



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/CEP/S/152
10 February 2009

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Special session
Geneva, 27–29 January 2009

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
ON ITS SPECIAL SESSION**

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION.....	1-5	2
I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA.....	6	2
II. REFORM OF THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” PROCESS	7	2
III. REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK.....	8-20	2-5
A. Environmental Performance Reviews.....	8-16	2-4
B. Environmental monitoring and assessment.....	17-19	4
C. Partnerships with the private sector.....	20	5
IV. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2009.....	21	5
V. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.....	22-24	5
VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.....	25	5
VII. CLOSE OF THE SPECIAL SESSION.....	26	5
<u>Annexes</u>		
I. Reform of the “Environment for Europe” process: reform plan		6-11
II. Terms of reference of a joint task force on environmental indicators		12-13
III. Programme of work for 2009		14-22

INTRODUCTION

1. The special session of the Committee on Environmental Policy was held from 27 to 29 January 2009 in Geneva. Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia) chaired the session.
2. The session was attended by delegates from 35 member countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE): Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United States of America and Uzbekistan.
3. The State of Qatar participated as an observer (participation under article 11).
4. Representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Commission (Directorate-General Environment) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) also took part.
5. The Regional Environmental Center (REC) for Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the Regional Environmental Centers for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus), for Central Asia (CAREC), and for the Republic of Moldova (REC Moldova) were represented. European Eco-Forum also participated.

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Committee adopted the agenda for its special session.

II. REFORM OF THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” PROCESS

7. The Chairman introduced the draft reform plan and the compromise proposal distributed to members of the Committee on 11 November 2008. The Committee addressed the outstanding issues and approved the “Environment for Europe” reform plan (annex I), which would be transmitted to the Economic Commission for Europe at its sixty-third session for endorsement.

III. REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

A. Environmental Performance Reviews

1. Peer review of the Environmental Performance Review of Kyrgyzstan
8. The project leader of the Environmental Performance Review programme introduced the results of the Environmental Performance Review of Kyrgyzstan. Feedback from Kyrgyz authorities on the recommendations had been received in advance of the peer review, which had proved to be useful for the meeting of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance (EPR

Expert Group). Amended recommendations were made available to the Committee for the peer review.

9. Mr. Adriaan Oudeman (Netherlands), the rapporteur designated by the EPR Expert Group, presented an overview of the results of the second EPR of Kyrgyzstan. Since the first EPR in 2000, significant modifications had been made to national legislation and regulation, including the Water Code. A solid framework for environmental law was in place and should be implemented in the coming years. One noteworthy factor was the downgrading of the Environmental Ministry to the status of the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry (SAEPF). In the area of licensing and permits, there was room for improvement. Economic instruments were in place, although no new instruments had been implemented since 2000.

10. The high-level delegation of Kyrgyzstan included Mr. Abdymital Chyngojoev, State Secretary, SAEPF; Mrs. Djyparkul Bekkulova, Head, Environmental Strategy and Policy Division, Department of Ecology and Nature Management, Ministry of Environment and Civil Emergency; Mr. Zhusupzhan Dzheenbekov, Deputy Chairman of the Parliament; and Mr. Baktybek Koichumanov, Advisor to the Director of SAEPF. Mr. Chyngojoev briefed the session on progress made with respect to the ratification of environmental conventions, legislation and the adoption of strategies, programmes and plans in a number of environmental sectors (e.g. forestry, fauna, biodiversity and climate change). He placed particular emphasis on the Environmental Code, which were adopted in January 2009. Mr. Dzheenbekov confirmed that these recommendations would serve as an important basis for discussions by Members of Parliament, who were working to strengthen environmental protection in the country.

11. The secretariat introduced an informal document on “The need to strengthen the national environmental authority of Kyrgyzstan” as background for the in-depth discussion. A productive exchange of views and experiences followed the paper’s presentation. Delegates of other member countries shared their experiences in implementing the EPR recommendations. A number of delegations stressed that the strengthening of SAEPF would be an important step, as a more equal footing with other line ministries would make the institution more efficient in terms of protecting the environment. Others emphasized that the roles and functions of the other ministries and State agencies involved in environmental protection should be reassessed accordingly.

12. The Committee concluded the peer review by adopting the recommendations of the second EPR of Kyrgyzstan.

13. Mr. Sinisa Stankovic (Montenegro) reported on the participation of the Committee delegations in the open-ended meetings of the EPR Expert Group. Delegations expressed their interest in continuing to attend such meetings. The Committee agreed that the Committee delegates should continue to be invited as observers.

2. Activities under the programme

14. The secretariat reported on other activities under the EPR Expert Group, including the launch event for the review of Kazakhstan held in October 2008 in Astana and Almaty, where

the results and main recommendations of the EPR had been presented. The second review of Uzbekistan has started and the expert mission is foreseen for April 2009. The secretariat noted that the EPR programme would need further support in 2009 due to the high costs of the reviews conducted and those expected for the upcoming review in Central Asia.

15. The secretariat stated that it was timely to start preliminary thinking about the future of the EPR programme beyond the second cycle of reviews. A discussion paper would be put before the Committee in October 2009. The Committee decided that time should be allocated for such discussion.

