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The "Environment for Europe" mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes

Survey for reporting on promoting the "Environment for Europe" process and the outcomes of its ministerial conferences*

I. Introduction

1. At its eighteenth session in April 2012the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) invited the secretariat to organize consultations (in the form of a survey) with UNECE member States to collect information on how countries have been promoting objectives and priorities of the "Environment for Europe" (EfE) process and strengthening implementation of outcomes of the Astana Ministerial Conference, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.

2. The secretariat will prepare a summary report on the basis of responses received to the survey. The report will support the discussion during the EfE mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes which is being organized during the nineteenth session of CEP (Geneva, 22–25 October 2013).

3. The survey, contained in section V of the current document, was developed by the secretariat in consultation with the CEP Bureau. In addition, an overview of main achievements of the EfE process is provided in section II. Section III focusses on outcomes of Astana Ministerial Conference, and section IV includes background information on the mid-term review of relevance to the survey. For convenience, the Reform Plan of the EfE process is provided in the annex to this document.

II. Overview of the "Environment for Europe" process: main achievements

4. Since its launch in 1991 the EfE process supports countries efforts to advance in environmental governance. The EfE process is a unique partnership of member States within the UNECE region, organizations of the United Nations System represented in the region, other intergovernmental organizations and bodies, Regional Environmental Centres, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other major groups. UNECE, which has been closely associated with the EfE process since its inception, serves as its secretariat.

* This document has not been formally edited.

5. The process and its ministerial conferences provide an effective high-level platform for stakeholders to discuss, decide and join efforts in addressing environmental priorities across the 56 countries of the UNECE region, and is a regional pillar of sustainable development.

6. At the same time, the process focuses on supporting the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and of South-Eastern Europe in their efforts to raise environmental standards and comply with international commitments.

7. The EfE process provided the framework for the development of governance policies and initiatives, legal instruments, policies and practical actions and tools that promote and improve environmental governance and strengthen sustainable development at the regional level, as well as contribute to enhancing the global sustainability. The main achievements of the EfE process include:

(a) Four assessments on the state of the environment in the pan-European region (Dobris, Aarhus, Kyiv and Belgrade assessments) and an assessment of environmental assessments (Astana).

(b) Setting up institutional mechanisms for cooperation (establishing the Environmental Action Programme Task Force, the Project Preparation Committee and the Regional Environmental Centres).

(c) Acting as a driving force for developing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other environmental policy instruments, and promoting their implementation.[1]

(d) Launching the UNECE Environmental Performance Review Programme for member countries that are non-OECD members.

(e) Promoting cross-sectoral activities and policy integration (energy efficiency, education for sustainable development (ESD) and greening the economy).

(f) Enhancing cooperation between Governments and civil society organizations.

8. Following a decision by Ministers in Belgrade in 2007, CEP reformed the EfE process in 2009 to ensure that it remains relevant and valuable, and to strengthen its effectiveness.

III. Main features of and lessons learned from the Astana Ministerial Conference

9. The seventh EfE Ministerial Conference (Astana, 2011) wasthe first EfE Conference organized in accordance with the Reform Plan of the EfE process. The Astana Ministerial Conference gathered more than 1,500 participants from Governments, the international community, civil society, business and the media throughout the UNECE region to discuss two main themes: sustainable management of water and water-related

[1] The UNECE Programme on Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs); the UNECE Programme on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment; the Pan-European Biological and Landscape DiversityStrategy (PEBLDS); the Aarhus Convention; the Protocols on Heavy Metals and Persistent Organic Pollutants to the Air Pollution Convention; the Pan-European Strategy to Phase-out Leaded Petrol; the UNECE Strategy for ESD; the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Espoo Convention; the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Aarhus Convention; the Protocol on Civil Liability to the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions; the Environment Strategy for Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries; the Carpathian Convention; and a series of guidelines and recommendations to Governments.

ecosystems; and greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development.

10. The event was organized in an interactive format, including nine high-level multi-stakeholder roundtables. To support multi-stakeholder discussions during the Conference and to facilitate decision-making, substantive documents on each of the two main themes were prepared by UNECE jointly with EfE partners. For the first time, the EfE Ministerial Conference was a paper-smart event.

11. The EfE partners organized 43 side events on issues related to the two main themes of the Conference. The Conference gathered business and industry representatives, who also participated in a Green Innovations, Technologies and Eco services Fair, organized on the margins of the Conference. Representatives of media attended the Conference, preceded by a capacity-building workshop for journalists.

12. The Conference culminated in the adoption of the Astana Ministerial Declaration — a concise and comprehensive document — in which ministers confirmed their commitment to improving environmental protection and promoting sustainable development in the UNECE region through the EfE process, as well as decided on a number of follow up and further actions under the two themes of the Conference.

13. At its eighteenth session in April 2012, CEP assessed the effectiveness of the Astana Ministerial Conference. Delegations highly appreciated the organization and the outcomes of the Conference, structured in a new format according to the EfE Reform Plan. The success of the Conference was attributed to its two main themes, which were of importance for the entire region, its interactive for matand its good outcomes, as well as its efficient preparatory process[2].

14. Meeting participants observed that the Astana Conference had demonstrated once again that the EfE process provided a unique high-level platform for addressing environmental concerns across the region and should be continued. Delegations expressed the wish for the future EfE conferences to be prepared in the same manner, including an even higher interactivity during the conference.

15. At the same time, some delegations observed that the biggest challenge for future conferences was to provide new structures or frameworks to address emerging themes, such as green economy, given the ongoing economic crisis that affected all countries in the UNECE region.

16. Future conferences should also be better streamlined, in particular in terms of side events. Concerning identification of themes for the next conferences, delegates stressed the need to find the right balance between established and emerging themes, including enhancing the work related to green economy and the mainstreaming of environmental concerns into the economic development.

IV. The "Environment for Europe" mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes

17. In accordance with the EfE Reform Plan and following a decision by the Astana Ministerial Conference, CEP is convening a mid-term review in 2013 to assess the progress in implementation of the Conference's main outcomes. The mid-term review would provide

[2] The preparatory process for the Astana Ministerial Conference commenced in 2009 and included four meetings of CEP (October 2009, November 2010, May and September 2011), two meetings of CEP Extended Bureau (May 2009 and March 2010), and one joint meeting of the Bureaux of CEP and of the Water Convention (January 2010).

renewed impetus to the process and its findings would be taken into account in the preparatory process for the next conference.

