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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**  
Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials  
“Environment for Europe”

**REPORT OF THE THIRD SESSION**

Introduction

1. The third session of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials “Environment for Europe” took place in Geneva on 3 (afternoon) and 4 July 2002.
2. The meeting was attended by delegates from Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Yugoslavia.
3. Representatives of the Commission of the European Communities (EU) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) also attended, as did representatives from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization’s Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO), the World Bank and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

4. The following other intergovernmental organizations were present: the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Project Preparation Committee (PPC), Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forest in Europe (MCPFE), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy.

5. The following non-governmental and regional organizations were represented: European Eco-Forum, European Environmental Bureau, Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), and Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC).

## **I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

6. The meeting was opened by the Chair, Ms. Anna Golubovska-Onisimova (Ukraine). She proposed that consideration of item 7 of the agenda, on the organization of work during the Kiev Conference, be postponed until the next session. The Working Group accepted this proposal and adopted the agenda as amended (CEP/AC.11/2002/1).

## **II. POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE KIEV CONFERENCE**

7. The Chair introduced the paper on the policy framework for the Kiev agenda (CEP/AC.11/2002/4). She noted that the paper was the third revision and had taken into account comments of the Working Group at its second session, proposals made by the Friends of the Chair and suggestions of the Executive Committee at its fourth meeting, 1-2 March 2002. She emphasized that this was not a negotiated text but should be viewed as a tool for the Working Group to prepare the agenda for the Kiev Conference and to link together the preparatory activities. The delegations concurred.

8. Referring to the alternative proposals for the overriding theme for the Conference, many participants favoured "environment and security" and many others supported the theme of "strengthening the environmental pillar of sustainable development." Some participants suggested that "Environment for Europe" was sufficient as a theme and would best reflect the general purpose of the Kiev Conference. There was no consensus, and it was decided that the discussion would be revisited once there was more clarity regarding the whole agenda for the Conference.

9. Most delegations participating in the discussion stressed the importance of those items that were of particular interest to the 12 countries in transition in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (G12) 1/ as well as to those South-east European countries that were not yet applying for European Union membership. Several delegations, while supporting the focus on these countries, emphasized the importance of maintaining a pan-European view and addressing the responsibilities of all countries in the UNECE region. In this regard, some delegations proposed that the Kiev agenda should give sufficient attention to transboundary impacts and the sustainable management of shared ecosystems like transboundary watercourses and international lakes. The ECE-wide region importance of the three main legal instruments that were being negotiated was also stressed.

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10. The Working Group invited delegations to submit to the secretariat by 15 August 2002 written comments on document CEP/AC.11/2002/4. The Chair would thereafter prepare a revised version for circulation at the next session of the Working Group.

### **III. AN ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY FOR THE G12**

11. The Chair, referring to document CEP/AC.11/2202/5, informed participants of the progress in the development of the G12 environmental strategy. She noted that the High-level Preparatory Meeting on the Development of a G12 Strategy had taken place in Kiev on 1-2 February 2002. The discussion had been jointly chaired by the Minister of Environment of Georgia and the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine. This had been followed by the Ministerial Meeting of the G12 countries and interested Western countries in The Hague (Netherlands) in April 2002, and a meeting of the G12 Steering Group in Geneva on 1 July. The Chair further reported the results of the fourth preparatory meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Bali, Indonesia, June 2002), where consultations on the margins of the meeting had led to an agreement between G12 and the European Union to launch a new water initiative in the context of an "Pan-European East-West environmental partnership for sustainable development" to be presented at the World Summit in Johannesburg (South Africa) and implemented in the framework of G12 environmental strategy.

12. The Working Group of Senior Officials expressed its strong interest in and support for the G12 environment strategy. Many of the representatives offered to share their experience. Members also emphasized the importance of ensuring that all interested member States in the UNECE region be included in the partnership.

13. Participants generally agreed that the G12 environmental strategy would be an important item on the agenda for Kiev. At the same time, they noted that considerable work remained to be done in elaborating the strategy. Some of the issues that needed to be taken into consideration in this process included addressing transboundary environmental problems of the G-12 countries and coordinating a number of related activities in the subregion. The representative of Greece pointed out that a strategy for the Euro-Mediterranean region had already been developed for the World Summit, and that this would serve as one model for the G12.

