

Sustainable Energy



Energy for Sustainable Development Forum in Central Asia

UNECE will organize its Third International Forum: Energy for Sustainable Development. Capacity building for energy efficiency and access to cleaner energy in Central Asia and neighbouring regions at Issyk Kul Lake in Kyrgyzstan on 12-14 September 2012.

This Forum is a follow-up to the International Energy Efficiency Forums held in 2010 and 2011 in Astana, Kazakhstan, and Dushanbe, Tajikistan, respectively. It will be organized jointly with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The Forum, which will begin with a high-level segment, will be attended by ministers and governmental officials from Central Asia and neighbouring countries. It will focus on the following topics:

- sustainable energy in Central Asia and neighbouring regions: current status, barriers and opportunities as well as the role of the Governments and public sector in creating a favourable environment for sustainable energy promotion;
- energy efficiency in buildings and the housing sector: challenges, success cases and opportunities;
- investments in energy efficiency and cleaner energy: ways to finance energy efficiency and cleaner energy projects;
- role of the private sector in promoting cleaner energy options in Central Asia and neighbouring regions.

Plenary sessions on energy efficiency in buildings and the housing sector and financing energy efficiency and cleaner energy will be held on the first day.

Four parallel workshops will take place on the second day:

- Legal and Regulatory Frameworks to Promote Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Energy in North and Central Asia;
- Energy Efficiency in Buildings;
- Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in Advanced Fuel Technologies;
- Case Studies on Energy Efficiency Financing and Promotion of Advanced Energy Efficiency Technologies.

On the third day, participants will explore the potential for development of renewable energy sources, in particular small hydropower, in Kyrgyzstan. □

For further information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=29476> or contact oleg.dzioubinski@unece.org or viktor.badaker@unece.org

Water

UNECE Water Convention turns 20 as it prepares to face global challenges



UNECE's Water Convention was signed in 1992 in Helsinki. To mark this anniversary the Government of Finland hosted a two-day meeting on 3 and 4 September to debate the achievements of the past 20 years and look at future perspectives for the Convention.

With the world's population predicted to grow to 9.1 billion in 2050, the risks of potential conflicts over access to water resources can only increase. In this context, the Convention is more relevant than ever, as was highlighted at the meeting. It provides a useful framework to exchange experience in addressing the increasing imbalance between water supply and demand, deterioration of water quality and ecosystems, impacts of climate change as well as the linkages between water, food and energy in transboundary basins.

"The future of the Convention will be defined by its globalization and opening up to countries outside the UNECE region" affirmed UNECE Executive Secretary Sven Alkalaj. "The approach with regard to non-UNECE countries should be consistent with how the Convention and its Parties have behaved so far towards non-Parties in the UNECE region. It has been an inclusive and engaging approach, involving non-Parties in the work almost as much as Parties", he said.

Another important aspect for the future will be the relationship with the 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses, which is expected to enter into force in 2013 or 2104. Participants at the meeting stressed that it is critical that future scenarios build on synergies between the two Conventions, in order to avoid duplications and waste of resources.

The event also reconfirmed the strong support of the Parties to the Convention and their commitment to ensure that it will rise to future challenges. In particular, Finland reasserted its strong backing of the Convention and of transboundary water cooperation not only through the organization of the event but also in the bilateral meetings that were held between Mr. Alkalaj and Ms. Anne Sipiläinen, Under-Secretary of State for Development Aid and Development Policy, Mr. Ville Niinistö, Minister of the Environment and Mr. Jari Koskinen, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. □

For further information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/> or contact: francesca.bernardini@unece.org

Facts and Figures



Total amount of waste generated in selected UNECE countries in descending order, 2008, in millions of tonnes

Russian Federation	3,877
EU (27 countries)	2,612
Kazakhstan	457
Ukraine	427
Germany	373
France	345
United Kingdom	334
Bulgaria	286
Romania	189
Italy	179
Spain	149
Poland	140
Netherlands	100
Sweden	86
Finland	82
Belarus	43
Armenia	12

Notes: The countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia are highlighted in blue.

Data for the Russian Federation excludes municipal waste.
Data for Ukraine are for 2010.

Source: Eurostat and data provided to the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators.

How much waste do we produce?

The member States of the European Union (EU) produce more than 2 billion tonnes of waste, including hazardous materials, every year. And this figure is rising steadily. The situation is even more alarming in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, which generate nearly 4 billion tonnes (2009).

Waste management is therefore a key concern for the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources. Most of the municipal and hazardous waste is disposed of into or onto land. There are many environmental drawbacks of landfill. Heavy metals and toxins are leaking into the surrounding groundwater and soil. The waste generates explosive and toxic gases.

The number of illegal landfills in the region is unknown - but probably very high, with additional environmental risks which are hard to estimate. Incineration as an alternative disposal method to landfill produces toxins and heavy metals unless it uses expensive filters. Thus, the optimum solution is to prevent the production of waste and/or reintroduce it into the product cycle by recycling its components where there are ecologically and economically viable methods of doing so.

Measuring waste is still a challenge

Policy-makers need sound waste statistics to assess and develop waste management policies. Data, however, remain a key challenge. Statistics on waste production, composition, transport and treatment are not collected in the same way or with the same level of detail across UNECE countries. The lack of data on hazardous waste is of particular concern.

The countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia are facing serious data challenges. The data collection from enterprises and municipalities does not cover all economic sectors, and estimates are needed for rural areas not served by the municipal waste collecting system. In general, obligations for reporting are legally in place but not often applied in practice.

Furthermore, different methodologies and classifications used at national level make it difficult to compare data across UNECE countries. For example, according to the available data (see table), a country like Bulgaria, with a population of 8 million, produces more waste (11% of EU total) than Italy (7% of EU total) and almost as much waste as the United Kingdom (13% of EU total). The data also shows that the Russian Federation alone has generated 1.5 times more waste than the entire EU, while Kazakhstan has generated more waste than France, a country with a population four times bigger and a gross domestic product (GDP) nearly 15 times higher!

Joint UNECE/Eurostat/EEA Workshop on Waste Statistics

To address these methodological challenges, UNECE organized a Workshop on Waste Statistics jointly with Eurostat and the European Environment Agency (EEA).

The workshop focused on how to compile and disseminate high-quality, harmonized and timely waste statistics in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. In particular, it discussed practical challenges and problems in producing statistical data, information and indicators on waste generation and waste management, including the recovery and disposal of waste. The workshop was aimed at national experts involved in the production of waste statistics. Experts from international organizations and institutions were invited to share experience and broaden the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

The area of waste statistics is relatively new and UNECE will continue its work aiming at building expertise and strengthening data collection and reporting systems, particularly in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. □

All documents of the workshop are available at: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2012.04.viron.html

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