18. The EfE Reform Plan stipulates that particular efforts should be made by all relevant responsible actors to implement the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences. Member States should regularly consider how to promote objectives and priorities of the EfE process and strengthen implementation of the outcomes, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.

19. Furthermore, the Reform Plan stipulates that active participation by and input of all interested UNECE countries, and in particular of interested countries from subregions with specific needs in improving their environmental situation is crucial for the success of the activities under the EfE process. Also, countries taking the lead for one or more issues were encouraged to do so in ways that would contribute significantly to the EfE process' objectives and priorities.

20. The Astana Conference main outcomes include: (a) ratifying and implementing the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); (b) implementing the Astana Water Action; (c) promoting a green economy in the region and the Green Bridge Partnership Programme; (d) conducting a third cycle of environmental performance reviews (EPRs); (e) establishing a regular process of environmental assessment and developing a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS); and (f) continuing the work of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force (EAP Task Force) and strengthening the work of the Regional Environmental Centres (see ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/2/Add.1).[3]

V. Survey

21. The purpose of the survey is to collect information (in accordance with the request by CEP) from the UNECE member States about the promotion of the EfE objectives and priorities in general, as well as strengthening implementation of the outcomes of the Astana Ministerial Conference in particular, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.

22. Following to the EfE Reform Plan, which stipulates in paragraph 16 that "member States should regularly consider how to promote objectives and priorities of the EfE process", the survey aims at assessing the progress made by countries in implementing the EfE objectives and priorities as set out in the 2009 EfE Reform Plan (paragraphs 6 and 7). The EfE priorities adopted in 2009 cover most of activities carried out at present by the UNECE Environment subprogramme, as well as a number of activities carried out by the EfE partners. These activities are included in sections 2 and 3 of the survey.

23. In addition, following up on paragraph 16 of the EfE Reform Plan stipulating that "member States should strengthen the implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences", the survey aims at assessing the progress in implementation of the main outcome activities of the 2011 Astana EfE Ministerial Conference (refer to paragraph 20 of the present document). These activities are included in section 4 of the survey.

24. Furthermore, the survey seeks to identify country views on environmental priorities and themes that could be addressed at the next ministerial conference, as well as on possible efficient interactive modes for conducting discussions at ministerial level. These issues are included in sections 5 and 6 of the survey.

[3] The Astana Ministerial Declaration and other Conference documents are available on the ECE website (http://www.unece.org/env/efe/astana/welcome.html).

25. It is recognized that countries may engage in a particular issue, treaty or process without the direct attribution of that engagement to the EfE process. Therefore it is recommended that the responses to the survey questions also explain the extent to which the EfE process has influenced the attention and priority given to an issue, process or treaty. If the response to a question is "not applicable", "disagree" or "not foreseen", but the particular issue is nonetheless important for the country, it could be explained that the issue is addressed primarily through means other than the EfE process or UNECE activities.

26. The target group of the survey comprises the representatives of national Governments of the UNECE region.

27. The structure of the survey has been developed to be user-friendly, mostly using a "tick box" approach, which is complemented by an explanatory section to allow respondents to elaborate on their choice. Such an approach is expected to facilitate the process of filling in the survey.

28. On the basis of responses received the UNECE secretariat will prepare an analysis for consideration by the nineteenth session of CEP. The analysis along with the responses received from countries will be posted on the CEP website.

29. UNECE member States are invited to complete the survey below and submit it to the secretariat (efe@unece.org) **by Friday, 28 June 2013**, at the latest.

1. Contact information

Please indicatethename, title, organization and country, as well as the contact data of the person who filled in the survey

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Title:	Executive Director
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Website:	www.carecnet.org
Date:	08.07.2013

2. Progress in promoting the objectives of the "Environment for Europe" process

In the table below, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements and provide an explanation, as appropriate. The boxes can be ticked by double-clicking on the box and choosing "checked" under the "default value" from the popping up window.N/A means not applicable. If you choose N/A, nevertheless please elaborate on your choice.

The EfE process continues to serve as a mechanism to:

(a) Improve the environment throughout the region, contributing to sustainable development which may in turn contribute to poverty eradication, to improving quality of life, and to a safer world

☒strongly agree / ☐ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree / ☐ N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Being established within the EfE process as the institutional mechanism for regional cooperation in Central Asia, CAREC supports and contributes the EfE process through numerous activities such as the 1) development of the Shared Environmental Information System in CA; 2) the application of IWRM principles in small transboundary watersheds; 3)the promotion of education for sustainable development in CA, and implementing: 4) the assessing of assessments processes on air, wastes, biodiversity and climate change in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; 5) a series of low carbon development programmes in CA; and 7) raising public awareness of sustainable development issues throughout the region.

Besides, CAREC contributes towards the development of the Green Bridge Initiative of the Kazakh Government, and the Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable Development.

(b) Enhance the implementation of strengthened national environmental policies

☒ strongly agree / ☐ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree / ☐ N/A

The EfE encouraged CA states to strengthen their national environmental policies and develop strategies for sustainable development.

CAREC supports this process through numerous programmes andprojects.

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

(c) Support convergence of environmental policies and approaches, while recognizing the benefits from a diversity of approaches to achieve common goals, and the prioritisation of environmental objectives

☒strongly agree / ☐somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree / ☐ N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

CAREC's mandate focusses in particular on the support of regional activities and thus on the convergence of environmental polices and methods throughout Central Asia. Examples of such activities are CAREC's programmes on the harmonisation of water quality standards, the application of IWRM based basin planning in transboundary small watersheds, support towards comparable environmental indicators and environmental performance reviews and the, development of Shared Environmental Information System...

(d) Encourage the participation of civil society

☒ strongly agree / ☐ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree / ☐ N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Civil society is a crucial force for supporting EfE process, monitoring implementation of national obligations and outcomes of Ministerial conferences and providing a platform for civil society .