16. The representative of Kazakhstan suggested that EPRs, including their recommendations, could have a greater impact in countries if these were sent directly to the Prime Minister.

B. Environmental monitoring and assessment

17. A representative of the secretariat of Environment, Housing and Land Management Division introduced a conference room paper on a framework for cooperation with the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) on methodological issues of environmental indicators. He recalled that the Committee, at its two previous sessions, had considered the possibilities and modalities of such cooperation. Should a joint task force be established as was proposed by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, its main objective would be to train country state-of-the-environment experts and statisticians in using the Indicator Guidelines endorsed by the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, 2007). The first meeting of the joint task force would be held back-to-back to a workshop to be organized by Working Group, CES and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) from 4 to 6 May 2009 in Chisinau. Financing was ensured for the event thanks to contributions from the Russian Federation and UNSD. For further meetings, funds should be raised, as necessary.

18. The Director of the UNECE Statistical Division informed the Committee that the CES Bureau had considered the proposal for establishing an intersectoral task force on environmental indicators at its meeting held on 20 and 21 October 2008 in Washington, D.C. The CES Bureau had approved the terms of reference for the proposed task force as a joint undertaking of the two UNECE subsidiary bodies to help the countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe to strengthen environmental data collection, produce environmental indicators and promote comparability of environmental statistics. It authorized the UNECE Statistical Division to earmark the necessary staff resources to support the task force activities in the biennium 2009–2010. He underlined the need for the task force, as there was currently no institutional framework for cooperation between the two UNECE subsidiary bodies to carry out important intersectoral work.

19. The Committee supported the proposed framework for cooperation with CES on environmental indicators, agreed with the terms of reference of the task force (annex II to the present report) and decided to transmit these to the Executive Committee of UNECE for endorsement in late February 2009.

C. Partnerships with the private sector

20. As follow-up to the round-table discussion held in October 2008, Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy) and Mr. John Michael Matuszak (United States), who had chaired the round-table sessions, were entrusted to put forward proposals at the next Committee session in October 2009 on further steps for developing cooperation with the private sector in the framework of the Committee's work and the "Environment for Europe process".

IV. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2009

21. Following the Committee's request at its special session, the secretariat presented the programme of work for 2009 (annex III) which it had prepared. The Committee adopted the programme of work for 2009. The Committee would consider the programme of work for the next biennium 2010–2011 at its October 2009 session.

V. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22. EEA informed the session that it would submit a letter to the Committee to clarify the current position of EEA with respect to the Pan-European report.

23. UNEP reported that it was working on a "Dinaric Arc and Balkans Environmental Outlook". A first meeting to explore preparation of the report would be hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Waters Administration of Albania from 3 to 5 February 2009. Invitations had been sent out to nine countries in the subregion as well as to civil society representatives and to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), EEA and the RECs.

24. The secretariat informed the Committee about the outcomes of the Third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment hosted by the Government of the Netherlands and held on 22 and 23 January 2009 in Amsterdam under the auspices of the Pan-European Programme on Transport, Health and Environment (THE PEP). The Amsterdam Declaration, the final outcome document, had been adopted and was available on THE PEP website (www.thepep.org/en/welcome.htm).

VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

25. The Committee confirmed Mr. Lomtadze (Georgia) as Chairman and the following members as Vice-Chairs: Mr. Cozzone (Italy), Mr. Bulat Yessekin (Kazakhstan), Mr. Stankovic (Montenegro), Mr. Oudeman (Netherlands) and Mr. Matuszak (United States of America). Three new Bureau members were elected: Ms. Elisabete Quintas da Silva (Portugal), Ms. Martine Rohn-Brossard (Switzerland) and Mr. Volodymyr Bevza (Ukraine). The Committee thanked the outgoing Bureau members Ms. Ruzanna Davtyan (Armenia), Ms. Eldrid Nordbo (Norway) and Mr. Jon Kahn (Sweden) for their many years of active service.

VII. CLOSE OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

26. The next meeting of the Committee will be held from 20 to 23 October 2009 and the open-ended EPR expert group meeting will be held on 19 October 2009, back-to-back with the CEP session.

Annex I

REFORM OF THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” PROCESS: REFORM PLAN

(as adopted by Committee on Environmental Policy on 29 January 2009)

