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CHALLENGES AND EMERGING DIRECTIONS OF
ECE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

Preliminary outline of a comprehensive analytical paper to provide guidance and serve as
reference for the Committee and its Bureau in developing a long-term programme*

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* Prepared by Mr. B. Bošnjaković, consultant to the ECE secretariat, in response to the Committee's request (ECE/CEP/80, para. 26).

Introduction

1. With both the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” on the agenda, the 2002-2003 biennium offers an exceptional opportunity for the ECE member States and their Committee on Environmental Policy to take stock and reflect on:
 - (a) The achievements of the Committee and the governing bodies of the ECE conventions in the past five to ten years;
 - (b) Current trends and developments, and their effect on the environment in the ECE region;
 - (c) The challenge of the principle of sustainable development to the Committee’s core business and the strategic options for the future;
 - (d) The cooperation between the Committee on Environmental Policy and the governing bodies of the conventions and other players in implementing these options.

2. A strategy is expected to help the Committee tackle the above issues. However, it is unlikely to be an instant solution: its preparation would presumably require much effort and consultation. The strategy would also need to take into account the outcome of the 2002 World Summit in Johannesburg (South Africa) and the decisions of the 2003 Ministerial Conference in Kiev.

3. The strategy could become a guide for the Committee on Environmental Policy for the five to ten years following its adoption to structure and continuously adapt its programme of work. It should ensure and strengthen synergies with other players, and in particular with the governing bodies of the conventions and other ECE committees, with the regional commissions and other relevant United Nations bodies and with global, regional and subregional organizations.

4. To implement the strategy, the Committee on Environmental Policy would need to exert leadership to encourage cooperation with different actors in the governmental, non-governmental and private segments of society and the economy.

I. PAST AND PRESENT ECE ACTIVITIES TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT: ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

5. ECE covers a highly heterogeneous and dynamic region, responsible for roughly three quarters of world economic production, trade and pollution. ECE has proven to be an excellent forum for sharing and generating ideas, analysing and formulating policies, and designing approaches to assist member States in solving national, subregional and regional problems. After years of expansion, serviced by the ECE Environment and Human Settlements Division, the time is right to take stock of what was achieved and to make plans for the future. In a timely way it coincides with the launching by the Secretary-General of a review of the Secretariat’s programme of work coupled with an evaluation of its management processes and support structures.

A. Achievements

6. The Committee on Environmental Policy as well as the bodies established in the various areas of activities, and in particular the governing bodies of the legally binding conventions, represent a unique and powerful consensus-based policy forum for discussing environmental issues and setting priorities at the pan-European level.

7. Achievements can be pointed out in five main areas of ECE environmental activity.

1. Development of legally binding and non-binding standards and environmental policies

8. Five conventions and nine protocols have been negotiated under the auspices of ECE. All the conventions, as well as some of their protocols, are now in force (more details are posted on the ECE web site at www.unece.org). The political will that their Parties and Signatories show to adhere to these conventions is proof of the importance that they attach to them. In addition, the process of negotiation that led to the adoption of the standards and the ensuing regional and bilateral technical cooperation resulted in the establishment of active networks of experts.

9. The ECE conventions and their guidelines are at the origin of many successful programmes and initiatives to improve the environment. Some of their achievements are: a significant reduction in emissions of several types of air pollutants; a pilot programme for monitoring and assessing transboundary waters; an increasing number of cross-border environmental impact assessments; an early warning system for industrial accidents with transboundary effects; the application of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in other conventions.

10. The work leading to the adoption of the conventions, and the ongoing work under the conventions and guidelines represent a highly dynamic policy development process, which has identified and addressed policy, institutional and legal issues for further discussion and/or development, for instance:

- Interlinkage between conventions;
- Compliance with the provisions of the conventions;
- Strategic environmental assessment (SEA);
- Civil liability for transboundary damage;
- Pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTR).

11. Owing to its pan-European character, ECE serves as a multilateral forum for dialogue between EU and non-EU countries on environmental and sustainability issues that require regional agreements or policy debates. In particular in the area of norms and standards, the ECE legally binding instruments are often translated into EU legislation and sometimes EU legislation is used as a model when drafting legal instruments within ECE for the region as a whole. So the European Union can take full advantage of the ECE multilateral framework to extend its best practices. The EU is a Party to all the ECE environmental conventions except the Aarhus Convention, and its representatives are active in the policy discussions and work under these conventions.