14. The delegation of Ukraine proposed to organize a meeting to discuss the further development of the strategy with the participation of all interested actors by the end of September 2002 in Kiev.

### **IV. ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA**

15. The secretariat informed the Working Group about its work to date on this issue, as described in document CEP/AC.11/2002/16. With financial support from Norway, the secretariat had participated in a meeting in Central Asia to discuss the possibility of linking commitments to be made by the Heads of State in Johannesburg with the development of an initiative to the Kiev Conference. Environment Ministers in Central Asia did recommend that their governments should develop a common position to both the World Summit in Johannesburg and the Ministerial Conference in Kiev. However, the conclusion of the secretariat was that the five countries at this stage did not seem to be in a position to agree on a common platform for a serious effort to address the diverging positions with regard to water management and water allocation.

16. In the ensuing discussion, a number of countries strongly supported the inclusion of water, environment and security as a separate item on the Kiev agenda. It was felt that the Conference could make a substantial step forward in this area and provide a platform for future work. The delegations of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan noted that solving the problems of water, environment and security required solving many strategic tasks and addressing the overall security of the Central Asian countries. For these reasons, it would be important to take this up at the Kiev Ministerial Conference.

17. Other delegations also considered the issue to be highly important, but were concerned that there was not yet sufficient willingness among the States concerned to reach agreement in time for the Kiev Conference. Some were concerned that water, environment and security could not be discussed by Environment Ministers alone, but would also need the involvement of ministers of water, energy and foreign affairs, for instance. Others held the view that there should be a separate item on water and security that would address the concerns for the whole UNECE region.

18. Many participants supported the view that an alternative would be to address it within the context of the G12 environmental strategy. It was also generally agreed that promoting the ratification and implementation of the UNECE Water Convention should be an important part of this work.

19. It was also important to take into consideration the relationship between the issue of water, environment and security and that of the economic aspects of security in Europe that had been discussed during the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (7-10 May 2002). Furthermore, should security-related issues be included in the Kiev agenda, OSCE should be included as a partner.

20. The Chair concluded that it was too early to make a final decision on this matter and that the discussion would be revisited at the next session of the Working Group of Senior Officials.

## **V. ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATION**

21. The delegation of Sweden introduced an addendum to document CEP/AC.11/2002/10 and announced that, in partnership with the Russian Federation, it would lead the process for environment and education. Whether the final product would be a strategy, guidelines or an action plan was still to be determined. The first meeting of a drafting group would take place in September 2002. The delegation also invited all interested participants to join an informal meeting on the subject during the lunch break on 4 July.

22. Members welcomed the initiative of Sweden and the Russian Federation and supported further work. The delegation of France suggested that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should be among the actors involved. The delegation of Tajikistan provided information on the subregional Workshop on Environmental Education in Central Asia, which had taken place in Dushanbe in June 2002.

23. It was decided that Sweden would report on the status of preparation of the strategy at the next session of the Working Group of Senior Officials (November 2002).

## **VI. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION: TEN YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS**

24. The secretariat introduced document CEP/AC.11/2002/17 on “Environmental policy in transition,” which, when completed, would summarize the lessons learnt through the Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR) in countries with economies in transition for submission to the Kiev Conference.

25. Members welcomed the paper and discussed how to present this document at the Kiev Conference. In general, it was felt that it should be put early on the agenda in order to provide a basis for discussion of other items as well. Many participants noted how important the Environmental Performance Reviews had been, and felt that it would be very useful to strengthen the analytical core of the programme. Some participants suggested that the report could help to contribute to the development of the G12 environmental strategy. Other proposed that it could be interesting to compare and contrast the OECD “Review of Reviews” with the UNECE “Ten-year Review”.

## **VII. ORGANIZATION OF WORK DURING THE KIEV CONFERENCE**

26. The Working Group decided to postpone discussion of this item until the next session of the Executive Committee and the fourth meeting of the Working Group.

