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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

First regional meeting on education for sustainable development

Geneva, 19-20 February 2004

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**WORK PROGRAMME OF THE TASK FORCE ON
EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Introduction

1. UNECE Environment Ministers endorsed the Statement on Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/CEP/102/Rev.1) by acclamation at their Conference in Kiev (21-23 May 2003). They invited the different bodies responsible for education in UNECE member States to consider the Basic elements for the UNECE strategy for education for sustainable development (ECE/CEP/102/Add.1), in preparing relevant strategies, legislation as appropriate and decisions on the local, State and regional levels, considering the widely varying situations not only between countries, but also within the countries of the region. They also invited UNECE to develop a regional strategy for education for sustainable development in close cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Council of Europe and other relevant actors.
2. Pursuant to this decision, the Committee on Environmental Policy of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, at its tenth session (20-22 October 2003), set up an open-ended Task Force on Education for Sustainable Development to develop a strategy. The delegations of the Russian Federation and Sweden volunteered to lead the process. UNECE will serve as its secretariat.
3. In line with the above, the UNECE secretariat has prepared a draft strategy (CEP/AC.13/2004/13). The draft strategy was derived from the Statement on Education for Sustainable Development and the Basic Elements. It contains a preamble and addresses the role of education in achieving sustainable development; the goals, principles and approaches of education

for sustainable development; the purpose and scope of the strategy; measures of implementation; assessment of implementation; and international cooperation. The draft strategy has benefited from the UNESCO framework for a draft international implementation scheme on the decade of education for sustainable development.

I. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY (FEBRUARY 2004 – OCTOBER 2005)

A. First regional meeting on education for sustainable development

4. The first meeting of the Task Force on Education for Sustainable Development will take place on 19-20 February 2004, pursuant to the decision of the Committee on Environmental Policy, at its tenth session (20-22 October 2003). At this first meeting, the Task Force should elect its Chair and decide on its work plan and terms of reference. The Task Force is expected to discuss its future work based on the decisions of the Kiev Conference and the Committee.

5. The Task Force is invited to discuss the substance and structure of the draft strategy. Delegates may also wish to share their experiences and good practices in education for sustainable development.

6. The Task Force may wish to set up a small drafting group. Its members should have extensive experience in national and international education policies and in sustainable development. The drafting group will work in English only. No interpretation facilities will be made available.

7. The Task Force may wish to consider whether it would like to provide input to a possible regional segment during the International Conference on Education (UNESCO; Geneva, September 2004) and what the nature of this input should be.

B. Drafting the strategy

8. Most of the drafting will be done during the meetings of the drafting group, whose members will also communicate by e-mail. Member States may wish to host meetings of the drafting group. The following calendar of meetings is proposed:

(a) First meeting of the drafting group (20 February 2004, afternoon). The drafting group will start working on the text of the strategy in the afternoon of 20 February 2004, immediately after the first meeting of the Task Force. It is suggested that the group should work on the structure of the document and on the preamble, and on the sections which address the role of education in achieving sustainable development, the goals, principles and approaches of education for sustainable development, purpose and scope of the strategy;

(b) Second meeting of the drafting group (March 2004). It is suggested that the group should work on the substantive chapters that address a number of implementation aspects of the strategy, including national policies and institutional arrangements, financial matters, curriculum, instruction materials, instruction methodology and technology, trainings, research, and public awareness. The meeting would last one or two days;

(c) Third meeting of the drafting group (April 2004). It is suggested that the group should work on the chapters which focus on international cooperation and assessment of the strategy's

implementation. It is expected that the drafting group would also finalize the draft of the strategy at this meeting. The meeting would last one or two days.

C. Second regional meeting on education for sustainable development (July, 2004)

9. The Task Force may wish to hold its second meeting to discuss and approve the draft strategy and to submit it to the Committee on Environmental Policy for comments.

D. Submitting the draft strategy

10. The draft strategy should be submitted to the Committee on Environmental Policy for comments at its eleventh session (October 2004).

E. Finalization of the strategy

11. Taking into account the comments received from the Committee on Environmental Policy, the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, will finalize the draft strategy.

II. PROPOSED FOLLOW-UP

A. Adoption of the strategy: regional launching of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (February 2005)

12. The United Nations General Assembly, at its fifty-seventh session (December 2002), proclaimed the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 2005 the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. In early 2005, UNESCO plans to launch the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development worldwide. A joint high-level meeting of Environment Ministries and Education Ministries or equivalent State bodies responsible for education in UNECE member States may be convened to adopt the UNECE strategy for education for sustainable development. The meeting would last one day and be held in February 2005 in Geneva or in a host country.

B. Implementation of the Strategy (March 2005~)

13. Member States should begin implementing the strategy without delay. The UNECE secretariat could provide assistance and facilitate the implementation by organizing subregional workshops. It could also develop an outline to help States report on progress.

C. Assessment of implementation (October 2006 ~)

14. A joint session of the Committee and representatives from Education Ministries or equivalent State bodies responsible for education in UNECE member States to discuss progress in the strategy's implementation might be organized every second year, starting from October 2006.

15. At their Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", Ministers may wish to discuss progress in the strategy's implementation based on national and other relevant reports (e.g. NGO reports). The UNECE secretariat could prepare a consolidated progress report on the basis of the information provided. This might be submitted through an open-ended "Environment for Europe"

preparatory group in early 2007 to the Environment Ministers at their sixth Ministerial Conference to be held in the autumn that year.

16. Environmental performance reviews may also include an assessment of the reviewed country's education for sustainable development.

III. FINANCIAL MATTERS

17. Financial support to delegates from countries with economies in transition is subject to the availability of funds for this purpose. Support will be provided in accordance with the rules established by the Committee on Environmental Policy.