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007) recognized the important value of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process as a unique pan-European forum for tackling environmental challenges and promoting broad horizontal environmental cooperation, and as a pillar of sustainable development in the UNECE region. The EfE process was considered to be an important framework for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region. The added value of the EfE process was recognized in its close links with other regional and subregional initiatives and processes, which help to integrate environmental and sectoral policies.
2. The ministers in Belgrade agreed that the EfE process, initiated in 1991, needed to be reformed. They committed themselves to continuing a focused and needs-based EfE process concentrated on results-based, action-oriented activities that improve the environment and advance sustainable development in the region and to actively seeking partnerships with civil society, including the private sector. The purpose of the reform was to strengthen its effectiveness and to ensure that it remained appropriate for, and fully aligned with, the growing needs of the UNECE region and the evolving political and economic landscape, as well as the environmental priorities of the region.
3. The Belgrade Ministerial Declaration stated that the reform should focus on, although may not be limited to, the following aspects:
 - (a) The format, focus and priorities of the process and Ministerial Conferences;
 - (b) Evaluating the performance and impact of the process;
 - (c) Attracting the broader interest and more active engagement of all stakeholders, in particular the private sector;
 - (d) Expanding the use of partnerships as vehicles for improving implementation;
 - (e) Leveraging external contributions of expertise, manpower and resources;
 - (f) Assessing ways and means to promote more effectively the UNECE region-wide dimension of environmental cooperation;
 - (g) The full cost of the process and the effective allocation of available resources;
 - (h) Future secretariat arrangements.
4. In order to address the above issues in depth and with due consideration, the ministers invited the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) to develop, in consultation with EfE partners a plan for EfE reform so that it could be endorsed at the political level by UNECE in spring 2009.

5. The ministers further decided that the next EfE Ministerial Conference would be organized on the basis of the agreed reform.

II. OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” PROCESS

6. The EfE process should continue to serve as a mechanism to: (a) improve the environment throughout the region, contributing to sustainable development which may in turn contribute to poverty eradication, to improving quality of life, and to a safer world; (b) enhance the implementation of strengthened national environmental policies; (c) support convergence of environmental policies and approaches, while recognizing the benefits from a diversity of approaches to achieve common goals, and the prioritisation of environmental objectives; (d) encourage the participation of civil society; (e) promote broad horizontal environmental cooperation.

7. The political priorities should be based on commitments already taken under the EfE process. These priorities may include:

- (a) Improvement of environmental governance, including strengthening environmental institutions and implementation of policy instruments;
- (b) Streamlining the implementation by Governments of commitments they have made to existing UNECE legally binding and legally non-binding instruments;
- (c) Enhancing efforts in environmental monitoring;
- (d) Ensuring implementation of the Environmental Performance Review programme;
- (e) Raising public awareness of environmental issues;
- (f) Promoting linkages between environmental policy, economic and social well-being and competitiveness.

8. Furthermore, thematic priorities of the EfE process would be identified in line with current needs, national circumstances and in respect to future emerging issues.

9. In the future, the EfE process will be based on general principles and agreements on the operational modalities, as described below.

III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

10. The ministers in Belgrade agreed that the EfE process should:

- (a) Keep its UNECE region-wide dimension and be open for all interested countries of the region;
- (b) Engage all stakeholders, including the private sector, to strengthen the work in partnership;
- (c) Maintain close links with other regional and subregional initiatives, and focus on specific needs that are not entirely addressed by other cooperative frameworks, instruments or processes in the region and its subregions;
- (d) Concentrate on results-based, action-oriented activities;

- (e) Be kept open to issues on which the process can provide added value;
- (f) Use delivery as a major criterion of its effectiveness. CEP should regularly consider and assess progress achieved under the process.

11. To complement the above principles, a consensus emerged from CEP in relation to the EfE process and the Conference:

- (a) On the one hand, the EfE process-related principles are as follows:
 - (i) Broader engagement from the Governments to achieve long-term policy integration of environmental considerations into other sectors;
 - (ii) Stronger focus on implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences by relevant responsible actors in the period between Conferences;
 - (iii) Encouragement of and support to subregional activities including stronger involvement of relevant subregional structures in the implementation process, including RECs;
 - (iv) Enhanced cooperation between the regional and subregional partners in the region;
 - (v) Identification of ways to strengthen linkages between the activities under the EfE process and those of relevant international processes.
 - (vi) Enhancement of relevant Governments' implementation and compliance with their commitments under multilateral environmental agreements;
 - (vii) Utilization of the Environmental Performance Reviews as an important instrument for protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable development.
- (b) On the other hand, the Conference-related principles are:
 - (i) The ministerial level of the Conferences should be maintained;
 - (ii) Specific mechanisms for attracting high-level participation, including those from the private sector, should be developed;
 - (iii) A limited number of themes, not more than two, to be identified in advance and addressed by each Conference;
 - (iv) Within the identified themes there should be a focus on specific needs of the subregions, in order to contribute to better cooperation and more substantive and action-oriented outcomes of the Conference;
 - (v) An effective communication strategy, including broad mass-media coverage, as appropriate, should be further developed, comprising, *inter alia*, special events for journalists, circulation of electronic newsletters and maintaining a dedicated website;
 - (vi) The outcome documents, in all forms, should be focused and action-oriented;

- (vii) Carbon neutrality of the Conferences based on the voluntary contributions available.