12. The remarkable progress achieved so far has been accompanied by, and made possible

through, a profound change in working practices towards a participatory and interactive culture: meetings of signatories or parties, as well as of many working groups, are now attended by numerous non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

2. “Environment for Europe”

13. The series of pan-European environmental ministerial conferences (Dobris, Lucerne, Sofia, Aarhus and Kiev) has initiated a number of important policy decisions and priority actions described as the “Environment for Europe” process. ECE services and contributes to several activities under this process. The programmes of work of the Committee and of the conventions’ governing bodies include various elements that contribute to the “Environment for Europe” process:

- The Environmental Performance Review (EPR) programme, adopted in Lucerne in 1993;
- Environmental Programme for Europe, adopted in Sofia in 1995;
- The Aarhus Convention and the Protocols on Heavy Metals and Persistent Organic Pollutants, adopted in Aarhus in 1998;
- The negotiations on new legal instruments (SEA, civil liability, PRTR) in view of the forthcoming Ministerial Conference in Kiev in 2003.

14. ECE also services other priority actions at pan-European level, such as the regional preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

15. The implementation of priority actions has given ECE the focal role of bringing together the main players and stakeholders at pan-European level. It has also helped to develop a sense of cohesion among the member States and an awareness of the urgent need to act jointly.

3. Policy and performance analyses

16. Since 1994, nearly 20 countries have been reviewed through the ECE EPR programme (more details are posted on the ECE web site at www.unece.org). The programme has four main objectives:

- (a) To assist countries in transition to improve their management of the environment;
- (b) To promote a continuous dialogue among ECE member countries;
- (c) To help integrate environmental policies into sectoral policies;
- (d) To help integrate health aspects into environmental performance.

17. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has already issued a report on the achievements, lessons learnt and conclusions drawn in the course of its EPR programme. The ECE secretariat is now working on a similar review for the countries in transition covered by the ECE EPR programme. In this context a number of issues are currently under discussion:

- How to help countries put EPR recommendations into practice?
- How to use lessons learnt at national level to identify subregional and regional trends and needs, e.g. for selected sectors?
- How to strengthen cooperation and harmonization between environmental monitoring (as done for instance by the European Environment Agency (EEA)) and the environmental

policy/performance analysis (as done by ECE and OECD)?

4. Cross-sectoral cooperation

18. Whenever there has been a need to address new policy challenges, cross-sectoral linkages, activities and cooperation have been established with other ECE committees and other international organizations (e.g. World Health Organization (WHO)), in particular for transport, health and energy. Following this trend, it is expected that the relationship between the Committee on Environmental Policy and the governing bodies of the conventions developed under the auspices of ECE will need to receive more attention in the future.

5. Operational support and capacity-building

19. Operational activities and technical assistance to member States are part of the work of the Committee on Environmental Policy and the governing bodies of the conventions. They include workshops, pilot projects and exercises. Moreover, the Regional Adviser has also provided technical assistance, mostly in a subregional context (Central Asia, Transcaucasia, South East Europe). These are reported to the Committee on Environmental Policy and the governing bodies of the conventions, but are not designed or carried out under their responsibility.

20. The technical assistance issues currently under discussion are:

- The need to strengthen cooperation with other regional commissions, and with other players providing technical assistance, especially at subregional level;
- How to integrate technical assistance into the Committee's overall strategy.

B. Areas for improvement

21. There is a need to launch new initiatives or strengthen existing activities to:

- (a) Facilitate accession to the ECE environmental conventions and their protocols by the member countries;
- (b) Integrate environmental concerns into sectoral policies;
- (c) Focus on policy areas where progress remains elusive: urban waste management and the environmental impact of agriculture and tourism.

22. A number of countries would benefit from assistance in: establishing the procedures and taking the steps needed to ratify the conventions; clarifying the relation between the national legislation/policies and the requirements to become a Party to an agreement; understanding the obligations in terms of financial and human resources; establishing programmes to develop and attract these resources. All these goals and activities are closely related to the overall "Environment for Europe" process. In order to improve overall governance, it has been suggested to streamline the goal-setting ministerial meetings, to better coordinate the many processes that pursue similar goals and to establish a sound financial basis for all these activities.