CAREC continues to involve civil society actors in all its activities. And thus to provide a forum for regional cooperation of civil society actors on environmental issues throughout Central Asia.

(e) Promote broad horizontal environmental cooperation

☒ strongly agree / ☐ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree / ☐ N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

The present complexity and interrelatedness of environment, water, and energy issues turns regional cooperation in Central Asia into a challenge. National interests, uncoordinated economic policies, and growing social pressures on governments of each state have reduced the willingness to pursue regional approaches.

3. Progress in promoting the political prioritiesof the "Environment for Europe" process

In the table below, please, provide a brief summary of how your country is progressing in promoting the EfE political priorities, based on commitments already made under the EfE process, including through national policies and relevant partnerships. Please tick the box that best corresponds to the current situation or level of implementation in your country. Provide an explanation, as appropriate. N/A means not applicable. If you choose N/A, nevertheless please elaborate on your choice.

The progress (in your country) on EfE political priorities may include:

(a) Improvement of environmental governance, including strengthening environmental institutions and implementation of policy instruments*(by your country)*

– improvement of environmental governance:

☐not started / ☐initiated/ ☒in progress / ☐accomplished/ ☐ N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Regional environmental governance in Central Asia is shared between several institutions such as the Interstate Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS), the Interstate Committee on Water Coordination (ICWC), the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), with sometimes overlapping, or conflicting mandates.

CAREC is the only regional non-governmental organisation mandated both, by the governments and civil society to assist in solving both national- and regional environmental problems in Central Asia.CAREC continues to use its mandate and expertise for supporting multi-state and -sectoral dialoguessharing its expertise so as to support the development of environmental cooperation in the region.

Most of the above activities are supported by donors and implemented by CAREC.

– strengthening environmental institutions:

☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐accomplished/ ☐ N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Herewith CAREC contributes via working with national ministries of environmental protection, water, energy, industry, agriculture, emergency situations, statistical agencies, national and interstate basin organizations, educational institutions, as well as, with local authorities, scientific institutes, NGOs.

– implementation of policy instruments:

☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐accomplished/ ☐ N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

This priority in Central Asian states is implementing via involvement of national experts into EfE working groups and processes, organization of seminars, study tours and other capacity building events for practitioners, application of Integrated Approach for the development of low carbon development strategies, introduction of Integrated Water Resources Management principles and basin management, development of Shared Environmental Information System, implementing assessment of environmental assessments, etc.

Scenario approach can be considered as the neutral instrument for developing mutually acceptable mechanisms for different environment and development issues in Central Asia, such as Integrated Water Resources Management, Low Carbon Development, etc. CAREC supports this scenario approach and interested to enhance its application in

the region.

(b) Streamlining the implementation by your Government of commitments made to existing UNECE legally-binding and legally non-binding instruments

Overall assessment:

☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒in progress / ☐accomplished/ ☐ N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Since being established in 2001, CAREC supported national governments to participate in the EfE process and to implement their commitments in the following areas: environmental governance, water resources management, Education for Sustainable Development, climate change and sustainable energy, participation of civil society and environmental awareness.

Air Pollution Convention and its Protocols	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐signed/ ☐ratified/acceded/approved/ ☐ in the process of ratification/accession/approval/ ☐not foreseen/ ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character. – Implementation ☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☐ in progress /☐well-implemented / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character. Herewith CAREC in cooperation with REC and Italian Trust Fund implemented the project "School Environment and Respiratory Health of Children" SEARCH II (2010-2013) for the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Tajikistan. The overall goal of the project was to improve children's health and the indoor environment in schools in Europe, through an active involvement of and cooperation with the three main sectors concerned - environment, health and education. The specific objectives of the project were: - To promote the SEARCH Initiative widely in Europe; - To develop programs to increase awareness and knowledge of environment and health related issues in the state schools; -To train school staff in order to promote implementation of these programs at the local level – Formal reporting (national implementation reports) ☐never submitted / ☐submitting occasionally / ☐ submitting regularly / ☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character.
Water Convention	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐ signed / ☐ ratified/acceded/approved / ☐ in the process of ratification/accession/approval / ☐ not foreseen / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):*

	CAREC is a regional organization of international character. – Implementation ☐ not started / ☐ initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐ well-implemented / ☐ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC supports this Convention via its activities on small transboundary watersheds that support application of IWRM principles and integration of environmental improvements into development plans, transboundary cooperation by establishing joint bodies and implementing joint activities.
Protocol on Water and Health	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐ signed / ☐ ratified/acceded/approved / ☐ in the process of ratification/accession/approval / ☐ not foreseen / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character. – Implementation ☒ not started / ☐ initiated / ☐ in progress / ☐ well-implemented / ☐ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character. – Formal reporting (national implementation reports) ☐ never submitted / ☐ submitting occasionally / ☐ submitting regularly / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character.
Industrial Accidents Convention	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐ signed / ☐ ratified/acceded/approved / ☐ in the process of ratification/accession/approval / ☐ not foreseen / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character. – Implementation ☐ not started / ☐ initiated / ☐ in progress / ☐ well-implemented / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character. – Formal reporting (national implementation reports) ☐ never submitted / ☐ submitting occasionally / ☐ submitting regularly / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character.

Protocol on Civil Liability	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐ signed / ☐ ratified/acceded/approved / ☐ in the process of ratification/accession/approval / ☐ not foreseen / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character. – Implementation ☐ not started / ☐ initiated / ☐ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character.
Espoo Convention	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐ signed / ☐ ratified/acceded/approved / ☐ in the process of ratification/accession/approval / ☐ not foreseen / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character. – Implementation ☐ not started / ☐ initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☐N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC supports the Espoo Convention via promoting of the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Strategic Impact Assessment (SIA) in CA states since 2007. These activities built a basis for application of EIA and SIA. Formal reporting (national implementation reports) ☐never submitted / ☐submitting occasionally / ☐ submitting regularly / ☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character.
Protocol on SEA	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐ signed / ☐ ratified/acceded/approved / ☐ in the process of ratification/accession/approval / ☐ not foreseen / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character – Implementation ☐ not started / ☐ initiated / ☐in progress / ☐well-implemented/ ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* - Formal reporting (national implementation reports)