IV. THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” CONFERENCE

Preparatory process

12. Materializing the above-mentioned principles calls for streamlining and improving the preparatory process for the Conferences. In this spirit, the following measures should be taken:

- (a) Not later than 18 months before the Conference the CEP at its regular session will decide on not more than two themes and discuss the outline of the agenda of the Conference. When deciding on the themes preliminary findings of available assessments and statistical reports on environment should be taken into consideration. A decision on the agenda of the Conference should be taken at the regular meeting of the CEP approximately 12 months prior to the Conference and further preparatory work would commence. Documents on substantial themes of the Conference should be released 6 weeks before the Conference;
- (b) CEP would act as the convening body for the preparatory process. To maintain the open nature of the preparatory process and the engagement of all stakeholders, representatives of major groups will be invited to participate in meetings of the CEP in preparation of the Conference, as appropriate, in accordance with the existing UN rules and procedures. Furthermore, CEP would consider and approve the official documents for submission to the Conference. Special sessions of the CEP could be scheduled, if needed, in the year prior to the Conference;
- (c) Particular efforts would be made to involve private-sector representatives in the preparatory process and the Conference;
- (d) To reduce the amount of documents produced for the Conference, only one official document per selected theme would be prepared by the UNECE or another EfE partner, in close cooperation with other EfE partners. The official substantive documentation would thus comprise the pan-European assessment and theme-specific reports;
- (e) Interested UNECE member States, EfE partners and other stakeholders could produce other documents featuring their activities and initiatives related to the EfE process, which would be circulated as information documents;
- (f) The preparatory process would be serviced by the UNECE secretariat;
- (g) For the preparatory process of the Conference and the Conference itself, the necessary extrabudgetary financial resources would have to continue to be provided to UNECE to supplement the United Nations core budget resources;
- (h) The host country should assume relevant financial commitments.

Format

13. The periodicity, duration and the organization of discussions at the Conference should be as follows:

- (a) The Conferences should be held every four to five years, with each Conference lasting two-and-a-half to three days maximum;

- (b) Based on the previous experience, the Conference should start with a short opening event. The host country would be given an opportunity to organize events highlighting its special features in addition to the official Conference agenda;
- (c) The discussions at the Conference should be arranged in an interactive manner and combine various types of sessions, e.g. plenary sessions, roundtables and moderated panel discussions, with a limited number of main speakers from different stakeholders (e.g. UNECE member States, EfE partners and major groups). When possible, interactive sessions, such as roundtables, could be run in parallel;
- (d) The Conference could be structured around the following main clusters (all of them focusing on the agreed priorities):
 - (i) Plenary sessions for the presentation and discussion of the priority topics;
 - (ii) Sessions on ongoing cooperation and partnerships in the UNECE region and its subregions with different stakeholders, including the private sector;
 - (iii) A session of environmental NGOs and ministers in the roundtable format as an integral part of the conference;
 - (iv) A session of private sector representatives and ministers in the roundtable format as an integral part of the conference;
 - (v) Sessions dedicated to announcing new partnerships and initiatives by stakeholders;
 - (vi) A brief concluding session with the presentation (and adoption, if appropriate) of the main outcomes of the Conference;
- (e) To address issues relevant to the agenda of the Conference in more detail, side-events should be organized by interested UNECE member States, EfE partners and relevant stakeholders;
- (f) To attract the attention of the private sector, opportunities should be provided for the organization of promotional events such as poster exhibitions, trade fairs, roundtables and environmental award initiatives.

Outcomes

14. Conference outcomes might include:
- (a) A chairperson's summary;
 - (b) Statements, initiatives, agreements, pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions;
 - (c) An agreed outcome of two pages on follow up and further actions strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference;
 - (d) Policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that are presented to the Conference by interested countries of the UNECE region and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues, and that were not negotiated within the preparatory process for the Conference;

- (e) Assessment reports used in preparation of or presented to the Conference that are important for the implementation of the Conference's outcomes.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

15. Particular efforts should be made by all relevant responsible actors to implement the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences.
16. Member States should regularly consider how to promote objectives and priorities of the EfE process and strengthen implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.
17. A mid-term review to be convened by the CEP to assess progress of the implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences and provide renewed impetus to the process. The review should be based on existing information. The findings of the review should be taken into account in the preparatory process of the next conference.
18. Active participation by and input of all interested countries of the UNECE, and in particular of interested countries from subregions with specific needs in improving their environmental situation is crucial for the success of the activities under the EfE process.
19. The RECs network should continue to play a role in the preparatory process for the Conference and should be encouraged to play a greater role in the achievement of the overall EfE process' objectives and priorities.
20. Other EfE partners should continue to be actively involved in the preparatory process and implementation of the EfE process.
21. Countries and/or organizations taking the lead for one or more issues are encouraged to do so in ways that would contribute significantly.

[Original: ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN]

Annex II

JOINT TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

Terms of reference

I. BACKGROUND

1. The involvement of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) in the preparation of the assessment reports for the “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conferences triggered their interest in the development of a set of environmental indicators and practical recommendations on their application. The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment under the Committee on Environmental Policy prepared the Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (Indicator Guidelines)¹, which were endorsed at the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 2007).
2. The Conference of European Statisticians was active in developing environmental statistics in the 1980s and early 1990s. It developed several environmental statistics classifications and a pan-European compendium of environmental statistics. At present, it supports a Joint UNECE/OECD²/Eurostat Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development in its efforts to develop a broad conceptual framework for measuring sustainable development.
3. Further to initial discussions between the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division and the Statistical Division of UNECE, the Committee on Environmental Policy, at its April 2008 meeting, invited the Conference of European Statisticians to consider cooperating with the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment on methodological issues of environmental indicators (ECE/CEP/148).

