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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Eighteenth session

Geneva, 28 and 29 June 2016

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the eighteenth session

**To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 9.30 a.m.
on Tuesday, 28 June 2016**

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Outcomes of the seventeenth session of the Working Group and the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.
3. Responding to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: developing a vision and road map for the Working Group.
4. Moving forward from Batumi: piloting a reporting mechanism for establishing the Shared Environmental Information System in the pan-European region.
5. Keeping the pan-European environment under review and the European regional assessment of the Global Environment Outlook.
6. Other business.

II. Annotations

According to its terms of reference (ECE/CEP/2015/12, annex I)¹ for 2016, the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment is open to all member States of the

¹ Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38470#/>.



United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Members of the Working Group are officials in ECE countries dealing with environmental monitoring and assessment. The Working Group is mandated to involve experts from statistical agencies, relevant services and major groups in its activities.

International forums and networks — such as the European Environment Agency, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Statistics Division, the World Health Organization European Centre for Environment and Health and relevant multilateral environmental agreements, especially those of ECE — are also invited to participate.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Working Group will be invited to adopt the agenda for its eighteenth session, as set out in the present document.²

2. Outcomes of the seventeenth session of the Working Group and the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

The secretariat will summarize the outcomes of the seventeenth session of the Working Group (Geneva, 7–8 September 2015), as contained in the English version of the report of that session. The secretariat will also summarize the outcome of the monitoring and assessment session at the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016), as contained in the Chair's Summary and the Ministerial Declaration.

3. Responding to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: developing a vision and road map for the Working Group

Following a request by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its twentieth session (Geneva, 28–31 October 2014), the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment prepared its revised terms of reference in order to streamline its work and to incorporate the work of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators. The updated terms of reference for the Working Group were adopted by Committee on Environmental Policy at its twenty-first session (Geneva, 27–30 October 2015). Notably, the mandate for the Working Group has been shortened from two years to one year, to be renewed at the forthcoming Committee session in December 2016. To address the implications that may have on planned activities and outputs, the Working Group will carry out national consultations to develop a clear vision leading up to 2021, including a discussion on how the activities of the Working Group can contribute more effectively to the monitoring and assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals. The national consultation process will also aim to consider the Working Groups role as a “network of networks” in bringing together European environmental monitoring and assessment networks to keep the pan-European environment under review, taking into account also the expected outcomes from the Batumi Ministerial Conference.

² Documentation for the meeting and other relevant information will be posted on a web page for the meeting on the ECE website (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42166#/>).

The members of the Working Group will be invited in May 2016 to answer a brief questionnaire, as part of the regular process of national consultations, to identify and clarify major institutional drivers and environmental priorities for national institutions concerned with environmental monitoring and assessment for the coming five-year period. The questionnaire will also take into account a longer time perspective that considers the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The secretariat will present the results from the national consultations to discuss strategic regional priorities for the regular environmental assessment to keep the pan-European environment under review. The Working Group will be invited to take part in focused round-table discussions, based on agreed strategic and thematic priorities, to provide views for the vision document and road map.

The post-session outputs will be a vision document that characterizes the priorities of the Working Group leading up to 2030 and a road map to guide activities and outputs for the coming five-year period (2016–2021). The intent will be to use this opportunity to support a discussion on the renewal of the Working Group's mandate at the Committee session in December.

4. Moving forward from Batumi: piloting a reporting mechanism for establishing the Shared Environmental Information System in the pan-European region

The Working Group was tasked by the Committee on Environmental Policy to review progress in the establishment of the Shared Environment Information System (SEIS). At its twentieth session (Geneva, 28–31 October 2014), the Committee further requested the Working Group to prepare an evaluation report on progress made in establishing SEIS for consideration at the Batumi Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2014/2, paras. 26 and 98 (ff) (iii)). The progress report was presented to the Committee at its special session in February 2016 (ECE/CEP/S/2016/L.9). It has subsequently been submitted to the Batumi Conference to support the ministerial discussion on keeping the pan-European environment under review (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/8).

The secretariat will follow up on these activities with the Working Group, presenting outcomes from the Ministerial Conference and key recommendations on strengthening SEIS. The intent is twofold. First, the secretariat will facilitate the provision of information on progress against the SEIS targets and performance indicators adopted by Committee and the establishment and implementation of SEIS in the ECE countries. Second, the secretariat will invite the Working Group to discuss how to further build capacities and strengthen the establishment of SEIS, in particular as regards the annual regular reporting process, and how to extend the SEIS indicators and data sets until 2020. This will address, among other things, how the review criteria to assess national SEIS performance can be improved and how to pilot the SEIS reporting mechanism, as well as the generation of annual SEIS-related performance reports for the Committee.

The members of the Working Group's sub-group on the development of the reporting mechanism will be consulted in advance on how the reporting mechanism under UNEP Live can be practically piloted, taking into account how an annual SEIS-related regular reporting process can complement and support regular environmental assessments and reporting, such as measuring sustainable development and green economy initiatives.

5. Keeping the pan-European environment under review and the European regional assessment of the Global Environment Outlook

At its twenty-first session, the Committee on Environmental Policy agreed to launch the European regional assessment of the Sixth Global Environment Outlook as the regional environmental assessment at the Batumi Ministerial Conference. In that regard, the ECE secretariat and UNEP have collaborated to engage the Committee to review the pan-European regional assessment, including a summary of key messages to be launched at the Ministerial Conference.

The Working Group will be invited to reflect on the results from the collaborative and consultative process of the regional component of the Global Environment Outlook. The Working Group will also be invited to provide feedback on the regional priorities and key messages that have been detailed throughout the assessment and to consider the Global Environment Outlook as the regular process of assessment to keep the pan-European environment under review.

6. Other business

The Working Group will be informed about the progress in bringing together European environmental monitoring and assessment networks, with a view to enhancing the coordination of activities and reinforcing the work of the Working Group as a “network of networks”, as well as any other relevant monitoring and assessment activities by participants.

III. Organization of work

A detailed organization of work will be released closer to the meeting time and will be posted on the web page for the meeting.