	☐never submitted / ☐submitting occasionally / ☐ submitting regularly / ☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character
Aarhus Convention	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐ signed / ☐ ratified/acceded/approved / ☐ in the process of ratification/accession/approval / ☐ not foreseen / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character – Implementation ☐ not started / ☐ initiated / ☒in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☐N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC has strong information, awareness and education components in all its activities, thus contributing to the spirit of the Aarhus Convention. In order to assist countries to comply with the Aarhus Convention (1998) and to improve the quality, timeliness and availability of environmental information CAREC is promoting the concept of Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS),in order to streamline the process of collection, exchange and usage of environmental information. CAREC continues to establish networks of experts, thus creating SEIS working groups and identifying main challenges and opportunities for the development of the systems for evidence basedenvironmental reports. – Formal reporting (national implementation reports) ☐never submitted / ☐submitting occasionally / ☐ submitting regularly / ☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character
Protocol on PRTRs	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐ signed / ☐ ratified/acceded/approved / ☐ in the process of ratification/accession/approval / ☐ not foreseen / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character – Implementation ☐ not started / ☐ initiated / ☒ in progress / ☒well-implemented / ☐ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC supported the implementation of a project aimed to promote good practices for nutrient reduction. In Central Asia the project covered Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The specific objectives of the project were: 1) To capture, analysis and summarize best

	practices and lessons learned; 2) To demonstrate of successful nutrient reduction replication strategies in two pilot areas ; 3) To disseminate and promote of nutrient reduction best practices, lessons learned and successful nutrient reduction replication strategies. - Formal reporting (national implementation reports) ☐never submitted / ☐submitting occasionally / ☐ submitting regularly / ☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words*. CAREC is a regional organization of international character
Strategy for ESD	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐ adopted / ☒actively participating / ☐ not engaged / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a key partner of the UNECE for its ESD strategy in Central Asia since 2003. CAREC supports: 1) developing and incorporating of the ESD strategy into national education systems, 2) ensuring that policy, regulatory and operational frameworks support ESD; 3) equipping educators with the competence to include SD in their teaching; ensuring that adequate tools and materials for ESD are accessible; 4) promoting research on and development of ESD; and 5) strengthening cooperation on ESD at all levels within the Central Asian region. CAREC promotes ESD principles, methodologies and key themes of SD into education systems of Central Asian by: 1) raising awareness and practical experience on SD; 2) facilitation of sub-regional inter- government, -sector and -agency cooperation for SD; 3) supporting sub-regional dialogues and networking for SD; 4) capacity development on key themes of SD (climate change, energy efficiency, water, biodiversity, etc.), for different target groups; 5) and adaptation of the best ESD education practices in Central Asia; 6) development of respective educational, learning and methodological materials for SD; and 7) international cooperation and participation in global and regional (European/Asian-Pacific) ESD processes. CAREC cooperates with: Central Asian ministries of education, environmental protection, health, culture, etc.; local authorities; non-formal and informal levels of the primary, secondary and higher education; educators; teachers of schools and universities; students and NGOs. – Implementation ☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒in progress / ☐well-implemented / N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* Practical deliveries achieved under CAREC leadership in Central Asia: 1. Since 2003, the representatives from the ministries of education and environment, NGOs, schools, universities and trainers are networking via regular meeting events (sub-regional conferences, workshops, trainings); 2. Regional working group (WG) on ESD to support ESD and SD initiatives is established and operational; 3. A multi-donor "Leadership Programme on ESD" is annually being conducted; 4. Educational multimedia materials such as the "Green Pack for Central Asia", "Glaciers Green Pack", "Caspian Green Pack", based on the "Green Pack" concept of the REC have been developed and introduced in schools; 5. Two disciplines: "Ecology & Sustainable Development" and "Energy Efficiency & Sustainable Development" were developed for the Higher Education System of Kazakhstan. The first became mandatory for bachelor-level students of all subjects. The second one is a voluntary course at the Kazakh National Technical University;

	– Formal reporting (national implementation reports) ☐never submitted / ☐submitting occasionally / ☒ submitting regularly / ☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* Support of formal reporting on ESD in Central Asia is provided by UNECE with support of CAREC. Examples: 2007 –sub regional workshop for preparation for the voluntary reporting under the UNECE ESD Strategy. 2010 - sub regional workshop for assisting to CA countries in preparation for the first Mandatory reporting under the UNECE ESD Strategy. 2012 –a regional workshop on promotion of the UNECE educators' competences in ESD in Central Asia on the base of the document *"Learning for a Better Future"*.
THE PEP	– Status *(more than one box can be ticked)* ☐ adopted / ☐ actively participating / ☐ not engaged / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character – Implementation ☐ not started / ☐ initiated / ☐ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character – Reporting (responding to THE PEP survey on progress in the attainment of the Amsterdam Goals) ☐never submitted / ☐submitting occasionally / ☐ submitting regularly / ☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character.
(c) Enhancing efforts in environmental monitoring Overall assessment in your country: ☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐well-implemented/ ☐N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC supported several joint water quality monitoring missions of national hydro-meteo services on small transboundary watersheds and trained stakeholders to make a simple water quality tests.	
Production of indicator-based state-of-the-environment reports	☐never produced / ☐ in progress /☐ producing occasionally /☐producing regularly/ ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character