II. OBJECTIVE

4. Against this background, it is proposed that a joint intersectoral task force on environmental indicators be created. The purpose of the task force will be to assist national statistical agencies and institutions responsible for the production of national reports on the state of the environment in EECCA and SEE countries to improve environmental data collection, further strengthen environmental reporting and promote comparability of environmental statistics and indicators in the region.
5. The joint task force will report to its parent bodies, the Committee on Environmental Policy and Conference of European Statisticians, and to their Bureaux. The task force will work closely with Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and inform it about the progress made and about the outcome.

¹ Published in the United Nations publication, *Environmental Indicators and Indicators-based Assessment Reports: Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*, Sales No. E 07.II.E.9.

² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

6. The joint task force on environmental indicators will:
- (a) Review the indicators covered by the Indicator Guidelines to provide practical recommendations on the necessary adaptation of statistical classifications and data collection forms and procedures for the production of indicators;
 - (b) Propose additional environmental indicators that may be important but are currently not included in the Indicator Guidelines (e.g. environmental expenditure, environmental taxes and subsidies, production of and trade in environmental goods and services and hazardous substances, and resource productivity) as well as provide and adapt to the needs of the countries concerned relevant guidance materials that are available at the international level;
 - (c) Recommend modern presentation formats and tools for effective dissemination of environmental indicators, including the use of modern information technologies;
 - (d) Assist in the organization of a workshop on environmental indicators to be jointly organized by UNECE and the United Nations Statistics Division in 2009. The workshop will be open to all interested countries so as to broaden the exchange of experiences and approaches. It will provide a forum for presenting the latest developments on relevant methodologies and classifications available at the global level.

III. MEMBERSHIP

7. Members of the task force will be nominated by country focal points in the Conference of European Statisticians and the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment. The United Nations Statistical Division, Eurostat, the European Environmental Agency, the World Health Organization European Centre for Environment and Health, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Inter-State Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States will be invited to designate representatives. The UNECE Statistical Division and the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division will jointly service the task force.

IV. TIMETABLE

8. The mandate of the task force will cover the period from 2009 to September 2010.

V. OUTCOME

9. The task force will submit, through the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians, a final report on its accomplishments and a proposal for follow-up, if any, to both UNECE Committees.

Annex III

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2009

Introduction

1. The Committee on Environmental Policy carries out work in accordance with the strategic goals adopted in 2003 (CEP/2004/2) to structure and adapt its programme of work. Specific activities in the draft programme of work for 2009 relate to the following main processes and strategic goals:

- (a) **Goal 1: Contributing to the “Environment for Europe” process.** Programme activity 1, “Environment for Europe” reform;
- (b) **Goal 2: Improving environmental governance.** Programme activities 2 and 3, Environmental Performance Reviews and environmental monitoring;
- (c) **Goal 3: Improving the effectiveness of international legal instruments.** Programme activity 4.1, implementation of multilateral environmental agreements;
- (d) **Goal 4: Integrating environmental concerns into sectoral policies.** Programme activity 4.2, environment and security; and programme activity 4.3, promoting environmental partnerships with the private sector;
- (e) **Goal 5: Contributing to regional implementation of the environmental pillar of sustainable development.** Programme activities 5, 6, 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3: sustainable development in the region; integration of environmental and sectoral policies; education for sustainable development; transport, health and environment; and environment and health.

SUBPROGRAMME 01– ENVIRONMENT

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 1

“ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” REFORM

3. At the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007), ministers agreed to undertake a reform of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process to ensure that the process remained relevant and valuable, and to strengthen its effectiveness as a mechanism for improving environmental quality and the lives of people across the region. They decided that the reform should focus on, although may not be limited to, the following aspects:

- (a) The format, focus and priorities of the EfE process and Ministerial Conferences;
- (b) Evaluating the performance and impact of the EfE process;
- (c) Attracting the broader interest and more active engagement of all stakeholders, in particular the private sector;
- (d) Expanding the use of partnerships as vehicles for improving implementation;
- (e) Leveraging external contributions of expertise, manpower and resources;
- (f) Assessing ways and means to more effectively promote the region-wide dimension of environmental cooperation;

- (g) The full cost of the EfE process and the effective allocation of available resources;
- (h) Future secretariat arrangements.

4. Ministers invited the Committee to develop, in consultation with EfE partners, a plan for the EfE reform so that it could be endorsed by the Commission at its next session (30 March–1 April 2009).

Work accomplished

5. The Committee held a first substantive discussion on the EfE reform during its fifteenth session. At the request of the Committee, the secretariat, with assistance of the Bureau, prepared a draft outline of the EfE reform plan that was discussed at the meeting of the Committee's Extended Bureau (23–24 June 2008) and used as the basis for the draft reform plan. The draft reform plan was subsequently discussed at the Committee's sessions in October 2008 and January 2009 and finally approved.

