



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/CEP/AC.13/2008/3  
28 June 2007

Original: ENGLISH

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

Third meeting

Geneva, 5-7 March 2008

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**ACTIVITIES OF THE BUREAU OF THE UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Fourth Meeting

Note by the secretariat

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), at its first meeting (13–14 December 2005), elected its Bureau and entrusted it with various substantive tasks. The Bureau serves as an intermediate implementing body between the Committee's meetings and reports on its work to the Steering Committee. The Bureau held its fourth meeting in Geneva on 19 February 2007, and its next meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place in October 2007 back to back with the sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (10–12 October 2007, Belgrade). These two meetings are specifically dedicated to the preparations for the Belgrade Conference.

2. The following members of the Bureau participated in the fourth meeting: Mr. Michel Ricard (France); Mr. Andreas Karamanos (Chairperson, Greece), assisted by Mr. Michael Scoullou (Greece); Mr. Paolo Soprano (Italy); Ms. Jyldyz Duishenova (Kyrgyzstan); Ms. Violeta

Ivanov (Vice-Chairperson, Moldova); Ms. Astrid Sandas (Norway), accompanied by Mr. Jan Peter Stromsheim (Norway); and Ms. Natasa Mujagic (for Ms. Vesna Fila, Serbia).

3. Participating as observers were Ms. Victoria Elias (European ECO-Forum), Ms. Christine Affolter (Environmental and School Initiatives (ENSI)), Ms. Natalia Eernstman (expert, Wageningen University, the Netherlands), and Mr. Robert Atkinson and Ms. Oreola Ivanova-Nacheva (Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC-CEE)).

## **I. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

4. Ms. Monika Linn, Secretary to the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) for the sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (October 2007, Belgrade), briefed the Bureau on the key outcomes of the fifth meeting of the WGSO’s Executive Committee and the meeting of the drafting group on the Ministerial Declaration, held on 14–16 February 2007 in Geneva. The major outcomes related to ESD were as follows: (a) the session on ESD would take place in the afternoon of the first day of the Conference, as originally scheduled, and (b) in addition to the joint Ministerial Statement on ESD prepared under the auspices of the Steering Committee, the ESD issue could also be reflected in the Conference’s Ministerial Declaration, prepared under the auspices of the WGSO.

5. The Bureau adopted its agenda as set out in the informal document SC-ESD/BUREAU-4/2007/1.

## **II. SESSION ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (BELGRADE CONFERENCE)**

6. The Bureau discussed the provisional agenda of the Belgrade Conference (see the informal document WGSO/EXECOM-5/2007/4). The Bureau stressed that the subtitle “Parallel processes” assigned to the ESD session and to the session on biodiversity was misleading. It strongly recommended to the WGSO that the subtitle for the ESD session be changed to “Joint session”, reflecting its cross-sectoral nature. The Bureau also suggested that the organizers of the session on biodiversity give the session its own relevant subtitle. Some delegates proposed replacing “Parallel processes” with “Thematic sessions”.

7. The Bureau discussed and approved the organization of work for the session on ESD as set out in the informal document SC-ESD/BUREAU-4/2007/2. At the proposal of Serbia, the Bureau agreed that the session would start with a welcome address of up to five minutes by the Minister of Education of Serbia, who would then give the floor to the Chairperson. As the result of consultations led by the Chairperson and assisted by the secretariat, the Governments of Canada and Kazakhstan have preliminarily agreed to provide keynote speakers at the ministerial level representing the education and environment sectors, respectively. The Bureau agreed that

the Director-General of UNESCO would be invited as a third keynote speaker. Furthermore, the Bureau invited the Netherlands to present key findings of the report on progress in implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD, suggesting the Chairperson of the Expert Group on Indicators as a possible presenter.