Enterprise environmental monitoring and reporting	☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☐ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character
(d) Ensuring implementation of the UNECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) Programme Overall assessment of your country's role: ☐ not active/ ☐active as donor / ☐active as reviewed country / ☐N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC participates in the process of promoting of this Programme in Central Asian Countries	
Participation in the EPR process as a reviewed country in the future	☐not interested / ☐initiated / ☐ in progress / ☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character
Participation in the EPR process as a donor country (in-kind and/or providing financial support)	☐not interested / ☐ initiated / ☐on-going ☒ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is a regional organization of international character
Implementation of EPR recommendations by the reviewed country	☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☐ in progress / ☐accomplished /☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* …
(e) Raising public awareness on environmental issues Overall assessment in your country: ☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☐ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* Information, awareness and capacities are key prerequisites for improving the current environmental situation in CA region. In this regard, CAREC identifies gaps in awareness raising at the levels of governments, civil society, the private sector and media. Awareness raising and the provisos on of environmental information are crosscutting activities that transcend through all of CAREC's programmes and projects and or are implemented via specific projects such as the EU funded project: "Targeted awareness raising for EU-CA partnership (AWARE)". For information distribution, CAREC cooperates with existing informational networks in Central Asia, such as CARNet, EcoIdea and Ecois, participates on regional platforms and conferences, uses both traditional and new technologies.	
Ensuring public	☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☐ N/A

access to environmental information	*Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* In order to assist countries to comply with the Aarhus Convention (1998) and improve the quality, timeliness and availability of environmental information, CAREC is promoting the concept of SEIS.
Ensuring public participation in environmental-decision making	☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☐ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* Small basin councils respectively local stakeholders committees, established by CAREC in several small transboundary watersheds of Central Asia, that consist of representatives from local authorities, local communities, water users, farmers, NGOs and others, play a role of mechanisms for practical public participation in environmental decision making at the local level.
Ensuring public access to environmental justice	☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☐ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is not implementing activities in this field.
(f) Promoting linkages between environmental policy, economic and social well-being and competitiveness Overall assessment in your country: ☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☐ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* …	
Mainstreaming the environment into economic development	☐ not started / ☒initiated / ☐in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☐ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC continues to inspire the greening of the private sector via initiatives such as the Green Business Club and CAREC's Sustainability Award in Central Asia.
Implementing environmental policies through economic/market instruments (e.g. phasing out subsidies, introducing environmental taxation, payment for ecosystems services, etc.)	☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☐ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* Currently used instruments in Central Asia use the "command and control" approach and aim to penalizepolluters rather than prevent pollution. Alternative incentive-based economic tools in environmental governance at the local level that contribute towards better cooperation; participation, transparency and targeted investment into ecosystem services are still unknown. Since 2008 CAREC promotes the concept of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) in Central Asian states. CAREC'sproject in the Chon-Aksu Watershed, Kyrgyzstan, provedthatthisapproachisfeasible. The network of pilot schemesinthe Ile-Alatay National Park (Kazakhstan), intheTigrovayaBalkaregion of Tajikistan andin the Ugam-Chatkal National Park (Uzbekistan)representeffectivePES schemesand thusensure the water supply for rural communities.

Implementing environmental policies through regulatory/normative instruments (e.g. norms, standards, bans, etc.)	☐ not started / ☒initiated / ☐ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☐ N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* Water deficiency and degradation of aquaticecosystemsis the mostchallenging issue for Central Asia. The main problems of transboundarywaterresources management in Central Asia are caused by the contradiction betweentheinterests of upstream countries and downstream countries, Central Asia countries decided to develop a Partnership Agreement on harmonization of the legislation in the environmentalsector.
Implementing environmental policies through information based/voluntary instruments (e.g. labelling, etc.)	☐ not started / ☐ initiated / ☐ in progress / ☐well-implemented / ☒N/A *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* CAREC is not implementing activities in this field.

4. Progress in strengthening the implementation of outcomes of the Astana EfE Ministerial Conference

In the table below, please, provide a brief summary of how your country is progressing in implementing the commitments made at the Astana Conference. Please tick the box that best corresponds to the current situation or level of implementation in your country. Provide an explanation, as appropriate. N/A means not applicable. If you choose N/A, nevertheless please elaborate on your choice.

The main outcomes of the Astana Conference include:

(a) Ratifying and implementing the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)*(by your country)*

Please provide additional information, as relevant, that was not provided under section 3(b) (up to 250 words):

…

(b) Implementing the Astana Water Action*(by your country)*

☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒in progress / ☐well-implemented/ ☐not foreseen

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

CAREC contributes to the implementation of the Astana Water Action via:

- Developing and expanding the use of payments for ecosystem services (PES) in CA states;
- supporting meetings of the interstate Chu-Talas Commission (Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan) and establishing the local stakeholders committees on small transboundary watersheds (Isfara, Aspara and Ugam);
- implementing capacity building activities for basin organizations and development of IWRM based basin plans jointly with basin commissions and local stakeholders committees;
- Supporting development of SEIS in Central Asia;
- Raising awareness about water-efficient techniques and practices;
- Highlighting the issue of reused and return waters in CA countries;
- implementing activities on community mobilization and engagement in proper management of rehabilitated

water supply systems in remote small villages (Kazakhstan).

(c) Promoting a green economy *(by your country)*

CAREC is non-governmental organization.

☐ not started / ☒initiated / ☐ in progress / ☐ well-implemented/ ☐ not foreseen

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

CAREC supports motivation of the private sector to be greener via developing the initiative to establish a Green Business Club and Sustainability Award in Central Asia.

Promoting the Green Bridge Partnership Programme*(by your country)*

☐ not started / ☐initiated / ☒in progress / ☐ well-implemented/ ☐ not foreseen

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

CAREC supports this initiative and consults the Kazakhstan's Government on its development.

(d) Ensuring implementation of the <u>third cycle</u> of environmental performance reviews (EPRs) *(by your country)*

☐ not foreseen / ☐ active as donor / ☐ active as reviewed country / ☒N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

CAREC is a regional organization of international character

(e) Establishing a regular process of environmental assessment (RPEA), including developing a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS)*(by your country)*

☐ not started / ☐ initiated / ☒ in progress / ☐SEIS developed / ☐RPEA established

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Involvement of Central Asia into the Assessment of Assessments activities was a significant step toward involvement of Central Asian countries in to SEIS oriented cooperation initiative in the Pan-European region. The main objective of this initiative is to simplify the system for collecting, sharing and using environmental data between different users. SEIS development in CA countries is implementing via several projects implemented by or with CAREC.

CAREC has established respective networks of experts, initiated a SEIS working groups and identified main challenges and opportunities for the development of the systems to produce indicator basedenvironmental reports.

At the moment CAREC implements three projects that supports the introduction of the SEIS concept in CA.