## **VIII. FUTURE OF THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE PROCESS”**

27. Mr. Von Meijenfeldt, Chair of the Committee of Environmental Policy, introduced the paper on THE Future of the “Environment for Europe” process (CEP/AC.11/2002/14), which he had been requested to prepare as a first draft by the Executive Committee at its fourth meeting. The paper focused primarily on issues of governance based on three statements and three proposals. The three statements were: (i) there is a lack of governance in the “Environment for Europe” process; (ii) the Kiev Conference offers the right opportunity for improvement; and (iii) we should not create something new, but cluster what we have. The three proposals include: (i) clustering ministerial meetings once a year; (ii) clustering subregional programmes and finances; and (iii) strengthening synergy among the UNECE conventions.

28. The paper was welcomed as an important contribution to the preparations for Kiev. Participants offered a number of comments on the paper and proposed that a drafting group should be established to continue the work.

29. Overall, members supported all three of the statements, but expressed different views on the proposals. With regard to the first proposal, few members supported organizing annual ministerial meetings, although the idea of clustering ministerial meetings, perhaps every two or three years, met with a more favourable reaction. The process could begin by clustering the “Environment for Europe” and “Health and Environment” processes. It was noted that, to do this effectively, it would be necessary to begin very soon to engage in a dialogue with Health Ministers.

30. With regard to the second proposal, there was support for clustering subregional programmes, with particular reference to the G12 and Balkan countries. At the same time, many members emphasized the importance of continuing a pan-European approach in the “Environment for Europe” process.

31. With regard to the third proposal, there was generally a consensus that more should be done to strengthen synergy among the conventions, but keeping in mind the need to respect their specialization and legal status.
32. Some of the members considered that the architecture of the "Environment for Europe" process should be reviewed, taking into consideration both political changes in Europe (EU enlargement process, reconstruction of South-eastern Europe) and outputs of the World Summit in Johannesburg. The necessity to have further discussion with all interested actors involved and early consensus on the matter was widely supported. It could also be useful to ask the respective partners in the process to prepare short papers on what they felt had been achieved through the "Environment for Europe" process as one point of reference for deciding the future.
33. Participants also suggested that further discussions should address not only the issue of governance but also the substantive direction that the "Environment for Europe" process should take.
34. In order to continue consideration of this issue, the Working Group established a drafting group, with due consideration to equitable geographic distribution, composed of Belgium, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, the United States of America, the European Commission and Eco-Forum. Mr. Von Meijenfeldt (Netherlands) would chair the drafting group.
35. Participants were requested to provide their written comments for the further revision of the document to the ECE secretariat by 15 August 2002. The first meeting of the drafting group will take place on 12 September 2002, in Geneva, prior to the sixth meeting of the Executive Committee. The Working Group will discuss the revised document at its next session.

#### **IX. UPDATE ON OTHER PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES**

36. The secretariat introduced document CEP/AC.11/2002/5 on the status of the preparatory activities planned for the Kiev Conference.
37. The delegations of Georgia, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and UNEP informed the Working Group that there had been substantial progress in developing a Carpathian convention, a Central Asian mountain charter and a legal instrument for the protection of the mountain ecosystems in the Caucasus. The instruments could possibly be ready for the Kiev Conference.
38. The EEA representative reported that preparation of the Kiev assessment was proceeding according to schedule. The assessment would be available in March 2003. He requested the G12 countries to provide full assistance and support for gathering the data required for the report.
39. The Council of Europe indicated its intention to present to the Conference a number of information documents, including documents on the European Landscape Convention, the Hanover "Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent and the Code of Practice for the Introduction of Biological and Landscape Diversity Considerations into the Transport Sector.