23. Although the need to integrate environmental concerns is widely accepted as a principle at intergovernmental level and within national structures, its implementation is slow. This will

not change without a fresh approach and a more sustained effort, both nationally and regionally. The integration of environment and health policies is particularly important. The Committee on Environmental Policy could consider playing a more focused and powerful role and intensify its activities with regard to the integration of sectoral policies.

24. Environmental deficiencies in urban waste management, agriculture and tourism are among the most visible to the public at large. Developing mechanisms and revenues for remedying them is a challenge for both national and regional policies. The Committee on Environmental Policy has not so far taken up this challenge but could consider doing so.

II. A CHANGING SCENE: TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE ECE REGION

25. The ECE region has been undergoing political, economic and social changes that are having a profound effect on the environment. The most important trends and developments have been: globalization; economic development and social challenges; security issues; EU enlargement; and the transition.

A. Globalization

26. During the past 15 years, the outlook for global political, economic, social and security development have changed dramatically under the influence of:

- (a) An increasingly widespread acceptance of democratic institutions and market-based economic systems;
- (b) The liberalization of trade and international capital flows;
- (c) The rise in the number and influence of transnational corporations;
- (d) Rapid technological innovation, in particular in information and communication technology.

27. All these factors raise challenges for the environment. For instance, globalization and new technologies can make for more environmentally friendly patterns of economic development, but technological gains can be offset by pollution and excessive resource use resulting from increased economic activity if the limits protecting the environment are flouted. Similarly, economic integration requires further liberalization of trade, investments and financial flows, all of which can contribute to the wealth of nations. However, if liberalization is not accompanied by the introduction of efficient legal frameworks, then criminality, social disintegration and environmental and public health deterioration may follow.

28. Globalization and sustained economic growth have affected the quality of the environment. Significant growth in GDP per capita and in industrial production tends to be accompanied by structural changes in the production system, with a shift from material- and energy-intensive sectors to services. This also means a shift in emphasis in environmental policy. Improvements in eco-efficiency have been offset by overall increases in the volume of goods and services consumed and discarded. Eco-efficiency gains in the energy sector are offset by an increasing use of oil, emitting more CO₂ and other pollutants.

29. The impact of globalization is marked by an increasing internationalization of cause-

effect-response chains for the environment and changes in the responsibilities and relations between the public and the private sectors.

B. Economic development and social challenges

30. The process of transition to a free-market economy, more participation in decision-making processes and regional and subregional integration has revealed and even increased disparities between countries and social groups with regard to their ability to cope with new challenges and in particular with environmental challenges.

31. Environmental pressures from consumption have intensified and may worsen in many areas as a result of rising incomes and resource- and pollution-intensive lifestyles. Although there are still large differences in some consumption patterns between Western countries and countries in transition, consumption patterns in Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent States are expected to follow the same path as they have done in the West.

32. Poverty continues to be a major social problem in many parts of the region. In several countries in transition more than half the population lives below the national poverty line. Relatively high unemployment in Europe raises questions about the sustainability of growth and human development. Poverty and unemployment often lead to human insecurity, ill health, loss of self-respect, a sense of failure and social exclusion. Sweeping corruption and criminality hamper economic reform and prevent the introduction of adequate and efficient environmental legislation. Such difficult social conditions are not conducive to the introduction and implementation of important environmental policy concepts such as the polluter-pays principle.

33. Reconciling basic environmental and health concerns with severe social constraints seems virtually impossible for some countries in transition. It is essential to keep an eye on such disparities and their evolution and to design measures to prevent subregions drifting apart.

C. Environment and security

34. Qualitative and quantitative changes in the causes, types and consequences of armed and other conflicts have taken place in recent years, ranging from terrorism, armed insurgencies and ethnic conflicts to full-fledged inter-State military conflicts. About 10 ECE member States have experienced the consequences of armed conflicts in the past decade.

35. Environmental and natural resource issues can play a significant role in the emergence of conflicts, during armed clashes and after the conflict has subsided. Although they are generally not the decisive cause of the outbreak of hostilities, they can be a contributing factor, as may be the case with scarce water allocation in certain areas. Even where they do not lead to open hostilities, transboundary environmental issues can nevertheless hamper and even undermine bilateral relationships between States. The existence and application of international environmental legislation can help prevent such situations or help settle disputes should they arise.