(f) Participation in the continued work of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force (EAP Task Force), including on the sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems, and on greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development*(by your country)*

☐not foreseen / ☐active as donor / ☐active as beneficiary / ☐N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

CAREC implemented the Central Asian Assessment of Assessments on water and water related ecosystems and the

resource efficiency/green economy (2011-2012) in cooperation with EEA, UNECE, Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and the Ministry of the Environment and Land Protection of Italy.

In 2013 CAREC implements the AoA on air, wastes, biodiversity and climate change in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan with support of FOEN.

Participation in strengthening the contribution of Regional Environmental Centres (RECs)in both promoting green economy and better environmental governance at the local, national, sub-regional and regional levels*(by your country)*

☐ not foreseen / ☐ active as donor / ☐ active as beneficiary / ☒N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

...

5. Thematic priorities of the "Environment for Europe" process for the Eighth Ministerial Conference

In the table below, please indicate the matic priorities that might be addressed at the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference, including a brief justification note for each proposed priorities. Please also indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the proposed several themes, as well as organising a high-level segment on MEAs and the proposed theme. Please kindly note that the idea to organize a high-level segment on MEAs emerged from the discussion at the informal meeting of representatives of governing bodies of MEAs and CEP (Geneva, 27 February 2013).

First thematic priority (an "established" theme of importance to the entire region, e.g. the Astana Conference addressed the "established" theme sustainable management of water and water related ecosystems)

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

…

Second thematic priority (an "emerging" theme of importance to the entire region, e.g. the Astana Conference addresses the "emerging" theme greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development)

Please propose a theme: Strengthening sub regional environmental governance

Please elaborate (up to 250 words)

Further regional –respectively sub-regional integration requires the strengthening of sub regional environmental governance. The fragmentation related to the environmental governance reflects and is strongly felt on the level of information, knowledge sharing and data management in sub-regions of the EfEregion. There is a lack of regional inter-sectoral protocol/agreement for data and information exchange, as well as for harmonization of qualitative and quantitative monitoring data and systems related to various environmental parameters. Additionally, there is a lack of sub-regional agreements on the coordination role of the Ministries of Environment related to data processing and analysis in the field of the environment, on their function as the main repositories of environmental information.

Enhancing the work on greening the economy and the mainstreaming	A possible "emerging" theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to follow up on the Astana EfE and Rio+20 Conferences commitments ☐ strongly agree / ☒somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree

of environmental concerns into the economic development	*Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* While the support to any activities to facilitate the framework of legal and administrative frameworks on greening the economy is laudable, the main initiative should come from the emerging private sector in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus region and the Central Asia. More than 30 years ago, first bi- and multilateral activities were initiated (UNEP) to integrate environmental considerations into economic development. So far, the private sector mentioned above have only responded in an anecdotal manner, given the existing investment frameworks in those regions.
Promoting sustainable consumption and production	A possible "emerging" theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to follow up on the Rio+20 Conferences commitments ☐ strongly agree / ☒somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree While we observe a changing pattern in consumption also in the Central Asian region, the continuous low level of production of consumer goods in the region make this an interesting subject, however with a limited impact in the Central Asian region.
"Greening" International Financial Institutions (IFIs) policies	A possible "emerging" theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to follow up on the Rio+20 Conferences commitments ☐ strongly agree / somewhat agree / ☒somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree Following the report on environmental deficiencies within the lending policies of the IFIS thirty years ago,("Bankrolling disaster"),a joint initiative was founded by UNEP called CIDIE (Committee of International Development Institutions on the Environment) which comprises all major IFIs.
Resilience and Change	A possible "emerging" theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to encompass the need for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, emergency preparedness and contingency planning to be ready for both environmental and demographic change in the coming years, i.e., the expected increase in extreme weather events due to global warming, but also to the foreseen changes in demographics (aging populations and south-north migration), in particular in urban areas) ☒strongly agree / ☐ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree Governments throughout the entire EfE region face the critical challenge of promoting sustainable and equitable economic development in the context of climate variability and change. Ecologically fragile regions are home to millions of people and their livelihoods, businesses and economies are highly sensitive to climate impacts. Addressing the challenge is critical for the future in particular of semi-arid regions,
Organizing a high-level segment on assessing the progress in establishing a regular process of environmental assessment and developing the SEIS across the region ☐ strongly agree / ☒somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree Rather than establishing a high level segment on assessing the progress on SEIS, a high level segment might be called	

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">upon to review the limitations of how far environmental data influence policy making at the governmental level</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Organizing a high-level segment on UNECE MEAs
☐ strongly agree / ☒somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree
The responsibility of implementing MEAs is truly national and a high level segment would only divert the responsibility away from national governments. …</td></tr>
<tr><td>Role of public participation in effective implementation of MEAs</td><td>A possible theme for a possible high-level segment on UNECE MEAs (of relevance to all UNECE MEAs)
☐ strongly agree / ☒somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree
Undoubtedly the role of public participation needs to be strengthened throughout the EfE region, yet calling in a meeting of high level public servants is unlikely to strengthen public participation.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Need to develop new structures or frameworks to address emerging themes, such as green economy, giving the on-going crisis that affected all countries in the UNECE region
☐ strongly agree / ☒somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree
First of all clarification is needed what is being understood under the terms of "new structures" and or "frameworks", before a clear statement can be provided.
…</td></tr>
<tr><td>Greening the economies</td><td>Elaboration of subregional roadmaps (e.g. EU, SEE, Central Asia, Caucasus, Eastern Europe)
☒strongly agree / ☐ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree
The strength of this suggestion is to strengthen the subregional environmental governance structures, which are so weak in most sub regions of the EfE region.