40. The secretariat reported on the work carried out by the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and on guidelines for reforming energy pricing. Both the recommendations to governments from the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Guidelines on reforming energy pricing should be completed in early 2003 in order to be adopted by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its tenth session.
41. The secretariat also informed the Working Group on the status of preparations for the following legal instruments: the protocol on strategic environmental assessment to the Espoo Convention; the possible protocol to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution on long-term financing of core activities and on strengthening pollution abatement activities; the protocol on pollutant release and transfer registers to the Aarhus Convention; and the joint protocol on civil liability for transboundary damage caused by hazardous activities within the scope of both the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. The negotiations and drafting of the documents were well under way, and it was expected that at least three of these instruments would be ready for the Conference. In addition, two soft-law instruments might be submitted: guidelines on public participation in international forums and guidelines on genetically modified organisms.
42. The OECD representative reported on the current status of its preparatory activities related to the G12 sub-programme and informed the Working Group of the wide range of reports expected to be ready for the Kiev Conference.
43. The delegation of the Netherlands, which chaired the related task force, noted that guidelines for environmental compliance and enforcement were expected to be ready for the Kiev Conference.
44. The PPC representatives confirmed that the report on environment-related investments in the newly independent States and Central and Eastern Europe would be printed in February 2003.
45. Eco-Forum informed the Working Group about its plans to organize a strategy meeting in November-December 2002, to develop NGO quality benchmarks for the Kiev Conference. These should be ready to disseminate at the Working Group's session in early 2003. Eco-Forum also planned to organize a parallel conference of non-governmental organizations two days before and one day after the official event in Kiev. During the Ministerial Conference, Eco-Forum had offered to organize a session for Ministers and NGOs on environmental policy integration, as well as several thematic side events.
46. In addition, the MCPFE representative informed the Working Group about its Expert-level Meeting in June, 2002, where the importance of the close cooperation with the "Environment for Europe" process and the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy was underlined. The representative suggested that Ministers at the Kiev Conference could take note of the relevant outcomes of the fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forest in Europe (Vienna, April 2003).
47. The delegation of France reported on the High-level Pan-European Conference on Agriculture and Biodiversity (June 2002) and suggested that its outputs could contribute to the Kiev Conference.

## **X. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE KIEV CONFERENCE**

48. At the request of the Executive Committee (March 2002), the secretariat had prepared a consolidated budget, reflecting the total resource requirements for the Conference (CEP/AC.11/2002/6).

49. The secretariat noted that the Trust Fund for the "Environment for Europe" process was almost exhausted and stressed that without additional funds it would be impossible to support the further participation of representatives from countries in transition in the meetings.

50. Several countries indicated their intention to contribute financially to the preparations for the Kiev Conference as well as to the Conference itself, but noted that the precise amounts had not yet been established. The Chair requested that they should provide this information, if possible, at the sixth meeting of the Executive Committee in September 2002.

51. The European Commission's representative proposed that the preparations of the Kiev assessment (EEA) should be reflected in the consolidated budget.

52. The OECD delegate stressed the need for early identification of whether financing for the future of the EAP Task would be available.

53. Eco-Forum expressed its gratitude to Governments and international organizations for their financial support for the activities of NGOs and underlined that more funds were needed.

54. The Chair concluded that updated information on the status of resource requirements should be prepared for the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

## **XI. HOST COUNTRY PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

55. The Chair informed the Working Group about the Decree of the President of Ukraine on the preparation and carrying out of the Kiev Conference. She also introduced Mr. Lyzun, the Secretary of the National Organizing Committee for the Kiev Conference.

56. Mr. Lyzun provided detailed information regarding the provisions of the Decree and underlined the full support that the Ukrainian Government was giving to the preparation of the Conference. He stressed that the Decree addressed both the organization and the financing of the Conference. The first meeting of the National Organizing Committee was scheduled for 11 July 2002.

57. Mr. Kinakh, the Prime Minister of Ukraine, headed the National Organizing Committee. The First Deputy Head was Mr. Kurykin, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources; the Second Deputy Head was Mr. Zlenko, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The other key Ministers, including the Minister of Economy and European Integration, the Minister of Science and Education, the Minister of Finance, Minister of Health, the Minister of Emergency Situations and Public Protection from the Chernobyl Disaster's Consequences, the Minister of Justice, and the Mayor of Kiev were also members of the National Organizing Committee. In



addition, local administrations, the scientific and the non-governmental community were represented.

58. The Ukrainian Government had decided to provide free visas to the official delegates to the Conference and would try to do likewise for non-governmental delegates.

59. The delegation of Ukraine expressed its appreciation to Denmark, Germany the Netherlands, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Commission for their financial support.

## **XII. OTHER BUSINESS**

60. The Working Group decided to organize the sixth meeting of its Executive Committee in Geneva, on 13 September 2002, and the fourth session of the Working Group on 7-8 November 2002, back to back with the annual session of the Committee on Environmental Policy.

### Note

1/ G12 refers to the 12 States that were formerly part of the Soviet Union: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.