36. Most armed conflicts are accompanied by collateral, or even intended, environmental damage. Such damage can be direct (e.g. causing contamination) or indirect (e.g. through the

destruction of infrastructure). Post-conflict management can have important environmental components: cleaning up contamination or repairing infrastructure, as is the case in some countries in South Eastern Europe that were hit by military conflicts. Transboundary (or multi-ethnic) environmental projects can, moreover, help to rebuild confidence among different communities.

D. EU enlargement

37. EU environmental policy and legislation have developed over the past decades by adapting pieces of national legislation and negotiating completely new legislation. The development of ECE environmental conventions, keeping in mind a pan-European perspective, has also had a great impact, the EU being a Party to all ECE environmental conventions but one.

38. The EU Environmental Action Programmes reflect its dynamic and strategic approach to environmental protection. The priorities singled out in the sixth programme include: (i) cooperation with the business sector and consumers to promote environmentally friendly production and consumption; (ii) better integration of environmental concerns into economic sectors such as transport, energy and agriculture; (iii) spatial planning and sustainable development at the regional and local level.

39. Many other pieces of EU legislation addressing policy areas such as agriculture and energy are highly relevant to environmental protection. They represent formidable challenges for reconciling environmental, economic and social concerns.

40. The body of EU law is one of the main factors influencing environmental protection policies not only in its member States, but also in applicant States, other States aspiring to EU membership and even those States in the ECE region that are not eligible for EU membership. Compliance with the body of EU law is a condition for successful accession, and the body of EU environmental law represents for all countries aspiring to EU membership a daunting political, institutional and financial challenge. This is becoming particularly visible in their struggle to cope with the financing and operation of environmental infrastructure in urban and rural areas, such as waste and waste-water management.

41. However, some economic aspects of EU integration could undermine environmental legislation and projects. For instance, certain transport projects are likely to inflict further damage on already fragile ecosystems. Agriculture, which is paramount for the economies and employment in most applicant States, is another example. The environmental consequences of current agricultural, forestry and fisheries policies and practices call for a rethinking both at pan-European level and within the EU.

E. Transition

42. Past mismanagement has left many areas and cities in Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent States with a crumbling, inefficient infrastructure. The first years of transition were marked by a change in public financing and rapid economic restructuring. In environmental management there was much emphasis on market mechanisms and market-based

instruments. This approach, often advocated by the international community, often turned out to be over-optimistic. The old and wasteful power plants and industries continued to operate. The general lack of purchasing power limited the possibilities for immediate full-cost recovery in utility services and much-needed long-term capital was not available. The regulatory regime did not develop fast enough to enable efficient environmental management.

43. With some notable exceptions, most countries suffered a steep decline in living standards. In the meantime, countries will move in different directions and at very different paces. However, a number of common approaches can be found across the range of national initiatives. The choice between short-term economic gains and longer-term environmental concerns pose a much more difficult challenge for the countries in transition than for the more developed countries in the region. Nonetheless, many countries in transition have passed important new laws to improve environmental protection, established new agencies and developed new sources of public information.

44. Establishing democratic and transparent government that is both equitable and efficient has been the most painful and protracted component of the transition. In the early 1990s many reformers advocated a minimalist State, and thus encouraged a sharp reduction in government and public expenditure and a neglect of the quality of public administration. The result was often a weak State where the public and private services needed for human development and in particular for environmental protection were not provided. Sharp cuts in public expenditure led to a loss of highly qualified people.

III. TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES AND OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

45. There is a growing debate among all players and stakeholders on whether the approaches to environmental protection have so far been too narrow. In fact, there is a growing consensus that significant progress in environmental protection can be achieved only within the broader context of **sustainable development**. This implies the need to integrate, even more than before, environmental concerns into other sectors, both economic and social, through a wide range of policy, legal, institutional and financial measures and incentives. This policy switch is necessary in all ECE member States. Managing it will require much effort and commitment from policy makers and other actors at all levels: global, regional, national and local. The paper prepared by the Vice-Chairs for negotiation at the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development stresses the key role of the United Nations regional commissions in pursuing the regional and subregional implementation of agenda 21 and the upcoming Summit's outcome.

46. For both the Committee on Environmental Policy and the conventions' governing bodies, the switch from a more narrowly defined environmental protection policy to the broader context of sustainable development raises two types of strategic questions:

(a) What are the main substantive challenges and options for the next five to ten years in view of the changed scenery?

(b) How should the Committee on Environmental Policy, other ECE committees and the conventions' governing bodies work together to take up the main challenges of sustainable

development?