Work to be undertaken

The Committee will, at its next session in October 2009 will discuss modalities for the preparation of the next "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference on the basis of the reform plan

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 2

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

7. The Environmental Performance Review (EPR) programme is continuing its second cycle of reviews on the basis of the recommendations adopted by the Fifth EfE Ministerial Conference (Kyiv, 2003) and by the Committee. The second reviews focus on the particular environmental concerns of the reviewed countries, with an emphasis on integration (sustainable development), implementation and financing. Ministers at the Sixth EfE Conference in Belgrade invited reviewed countries to implement the recommendations of their country reviews in accordance with their needs and priorities.

8. At its fifteenth session, the Committee decided that interim reporting regarding the implementation of the recommendations by reviewed countries should be compulsory between two consecutive reviews, and become a regular part of the EPR procedure.

Work accomplished

9. The Expert Group on Environmental Performance continued to support and offer advice on the preparation and conduct of the EPRs. It also carried out detailed expert reviews prior to the Committee's peer reviews and reported back to the Committee. The Committee reviewed the draft of the second EPR report of Kazakhstan and adopted the recommendations (21–23 April 2008). Since then, second reviews of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have been undertaken. In October 2008, the Kazakhstan report was launched with the following events: a round table at the national Senate; a presentation at the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe (EAP Task Force) session; and a workshop for non-governmental organizations and the business community organized in

cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)³. The draft EPR report of Kyrgyzstan was examined by the Expert Group (26 January 2009) and peer-reviewed by the Committee (28 January 2009).

Work to be undertaken

10. The expert mission for the review of Uzbekistan will take place in April 2009 and the report will be peer reviewed at the Committee's next regular session (October 2009). Other reviews will take place in late autumn 2009. Several candidate countries have expressed their interest to having a second EPR. The launch event for the EPR of Kyrgyzstan is foreseen for summer 2009 (tentatively in June).

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 3

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

11. The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment will help countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) to strengthen their environmental information and observation capacities. The Working Group will focus its efforts on the areas emphasized by ministers in Belgrade, in particular indicator-based assessment, environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises and support to environmental assessment(s) for the next EfE Ministerial Conference.

Work accomplished

12. At its ninth session (4–5 September 2008), the Working Group: (a) discussed the results of the Sixth EfE Conference and of the Committee's fifteenth session; (b) considered proposals of the European Environment Agency on the preparation of the assessment report(s) for the next EfE Conference; (c) discussed implementation by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Serbia of the recommendations on environmental monitoring and assessment in the second EPRs of those countries, and (d) considered environmental monitoring and assessment activities of other forums. The Working Group organized a round table on latest developments in environmental monitoring and assessment and prepared its work programme for 2009–2010 (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2008/2, annex 1).

Work to be undertaken

13. On the basis of its renewed mandate and the main directions of work on environmental monitoring and assessment agreed by the Committee, the Working Group will focus on improving environmental observations, data collection and reporting capacities in EECCA, the Russian Federation and interested SEE countries, in particular by: (a) helping developing national strategies for the use of monitoring as environmental policy tool; (b) providing countries with practical guidance for the effective implementation of recommendations on monitoring and information management in the EPRs; (c) training monitoring experts and statisticians in indicator production; (d) developing practical guidance on model enterprise monitoring programmes and corporate environmental reports; and (e) contributing to environmental assessment(s) for the next EfE Ministerial Conference.

³ The first two events were held in Astana, the third in Almaty.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 4

BUILDING CAPACITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

4.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

14. Since the 1970s, five regional environmental conventions and 12 protocols have been negotiated and adopted in the framework of UNECE. The responsibility for implementation activities lies with the governing bodies.

15. All the UNECE protocols have entered into force except for the three adopted at the Fifth EfE Conference in Kyiv, namely the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Protocol on Civil Liability and Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.

16. The Committee provides a catalysing forum in which all government representatives, including the governing bodies of the conventions, can share their experiences with promoting and assessing implementation of these regional environmental instruments as well as identifying means of improving compliance with them. Furthermore, the Committee supports, as appropriate, the implementation of the conventions and their protocols.

Work accomplished

17. The sixth informal meeting between the Bureaux of the Committee on Environmental Policy and of the governing bodies of the UNECE environmental conventions was held on 12 February 2007 at the invitation of the Chairperson of the Committee's Bureau. The aims of the meeting were to share experiences and seek synergies and areas of cooperation and to assess and promote the implementation of environmental legal instruments in the region. In this context, a paper on the implementation of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements, prepared by the secretariat, was discussed and submitted by the Committee through the Working Group of Senior Officials to the Sixth EfE Conference in Belgrade. The paper assessed the progress achieved and problems encountered in the conventions' implementation and gave an overview of capacity-building activities in the UNECE region. It also provided a basis for ministers to make policy recommendations for enhancing the conventions' implementation by Governments.

Work to be undertaken

18. It is envisaged that informal meetings between the Bureaux of the Committee and the governing bodies of the conventions will continue to be held annually. The next informal meeting is scheduled for October 2009, and it was agreed that participants would discuss the EfE reform plan as well as other issues to be agreed by the Committee's Bureau.

