in the protection, sustainable development and management of mountain regions, and the strengthening of cooperation among transboundary mountain regions, such as the Alps, the Carpathians, the Caucasus and Tianshan, through the sharing of experiences and technical cooperation. We emphasize the importance of implementing the partnerships for sustainable development of mountain regions in order to effectively address imminent challenges in biodiversity conservation, sustainable local development, water management and flood prevention and control in mountains and adjacent lowlands. The adoption and signing of the Framework Convention for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians contributes to the achievement of these goals for the Carpathian region. The Signatories are pleased to welcome the Convention and call upon other interested States to consider signing it and working towards its early entry into force and implementation. Contribution by donors and other interested parties will be essential to the effective implementation of the Convention. The decision of the Bishkek Mountain Summit also contributes to the achievement of these important goals and the States represented at the Summit call for support for the Central Asian Mountain Charter, which was adopted at this Summit.

S. Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme (REReP)

65. We welcome and support the REReP in its efforts to strengthen institutions, enhance cooperation and reduce environmental and health threats in South-Eastern Europe. We appreciate the joint work done by the countries of South-Eastern Europe and REC for Central and Eastern Europe to facilitate REReP implementation and we invite the donor community to further support and develop the process.

IV. FUTURE OF THE PROCESS

66. We strongly support the continuation of the EfE process and welcome the document on its future as a basis for discussion. The goals for the future of the EfE process are:

(a) To promote the achievement of policy objectives through regional and subregional cooperation on policy responses based on environmental monitoring and assessments, integration with sectoral policies, and governance, including the involvement of civil society, business and industry, and other major groups;

(b) To strengthen the implementation of environmental instruments to which countries are party, including regional conventions and protocols, and to encourage efforts to improve their efficiency, effectiveness and coherence;

(c) To improve cooperation between the regional programmes of United Nations bodies and organizations and other international organizations and institutions;

(d) To mobilize financial resources from all sources, inter alia, from governments, IFIs, donors and the private sector, to support the implementation of regional environmental instruments and subregional initiatives including capacity building;

(e) To support interregional cooperation and links with the global environmental governance structure, where this adds value;

- (f) To contribute to UNECE regional implementation of global sustainable development process;
- (g) To improve and strengthen monitoring and assessment in the region.

67. Within the EfE process, a larger concentration of efforts on the East European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries is needed. The process should seek to build a broad political platform for environmental initiatives and perspectives for regional and subregional cooperation. It should particularly address those areas where the experience gained and the expertise of the EAP Task Force, PPC and RECs would add value. It should aim towards the participation of the countries based on a strategic approach and a real understanding and commitment to reform, including administrative and legislative improvements. Further efforts to increase investment should continue, especially in the municipal sector.

68. We agree with the need to make cooperation with other ministerial processes in the region more effective and to limit the number of ministerial conferences. We invite the two distinct regional processes – Environment and Health, and Transport, Environment and Health – to keep us apprised of their progress and encourage communication to explore opportunities to strengthen joint action, as appropriate. In addition, we will further develop our cooperation with the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. We agree to invite the above-mentioned Ministers to our future conferences and to involve them actively in the preparatory work, as appropriate.

69. We decide that future EfE ministerial conferences should be held on a regular and predictable basis every four or five years, preferably in a host country. We affirm that the EfE process should continue as a broad framework bringing together a wide range of international organizations, with an effective division of labour and channels of communication and collaboration among them. An open-ended EfE Preparatory Group shall convene to coordinate the preparations not more than two years before the next conference, with the UNECE serving as secretariat. We strongly call upon the UNECE Committee of Environmental Policy and the EfE Preparatory Group to hold joint meetings with a coordinated agenda to avoid duplication and to ensure more efficient decision-making and to streamline their work. In order to limit the frequency of intervening UNECE-region meetings on the environment, we invite UNECE to encourage the clustering of ministerial or high-level meetings in a back-to-back format, taking place not more than once a year.