47. Although the answers to these questions must be based on the conclusions and the outcome of the Johannesburg World Summit, this chapter presents four possible major challenges. In the subsequent chapter, opportunities for cooperation among various bodies, both within ECE and outside, will be discussed.

Challenge 1: Environmental performance and integration of environmental concerns into other sectors

48. Goals may include:

(a) Observe and analyse trends in integration.

Some tools to achieve it:

- (i) Observation of trends in regional and national environmental performance;
- (ii) Integrated regional strategy for coordinated monitoring, data collection and assessment;
- (iii) Creating a strategic link between monitoring and environmental performance activities;
- (iv) Analytic trend studies and recommendations on the environmental consequences of key sectoral policies (agriculture, transport, energy, tourism);
- (v) Forum for the joint review and analysis of national sustainable development strategies;
- (vi) Study and possibly apply the concept of “environmental footprint”;

(b) Develop strategies and facilitate the move towards sustainability.

Some tools to achieve it:

- (i) Instruments (codes of good practice, guidelines, strategies) for implementing sustainable strategies in key economic sectors, with a view to reforming subsidies and internalizing external costs;
- (ii) Promoting cross-sectoral integration (water, health, transport, environment) by developing strategies, guidelines or binding instruments;
- (iii) Cross-sectoral capacity-building programmes for key stakeholders from the governmental, non-governmental and private sectors.

Challenge 2: Good governance and transparency

49. Goals may include:

(a) Develop new instruments that strengthen good governance and transparency.

Some tools to achieve it:

- (i) New protocols to existing conventions, e.g. SEA or civil liability for environmental damage;

- (ii) Environmental transparency index;
 - (iii) Studies and guidelines on the prevention of environment-related criminality and corruption, in particular in the transboundary context;
- (b) Promote and strengthen institutional and human capacities.
Some tools to achieve it:
- (i) Capacity-building to ensure access to efficient, independent and impartial justice in environmental matters;
 - (ii) Capacity-building to promote effective compliance and enforcement of environmental legislation, in particular in the transboundary context.

Challenge 3: Transboundary cooperation and regional security

50. Goals may include:

- (a) Interlinking conventions.
Some tools to achieve it:
- (i) Forum to share experience, promote synergies, and identify common problems and solutions shared by environmental conventions;
 - (ii) Guidelines on mechanisms of compliance, enforcement and monitoring under the various environmental conventions;
 - (iii) Instruments on civil liability for transboundary environmental damage.
- (b) Preventing conflicts and settling disputes.
Some tools to achieve it:
- (i) Promoting conflict prevention, dispute settlement and post-conflict management with regard to environment and natural resources, through subregional projects and in cooperation with other regional organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe;
 - (ii) Strengthen cooperation with other regional commissions on environment-related natural resource issues (water, energy) in shared transboundary areas;
- (c) Promote and strengthen institutional and human capacities.
Some tools to achieve it:
- (i) Legal advisory service to facilitate the effective implementation of regional environmental conventions and protocols, e.g. through bilateral agreements;
 - (ii) Programme of capacity-building for young administrators and other stakeholders from the ECE member States on the implementation of environmental conventions.

Challenge 4: Quality of life and social cohesion

51. Goals may include:

- (a) Reconciling social, environmental and economic concerns.
Some tools to achieve it:

- (i) Encouraging local initiatives and partnerships towards sustainable consumption patterns;
 - (ii) Study the feasibility of introducing social impact assessment to complement environmental impact assessment and SEA;
 - (iii) Policy recommendations, methodologies and guidelines on the application of the polluter-pays principle and the user-pays principle for key sectors and various socio-economic conditions;
- (b) Overcoming social disparities.
Some tools to achieve it:
- (i) Policy instruments, economic incentives, financing mechanisms and awareness-raising to improve and maintain quality of life in the urban and rural environment;
 - (ii) Guidelines on reconciling environmental concerns, economic imperatives and social constraints in the most economically, socially and environmentally disadvantaged urban and rural areas, with respect to pricing of water and waste management services;
 - (iii) Programme for overcoming environmental disparities (legal, institutional, investment) in the process of EU enlargement and market economy reform in the ECE region.