Elaboration/harmonization of regional eco-standards for products and production processes
☐ strongly agree / ☐ somewhat agree / ☒ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree
Numerous eco standards exist - it is doubtful that the EfE process would gain the resources to develop respective eco standards and how far they would duplicate already existing and well established schemes.
Other (please suggest demand-driven frameworks/structures)
☐ strongly agree / ☐ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree
…</td></tr>
<tr><td>Strengthening implementation of ESD</td><td>Mainstreaming ESD into technical and vocational training to meet future labour market demand
☐ strongly agree / ☒ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree
CAREC is a regional organization.</td></tr>
</table>

	Mainstreaming ESD into teachers/educators' training ☒strongly agree / ☐ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree The ESD concept is included into all activities implemented under the ESD programme of CAREC, such as the ESD related surveys, development of learning materials and innovative educational tools, organization of capacity building events for decision makers, educators, teachers, students and other stakeholders, including young leaders. Implementing an ESD school plan in every school (i.e. addressing campus management, curricula and community interaction ☐ strongly agree / ☒ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree *Please elaborate (up to 250 words):* An ESD curricula in every school is so far not foreseen in all CA countries yet.
Strengthening environmental considerations in other social and economic sectors	Sustainable urban development (e.g. bringing together the relevant activities under THE PEP, Environment and Health process, and green building) ☐ strongly agree / ☒ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree …

6. Format of the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference

In the table below, please, indicate/propose an interactive format for the next Conference. Provide an explanation, as appropriate.

Interactive format for the Conference (for a more productive ministerial participation) The positive interest, engagement and motivation of the participants of the CAREC initiated multistakeholders meeting at the last Astana conference can certainly be understood as a reflection of the format of those meetings. The interactive "town hall style" process allowed to reflect the opinions and contributions of all participants, thus ensuring that a wide spectrum of suggestions could contribute to this innovative process and be reflected accordingly.	
Parallel thematic round-tables	☐ strongly agree / ☒ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree *Please elaborate:* While the format can certainly contribute to the outcome of a future meeting, raising political interest for the EfE process and thus formulating a political agenda which brings political decision makers together rather than high level administrators should certainly be at the top of the Secretariat's agenda.:
Interactive discussions e.g.	☐ strongly agree / ☒ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree

similar to "BBC Question Time"	*Please elaborate:* *see above*
[please propose an interactive format]	☐ strongly agree / ☐ somewhat agree / ☐ somewhat disagree / ☐ strongly disagree *Please elaborate:* *see above*

7. Any other issues you consider important

[please include any issues relevant to the scope of this survey that you may wish to address …] *Please elaborate:* …

Annex

Reform of the "Environment for Europe" process: Reform Plan

Excerpt from the report of the Committee on Environmental Policy on its special session (Geneva, 27–29 January 2009)

I. Background

1. The Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007) recognized the important value of the "Environment for Europe" (EfE) process as a unique pan-European forum for tackling environmental challenges and promoting broad horizontal environmental cooperation, and as a pillar of sustainable development in the UNECE region. The EfE process was considered to be an important framework for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region. The added value of the EfE process was recognized in its close links with other regional and subregional initiatives and processes, which help to integrate environmental and sectoral policies.

2. The ministers in Belgrade agreed that the EfE process, initiated in 1991, needed to be reformed. They committed themselves to continuing a focused and needs-based EfE process concentrated on results-based, action-oriented activities that improve the environment and advance sustainable development in the region and to actively seeking partnerships with civil society, including the private sector. The purpose of the reform was to strengthen its effectiveness and to ensure that it remained appropriate for, and fully aligned with, the growing needs of the UNECE region and the evolving political and economic landscape, as well as the environmental priorities of the region.

3. The Belgrade Ministerial Declaration stated that the reform should focus on, although may not be limited to, the following aspects:

(a) The format, focus and priorities of the process and Ministerial Conferences;

(b) Evaluating the performance and impact of the process;

(c) Attracting the broader interest and more active engagement of all stakeholders, in particular the private sector;

(d) Expanding the use of partnerships as vehicles for improving implementation;

(e) Leveraging external contributions of expertise, manpower and resources;

(f) Assessing ways and means to promote more effectively the UNECE region-wide dimension of environmental cooperation;

(g) The full cost of the process and the effective allocation of available resources;

(g) Future secretariat arrangements.

4. In order to address the above issues in depth and with due consideration, the ministers invited the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) to develop, in consultation with EfE partners a plan for EfE reform so that it could be endorsed at the political level by UNECE in spring 2009.

5. The ministers further decided that the next EfE Ministerial Conference would be organized on the basis of the agreed reform.

II. Objectives and priorities of the "Environment for Europe" process

6. The EfE process should continue to serve as a mechanism to:

(a) Improve the environment throughout the region, contributing to sustainable development which may in turn contribute to poverty eradication, to improving quality of life, and to a safer world;

(b) Enhance the implementation of strengthened national environmental policies;

(c) Support convergence of environmental policies and approaches, while recognizing the benefits from a diversity of approaches to achieve common goals, and the prioritisation of environmental objectives;

(d) Encourage the participation of civil society;

(e) Promote broad horizontal environmental cooperation.

7. The political priorities should be based on commitments already taken under the EfE process. These priorities may include:

(a) Improvement of environmental governance, including strengthening environmental institutions and implementation of policy instruments;

(b) Streamlining the implementation by Governments of commitments they have made to existing UNECE legally binding and legally non-binding instruments;

(c) Enhancing efforts in environmental monitoring;

(d) Ensuring implementation of the Environmental Performance Review programme;

(e) Raising public awareness of environmental issues;

(f) Promoting linkages between environmental policy, economic and social well-being and competitiveness.

8. Furthermore, thematic priorities of the EfE process would be identified in line with current needs, national circumstances and in respect to future emerging issues.

9. In the future, the EfE process will be based on general principles and agreements on the operational modalities, as described below.

III. General principles

10. The ministers in Belgrade agreed that the EfE process should:

(a) Keep its UNECE region-wide dimension and be open for all interested countries of the region;

(b) Engage all stakeholders, including the private sector, to strengthen the work in partnership;

(c) Maintain close links with other regional and subregional initiatives, and focus on specific needs that are not entirely addressed by other cooperative frameworks, instruments or processes in the region and its subregions;

(d) Concentrate on results-based, action-oriented activities;

(e) Be kept open to issues on which the process can provide added value;

(f) Use delivery as a major criterion of its effectiveness. CEP should regularly consider and assess progress achieved under the process.