70. We invite UNECE through its Committee on Environmental Policy and in consultation with other principal subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, and in cooperation with other relevant organizations and institutions, to monitor the outcomes of the Kiev Declaration, to consider reflecting the relevant commitments of the Kiev Declaration in its work programme and to assist us in assessing progress in the implementation of environmental commitments of this region emanating from the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation as well as the UNECE Regional Preparatory Meeting for WSSD. The results of this work should feed into regional implementation meetings organized in preparation for UNCSD meetings as recommended by UNCSD at its 11th session.

71. The Central and East European sub-programme of work of the EAP Task Force should be phased out by 2004. Equally, PPC will phase out its work in the accession countries by this time. We invite the EAP Task Force and PPC to continue their work together, including through joint annual meetings and with a common Bureau. Participation in both bodies will be open to all countries of the UNECE region, international organizations, IFIs, RECs, and civil society and private sector representatives. We invite OECD and the European Bank for Reconstruction and

Development (EBRD) to provide support for the secretariats of the EAP Task Force and PPC respectively. At our next conference, we will consider opportunities to relocate the secretariat functions to Eastern Europe, the Caucasus or Central Asia.

72. We invite the EAP Task Force to lead efforts to facilitate and support, in cooperation with other relevant international bodies and RECs, the achievement of the objectives of the Environmental Partnerships Strategy by East European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries. Achieving these goals will include facilitating policy and institutional reform, capacity building, development of civil society, transfer of lessons learned and best practice, cross-border cooperation and environment-related investments in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The EAP Task Force, in cooperation with relevant international bodies, and on the basis of information provided by East European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries, should keep the Committee on Environmental Policy informed of progress in achieving the objectives of the Strategy. International organizations are invited to provide assistance and support to its implementation, in accordance with their respective mandates. We agree on the importance of sharing experience and knowledge within the UNECE region, and of transferring it to the countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The REC for Central and Eastern Europe should play a useful role in this respect, cooperating with the EAP Task Force and RECs operating in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in support of the implementation of the Strategy. We recognize the importance of supporting the activities of the EAP Task Force and PPC with adequate funding.

73. In developing its work plan, the EAP Task Force should establish, as appropriate, work-sharing arrangements with the international organizations and institutions which are invited to provide assistance and support to the Environmental Partnerships Strategy's implementation, in accordance with their respective mandates. A close link should be promoted with secretariats of regional environmental agreements, UNECE in the implementation of its EPR programme in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and capacity-building activities under the regional environmental agreements. The EAP Task Force should invite, as appropriate, subregional organizations and processes, such as the Inter-State Ecological Council (IEC), the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS), regional mountain initiatives, the Caspian and Black Sea programmes, to the information exchange and cooperation. We also count on close cooperation with UNDP country offices and RECs in the subregion. RECs and major groups, as appropriate, including environmental NGOs and the private sector, will be invited to take part in the EAP Task Force's activities through participation in a multi-stakeholder dialogue and the development of environmental civil society.

74. We note with satisfaction that the East European, Caucasian and Central Asian RECs have started to implement their mandates in the subregion. We will continue to support these RECs taking into account their role, in particular, in making available an impartial platform for cooperation, partnership and the exchange of information and in supporting the involvement of civil society in decision-making. We invite REC for Central and Eastern Europe to strengthen cooperation with the East European, Caucasian and Central Asian RECs in developing a REC network.

75. We stress the need to develop a communication strategy to raise awareness of the Efe process among a wider audience of stakeholders and the general public based on the achievements of the process. We invite UNECE through its Committee on Environmental Policy, in consultation with other principal subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, and in cooperation with the EAP Task Force and other relevant organizations and institutions, to develop this strategy without delay.

76. The Working Group of Senior Officials will meet at its special session in autumn 2003 and shall at that session, chaired by the present host country, decide on the next host country and the date of the next conference.

77. We express our deep gratitude to the Government of Ukraine for having hosted this Conference and we wish to thank it and its people for the warm hospitality that we have received.