4.2 ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY

19. The Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, a joint initiative of UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe and UNECE, builds on the combined strengths and field presence of the lead organizations to perform three key functions: (a) assessment and monitoring of linkages between environment and security; (b) capacity-building and institutional development; and (c) integration of environmental and security concerns and priorities into international and national policymaking. One component of

the Initiative's activities is to strengthen implementation of UNECE regional environmental conventions.

Work accomplished

20. To date, assessments of environmental and security risks have been completed for Central Asia, Southern Caucasus and Eastern Europe. Based on the assessments, the Initiative has developed and implemented specific work programmes aimed at reducing tensions and solving the problems identified (see www.envsec.org).

Work to be undertaken

21. UNECE will continue to collaborate within the ENVSEC framework, in particular through projects supporting implementation of UNECE regional conventions. Examples of ongoing and planned projects with UNECE involvement are: (a) pilot implementation in Central Asia of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context; (b) a regional cooperation project on dam safety in Central Asia; (c) support for the development of water cooperation in the Kura-Aras river basin; and (d) development of cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine with respect to the Dniester River.

4.3 PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

22. The Committee, recognizing the importance of strengthening the engagement of the private sector in the environmental activities of UNECE, initiated and sustained discussions on ways to attract private-sector interest to the Committee's work and the EfE process, and on how such partnerships could address environmental and sustainable development objectives.

Work accomplished

23. The Bureau convened an informal meeting with representatives of the private sector during the meeting of the Extended Bureau on 24 June 2008. The secretariat prepared a compilation of existing examples on private sector engagement within UNECE (e.g. the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division and other divisions), and submitted it to the Bureau in advance of the June meeting.

24. Building on the conclusions of the June informal meeting and its existing experience with working with the private sector, the Committee convened (in October 2008) a round-table discussion on promoting environmental and sustainable development objectives with the participation of leading environmentally active private-sector companies and umbrella associations. The round table contributed to strengthening the interest of the private sector in the Committee's work and the EfE process. The round table also identified possible ways to forge successful partnerships between the public and the private sectors in member States, as well as to improve these partnerships' quality so that they might better serve the interests of the broader community.

Work to be undertaken

25. Following the October round table, the Committee decided that creation of a long-term mechanism for communication and cooperation with the private sector was a priority. To this end, the Committee gave an extended mandate to the Bureau to undertake necessary steps in this direction, including continuing to involve private sector representatives in its work, e.g. through the EPR programme and the environmental monitoring activities. Depending on the level of

interest, the private sector could also be involved in future conferences convened under the EfE process.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 5

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNECE REGION

26. Building on Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development invited the regional commissions to consider organizing regional implementation meetings within the framework of the two-year implementation cycles of the Commission.

Work accomplished

27. The third UNECE regional implementation meeting on sustainable development was held on 28 and 29 January 2008 in Geneva. It reviewed the region's progress vis-à-vis implementing commitments made at the World Summit regarding the following thematic clusters: agriculture, rural development, land management, drought and desertification, and Africa. It evaluated the progress achieved, obstacles and constraints remaining in these areas. The meeting also discussed linkages between thematic priorities and cross-cutting issues, e.g. sustainable production and consumption patterns, education for sustainable development and finance.

28. The outcome of the discussions, reflected in the Chairman's summary, was presented at the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (New York, 5–16 May 2008). This contributed a UNECE regional perspective to the global-level debate. Moreover, in cooperation with the Commission secretariat and the other regional commissions, the UNECE secretariat organized an interactive discussion during the session, which focused on region-specific barriers and constraints as well as lessons learned and good practices.

Work to be undertaken

29. Subject to decision by the Commission at its spring 2009 session, a fourth UNECE regional implementation meeting on sustainable development will be organized in January 2010, in preparation for the Commission's eighteenth session (New York, May 2010). This eighteenth session will serve as a review session of the fourth implementation cycle, focusing on transport, chemicals, waste management, mining and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 6

INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SECTORAL POLICIES

30. Integrating environmental concerns into the activities of other sectors, whether economic or social, is one of the key challenges to effective implementation of environmentally sound sustainable development principles. Since the Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, actions and programmes in the UNECE region have worked towards this goal, but significant efforts are still needed through a wide range of policy, legal, institutional and financial measures and incentives.

31. The Committee has established cross-sectoral linkages, activities and cooperation with other UNECE committees (e.g. Transport, Housing and Land Management) and the conventions' governing bodies, as well as with other international organizations such as the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization (WHO-EURO). UNECE environmental cross-sectoral programmes should be further encouraged to ensure effective support for national and

regional initiatives. This would accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production, thus promoting social and economic development.

6.1 EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

32. At the Fifth EfE Conference in Kyiv, ministers agreed on the preparation of a strategy for education for sustainable development (ESD) and invited UNECE to work with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Council of Europe and other relevant actors on a regional ESD strategy. The High-level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries (Vilnius, 17–18 March 2005) adopted the UNECE Strategy for ESD and established a Steering Committee for ESD to oversee the Strategy's implementation and review its progress.