11. To complement the above principles, a consensus emerged from CEP in relation to the EfE process and the Conference:

(a) On the one hand, the EfE process-related principles are as follows:

(i) Broader engagement from the Governments to achieve long-term policy integration of environmental considerations into other sectors;

(ii) Stronger focus on implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences by relevant responsible actors in the period between Conferences;

(iii) Encouragement of and support to subregional activities including stronger involvement of relevant subregional structures in the implementation process, including RECs;

(iv) Enhanced cooperation between the regional and subregional partners in the region;

(v) Identification of ways to strengthen linkages between the activities under the EfE process and those of relevant international processes.

(vi) Enhancement of relevant Governments' implementation and compliance with their commitments under multilateral environmental agreements;

(vii) Utilization of the Environmental Performance Reviews as an important instrument for protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable development.

(b) On the other hand, the Conference-related principles are:

(i) The ministerial level of the Conferences should be maintained;

(ii) Specific mechanisms for attracting high-level participation, including those from the private sector, should be developed;

(iii) A limited number of themes, not more than two, to be identified in advance and addressed by each Conference;

(iv) Within the identified themes there should be a focus on specific needs of the subregions, in order to contribute to better cooperation and more substantive and action-oriented outcomes of the Conference;

(v) An effective communication strategy, including broad mass-media coverage, as appropriate, should be further developed, comprising, inter alia, special events for journalists, circulation of electronic newsletters and maintaining a dedicated website;

(vi) The outcome documents, in all forms, should be focused and action-oriented;

(vii) Carbon neutrality of the Conferences based on the voluntary contributions available.

IV. The "Environment for Europe" Conference

Preparatory process

12. Materializing the above-mentioned principles calls for streamlining and improving the preparatory process for the Conferences. In this spirit, the following measures should be taken:

(a) Not later than 18 months before the Conference the CEP at its regular session will decide on not more than two themes and discuss the outline of the agenda of the Conference. When deciding on the themes preliminary findings of available assessments and statistical reports on environment should be taken into consideration. A decision on the agenda of the Conference should be taken at the regular meeting of the CEP approximately 12 months prior to the Conference and further preparatory work would commence. Documents on substantial themes of the Conference should be released 6 weeks before the Conference;

(b) CEP would act as the convening body for the preparatory process. To maintain the open nature of the preparatory process and the engagement of all stakeholders, representatives of major groups will be invited to participate in meetings of the CEP in preparation of the Conference, as appropriate, in accordance with the existing UN rules and procedures. Furthermore, CEP would consider and approve the official documents for submission to the Conference. Special sessions of the CEP could be scheduled, if needed, in the year prior to the Conference;

(c) Particular efforts would be made to involve private-sector representatives in the preparatory process and the Conference;

(d) To reduce the amount of documents produced for the Conference, only one official document per selected theme would be prepared by the UNECE or another EfE partner, in close cooperation with other EfE partners. The official substantive documentation would thus comprise the pan-European assessment and theme-specific reports;

(e) Interested UNECE member States, EfE partners and other stakeholders could produce other documents featuring their activities and initiatives related to the EfE process, which would be circulated as information documents;

(f) The preparatory process would be serviced by the UNECE secretariat;

(g) For the preparatory process of the Conference and the Conference itself, the necessary extrabudgetary financial resources would have to continue to be provided to UNECE to supplement the United Nations core budget resources;

(h) The host country should assume relevant financial commitments.

Format

13. The periodicity, duration and the organization of discussions at the Conference should be as follows:

(a) The Conferences should be held every four to five years, with each Conference lasting two-and-a-half to three days maximum;

(b) Based on the previous experience, the Conference should start with a short opening event. The host country would be given an opportunity to organize events highlighting its special features in addition to the official Conference agenda;

(c) The discussions at the Conference should be arranged in an interactive manner and combine various types of sessions, e.g. plenary sessions, roundtables and moderated panel discussions, with a limited number of main speakers from different stakeholders (e.g. UNECE member States, EfE partners and major groups). When possible, interactive sessions, such as roundtables, could be run in parallel;

(d) The Conference could be structured around the following main clusters (all of them focusing on the agreed priorities):

(i) Plenary sessions for the presentation and discussion of the priority topics;

(ii) Sessions on ongoing cooperation and partnerships in the UNECE region and its subregions with different stakeholders, including the private sector;

(iii) A session of environmental NGOs and ministers in the roundtable format as an integral part of the conference;

(iv) A session of private sector representatives and ministers in the roundtable format as an integral part of the conference;

(v) Sessions dedicated to announcing new partnerships and initiatives by stakeholders;

(vi) A brief concluding session with the presentation (and adoption, if appropriate) of the main outcomes of the Conference;

(e) To address issues relevant to the agenda of the Conference in more detail, side-events should be organized by interested UNECE member States, EfE partners and relevant stakeholders;

(f) To attract the attention of the private sector, opportunities should be provided for the organization of promotional events such as poster exhibitions, trade fairs, roundtables and environmental award initiatives.

Outcomes

14. Conference outcomes might include:

(a) A chairperson's summary;

(b) Statements, initiatives, agreements, pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions;

(c) An agreed outcome of two pages on follow up and further actions strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference;

(d) Policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that are presented to the Conference by interested countries of the UNECE region and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues, and that were not negotiated within the preparatory process for the Conference;

(e) Assessment reports used in preparation of or presented to the Conference that are important for the implementation of the Conference's outcomes.

V. Implementation

15. Particular efforts should be made by all relevant responsible actors to implement the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences.

16. Member States should regularly consider how to promote objectives and priorities of the EfE process and strengthen implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.

17. A mid-term review to be convened by the CEP to assess progress of the implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences and provide renewed impetus to the process. The review should be based on existing information. The findings of the review should be taken into account in the preparatory process of the next conference.

18. Active participation by and input of all interested countries of the UNECE, and in particular of interested countries from subregions with specific needs in improving their environmental situation is crucial for the success of the activities under the EfE process.

19. The RECs network should continue to play a role in the preparatory process for the Conference and should be encouraged to play a greater role in the achievement of the overall EfE process’ objectives and priorities.

20. Other EfE partners should continueto be actively involved in the preparatory process and implementation of the EfE process.

21. Countries and/or organizations taking the lead for one or more issues are encouraged to do so in ways that would contribute significantly to the EfE process’ objectives and priorities.