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(Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda)

**ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW (EPR) PROGRAMME:
THE FUTURE OF THE REVIEW PROCESS**

1. At the fifth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Kiev, 21-23 May 2003), the Ministers reaffirmed their support for the EPR programme of UNECE and noted that it had been an important instrument for countries with economies in transition. The Ministers decided that the programme should continue to assist individual countries to assess progress, to promote policy dialogue through peer reviews, to help stimulate greater accountability and to offer the Governments concerned tailor-made recommendations on how to reduce the overall pollution burden.

2. The Conference also welcomed the report on Environmental policy in transition: Lessons learned from 10 years of UNECE environmental performance reviews (ECE/CEP/98) and supported the implementation of its recommendations (chap. VII):

“(a) The process of Environmental Performance Reviews should continue, taking into account the experience from the first ten years. Countries and organizations are encouraged to make broader use and support wider dissemination of the Reviews, through, for example, press conferences, or by bringing the reports to the attention of staff of embassies, national aid organizations, all relevant ministries, departments and institutes within the country and national information centres;

“(b) The first round of reviews should be completed and the second round proceed. All countries that are member States of UNECE but not members of OECD are eligible for first and second reviews;

“(c) The second Environmental Performance Reviews should measure progress made

in implementation, including implementation of the recommendations from the first review, using a relevant set of indicators;

“(d) The second Reviews should focus more on issues of implementation. With the most dynamic legislative phase of the early transition over, the future EPRs should devote more attention to performance in implementation of the national policy targets, national legislation, best practices, and international commitments, such as conventions and regional strategies. This could be valuable for the further development of international instruments;

“(e) The second Reviews should remain flexible and focus on the priorities of the countries, including, in particular, new concerns that have arisen;

“(f) The second Reviews should examine issues of financing. This would include, for example, the generation and allocation of public domestic financing for the environment; the position of environmental funds; the use of economic instruments; funds derived from the private sector; donor support; and foreign direct investment, as well as an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of environmental policy measures;

“(g) The second Reviews should give greater emphasis to the integration of the environment with other sectors at all decision-making levels and to its socio-economic interface. In this regard, the Reviews should further assess how environmental issues could be viewed comprehensively and in an integrated manner. This could assist countries, inter alia, to implement decisions taken at the fifth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” and the Johannesburg World Summit and to meet the Millennium Development Goals. They should also assess environmental issues in the context of environmental democracy, environmental justice and poverty eradication, among other critical economic and social concerns common to all countries;

“(h) The second Reviews should make maximum use of existing data. The first reviews have dedicated considerable resources to collecting and assessing data that have not been available outside the country or in electronic format. Many countries in transition have now had an opportunity to strengthen their monitoring and reporting systems and are providers of data to, for example, the European Environment Agency. UNECE should work in close cooperation with these and other organizations to maximize efficiency;

“(i) Cooperation with the Environmental Performance Review programme of OECD should be continued and strengthened;

“(j) Reviewed countries could provide an interim report to the Committee on Environmental Policy on implementation of first Review recommendations within three years of the conclusion of their first Review.”

3. Pursuant to these recommendations and to requests that have been submitted by member States, UNECE foresees the following programme:

(a) First Reviews: 2003-04:

- (i) Azerbaijan
- (ii) Bosnia and Herzegovina
- (iii) Tajikistan

The only eligible country that has not yet requested a first review is Turkmenistan.

(b) Second Reviews: 2003-05:

- (i) Belarus (requested)
- (ii) Serbia and Montenegro (requested) 1/

4. The Committee may wish to note that the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago is considering initiating its own EPR programme, and has asked for cooperation and advice from UNECE.

5. The Committee on Environmental Policy may wish to comment on this proposed programme of work. It may also wish to give further consideration to the recommendation that reviewed countries should provide an interim report to it within three years of the conclusion of their first review.

Note

1/ Serbia and Montenegro was reviewed in 2002 as Yugoslavia. The Government has requested a second review at a relatively early stage owing to the significant changes that took place in the country at the end of 2002. It is proposed that a second review focusing only on institutional, policy and legal issues should be undertaken in 2004 or early 2005 in order to reflect these changes.