Work accomplished

33. The Steering Committee has held three meetings thus far (December 2005, December 2006 and March–April 2008), which have seen major outcomes such as the adoption of the workplan for 2005–2007 (phase I), the decision to hold a joint high-level segment on ESD during the Sixth EfE Conference in Belgrade and the recently adopted workplan for 2008–2010 (phase II). A number of activities have been carried out: (a) subregional workshops on ESD; (b) the establishment of a comprehensive reporting mechanism; and (c) a collection of good practices in ESD. Most countries are showing commitment to establishing the necessary policies and institutional structures to implement the Strategy. A Joint Statement on ESD, expressing commitment to further implementation of the Strategy through the two implementation phases and beyond 2015, was adopted in Belgrade. The mandate of the Steering Committee to oversee the regional implementation of the Strategy was extended until 2015.

Work to be undertaken

34. In accordance with the adopted workplan for phase II – including its substantive content, time frame for implementation, and financial implications (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2008/5) – future activities will focus on coordination, capacity-building and the sharing of experience to support and further ESD in the region. These activities will include workshops and trainings, sharing good practices and case studies, and strengthening the use of electronic tools, awareness-raising and the review of implementation. The two key phase II priorities are: (a) the development of national action plans for ESD; and (b) development of ESD competences. The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held on 19 and 20 February 2009; the Bureau will hold its seventh meeting in November 2008.

6.2 TRANSPORT, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

35. The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) was established in 2002 under the joint auspices of UNECE (Environment and Transport Divisions) and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO-EURO). The objectives of THE PEP are to promote policy integration and sustainable transport development, notably in urban areas, through the sharing of best practices, capacity-building and awareness-raising. The programme focuses in particular on the challenges and solutions available to the Russian Federation and to EECCA and SEE countries.

Work accomplished

36. At its sixth session (28–29 April 2008), the Steering Committee of THE PEP discussed preparations for the Third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment and assessed progress made with respect to its work programme. It agreed that the main objectives of the High-level Meeting would be: (a) to strengthen Member States' commitment to the integration of transport, health and environment policies at the national level, with a special focus on the challenges faced by EECCA and SEE countries; and (b) to reinforce the role of THE PEP as a unique policy platform for promoting integrated approaches to transport development, taking into consideration the health and environmental concerns and adapting strategies and measures accordingly. Securing stable financial support for THE PEP was cited as an important criterion.

37. A workshop on sustainable and healthy urban transport was organized in October 2008 in cooperation with the Ministries of Transport, Health and Environment of the Republic of Moldova and the National Scientific and Applied Centre for Preventative Medicine, with support from Switzerland. The workshop highlighted specific urban transport challenges in EECCA and SEE and provided an input to the upcoming High-level Meeting.

38. The Third High-level Meeting (Amsterdam, 22–23 January 2009), was hosted by the Netherlands under the theme, "Making THE Link: Transport Choices for our Health, Environment and Prosperity". Key publications submitted to the Meeting included: (a) *Transport, health and Environment: trends and developments in the UNECE-WHO region (1997–2007)*; (b) *Working together for sustainable and healthy transport: guidance on supportive institutional conditions for the policy integration of transport, health and environment* and (c) *THE PEP: assessment and progress made*. Government representatives adopted the Amsterdam Declaration on four priority goals and future activities intended to reinvigorate THE PEP and to contribute to sustainable and healthy living, in particular in cities across the pan-European region.

Work to be undertaken

The Third High-level Meeting gave a mandate for a renewed workplan for THE PEP. It would include concrete projects and tools for achieving the programme's goals, including THE PEP Partnership to develop guidance for Governments on National Health and Environmental Action Plans (NETHAPS) and THE PEP "relay" to diffuse best practice in sustainable urban transport across the region and further development of THE PEP Toolbox of good practices and case studies for sustainable urban transport and its integration with THE PEP Clearinghouse. Future cooperation with UNEP on sustainable transport solutions in EECCA and SEE would be pursued. The workplan would be considered by the Steering Committee at its seventh session, to be held 22 and 23 October 2009 in Geneva.

6.3 ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

40. WHO-EURO Ministerial Conferences have been organized since 1989. These bring together ministers of health and environment and other stakeholders to strive for consensus and make political commitments to promote a safe and healthy environment. Ministers entrusted the European Environment and Health Committee with the tasks of following up on their decisions and serving as a steering committee for the preparation of the next Ministerial Conference, which will be held in Italy in autumn 2009.

Work accomplished

41. The Committee on Environmental Policy elected five members to represent the environment sector on the European Environment and Health Committee for a period of two and half years, i.e. until the next Ministerial Conference in 2009. High-level preparatory meetings, organized back to back with the European Environment and Health Committee, were held in October 2007 in Bonn, Germany; in March 2008 in Milan, Italy; and in October 2008 in Madrid.

Work to be undertaken

42. The environment and health preparatory process leading up to the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to be held in Parma, Italy, in February/March 2010 will continue to focus on children as well as address other environmental health issues of increasing concern such as climate change. Cross-cutting issues with a focus on children's environmental health will also be on the agenda of the upcoming event (www.euro.who.int@EEHC).