IV. OPTIONS FOR COOPERATION: AN INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE

52. The Committee on Environmental Policy can play different roles in the future. If it chooses to continue its present role in the traditional area of environmental protection – option 1 – leaving the economic and social elements of sustainable development aside, its task will be simpler, but it will have to face increasingly fierce competition from other organizations. At the same time it will forego the opportunity of gaining a central, focal role by developing into a natural policy forum for reconciling various sectoral interests at regional level.

53. By choosing to play a central role in setting the scene for the transition to truly sustainable development in the ECE region – option 2 – the Committee on Environmental Policy would opt for a much more ambitious and demanding task, which will require it to remodel its cooperation with other ECE committees, with ECE itself, with the governing bodies of the conventions, and with other organizations dealing with sustainable development in general and environmental protection in particular. Following this option to its logical conclusion would mean transforming the Committee into a committee on sustainable development.

54. A third, intermediate option would be to conserve the core mandate of the Committee but expand and strengthen its lead role in the sustainable development process within ECE. In fact, it should take stock and strengthen the harmonization initiatives that have been undertaken and foster synergies by linking regional perspectives into a partnership. These initiatives, if strengthened, will help member countries to develop and implement plans, programmes, policies and legislation to meet international obligations and reach environmentally sound and sustainable policy goals.

55. Clearly the Committee's future strategy will depend on which option it chooses. If it opts for option 1, the Committee could proceed relatively quickly with defining its strategy; however,

it might find itself isolated and restricted to areas not overlapping with broader economic, social and security policy issues. If it chooses option 2 or 3, the process of strategy definition will need to be more time-consuming, requiring the involvement of some, or all, other players from the beginning. If these players are not consulted in the very early stage of strategy development, they may not develop the feeling of ownership, and the process might fail.

56. The bodies that need to be consulted at various stages, depending on the option chosen, should include: the governing bodies of the five ECE environmental conventions; the Committee on Human Settlements; and the ECE Energy, Transport, Trade, Statistical, and Economic Analysis Divisions.

57. The Committee on Environmental Policy needs to consider not only the preferred strategic option – 1, 2 or 3 – but also the procedural option for the process leading to the adoption of the strategic document. The heavier option would require the strategy to be adopted by all the bodies involved. The lighter one would imply adoption only by the Committee on Environmental Policy, after some consultation with all the relevant bodies. Approval by the Economic Commission for Europe is required whatever the option.

58. Consultation with the Committee on Human Settlements and with the governing bodies of the environmental conventions will depend on the option chosen. The consultations with other Divisions of ECE should in any case not start before the Committee on Environmental Policy reaches an agreement on the general strategic directions in November 2002.

59. Whatever procedure is chosen, the consultations and discussions leading to the adoption are likely to take up much time – roughly two years. This is not unreasonable, since it would make it possible to take the outcome of both the Johannesburg World Summit and the Kiev Ministerial Conference fully into account.

60. Based on the ongoing discussions of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit, it is safe to assume that after the World Summit there will be growing pressure on all actors to improve intra-regional coordination and strengthen the regional institutional framework for sustainable development.

61. Similarly, the Committee's strategy and its options for implementation will be part of, and depend on, broader pan-European environmental governance issues as addressed in a recent discussion paper by its Chairman.

62. The implementation of the strategy should involve all those concerned. Especially if option 2 or 3 is adopted, implementation will require continuous strong support from the Economic Commission for Europe as well as a commitment to cross-sectoral cooperation from the relevant subsidiary bodies, including some adjustments to their priorities and resource use.

V. CONCLUSIONS

63. On the basis of the review of past achievements, the ongoing discussions in the Committee on Environmental Policy and other subsidiary bodies, the changing scene, and the new challenges confronting the ECE region, it is recommended that the Committee on Environmental Policy should take up a role in the context of sustainable development at regional

level, based on strategic option 1, 2 or 3.

64. The main strategic aims for the coming five to ten years could be summarized as follows:

- (a) Recognition of the environment, together with economic and social concerns, as the three main pillars of sustainable development;
- (b) Promotion of democratic, participatory and transparent governance throughout the region as basic precondition for efficient environmental protection;
- (c) Integration of environmental concerns into sectoral policies as essential for successful environmental protection and for revitalizing national economies and societies;
- (d) Promotion of transboundary and regional cooperation as a precondition for sustainable development and security in Europe;
- (e) Contribution to the overall ECE strategic directions as defined in the 1997 ECE Plan of Action, and taking into account the ongoing review of the ECE programme of work.

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F. Other documents

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