8. The Bureau stressed the limited time available for interventions from the floor and agreed that, to ensure a constructive discussion and give more delegations the opportunity to speak, the following should be implemented:

- The secretariat will provide delegations with guidelines on the format and content coverage of the interventions prior to the Conference.
- The secretariat will open a list of speakers about two months prior to the Conference.
- Delegations will be asked to provide a written outline of their intervention(s) indicating whether the intervention refers to topic (a) “Challenges” or topic (b) “The way forward”, and which point(s) for discussion they wish to address (see SC-ESD/BUREAU-4/2007/2).
- The secretariat will make the texts of interventions available through its website.
- Each delegation will be allowed to take the floor only once.
- The Chairperson will enforce a time limit of three minutes per intervention.

9. To make effective use of the time available, the Bureau suggested that subregions might wish to make a consolidated statement on behalf of all their member States. In this regard, REC-CEE informed the meeting that Albania planned to make a statement on behalf of the South-East European (SEE) subregion.

10. Following the discussion at the second meeting of the Steering Committee, the Bureau reiterated its concern regarding the fact that it was not possible to use funds from the United Nations regular budget for the ESD programme. It stressed that the issue of funding from the United Nations regular budget for the ESD programme would need to be brought to the attention of ministers in Belgrade, who might request the UNECE Commission to reconsider this decision.

11. At the suggestion of the Chairperson, the Bureau prepared a proposal for the draft Ministerial Declaration to be adopted at the Belgrade Conference and submitted it to the WGSO. It urged members of national delegations to coordinate their governments’ ESD-related positions in negotiations on the draft Declaration.

### **III. DRAFT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

12. As had been mandated by the Steering Committee, the Bureau discussed and finalized the draft Ministerial Statement (see the informal document SC-ESD/BUREAU-4/2007/3/Rev.1). The statement will be submitted to the Belgrade Conference through the WGSO.

#### **IV. FIRST REPORT ON PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY**

13. Ms. Natalia Eernstman, assistant to Mr. Arjen Wals, the expert responsible for the preparation of the report, made a presentation on the first outline of the document. While foreseeing a substantive outcome of their work, she stressed that the following made difficult the effective processing of submissions by countries: (a) incomplete answers; (b) the availability of some submissions only in the Russian language; and (c) the absence of quantitative data in many cases. The Bureau provided a number of comments on the presentation and agreed on the following:

- The title for the report will be “Learning from each other: achievements, challenges and the way forward”.
- The document should be of a political nature, while also giving substantive insight into the implementation of the Strategy’s objectives.
- It should present lessons learned and give guidance for the implementation of the Strategy in Phases II and III.
- It should contain some visual elements.
- It should highlight positive examples of subregional or cross-sectoral cooperation.
- It should include an executive summary and an addendum on the “lessons learned” from this first reporting procedure and from the use of indicators.

14. The secretariat informed the meeting that, to ensure transparency, the received national implementation reports would be posted on the UNECE website. Furthermore, the first draft of the report would be communicated to the national focal points and key stakeholders for comments in mid-March 2007. Thereafter, the experts would continue working on the text, taking into consideration, where appropriate, the comments received.

15. The Chairperson’s assistant informed the Bureau that *Europe’s Environment: The Fourth Assessment* (the Belgrade report), to be prepared by the European Environment Agency, would contain a chapter on ESD.

#### **V. PROPOSAL ON PANELLISTS**

16. The following governments and stakeholders submitted their proposals on an informal panel discussion: Armenia, Norway, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, European ECO-Forum and Toyota. The Bureau discussed the proposals and expressed its disappointment regarding the limited number of submissions. It agreed to extend the deadline for submissions to 5 March 2007 to allow for more inputs, and thereafter to hold an e-mail consultation on the final proposals on panellists. It recommended to Armenia and European ECO-Forum to coordinate the presentation of the SPARE project.<sup>1</sup> It also recommended that Toyota further develop its proposal. Since the panel will be chaired by Serbia, the Bureau agreed that there should be no panellists from the SEE subregion.

## **VI. COMPILATION OF COUNTRY-SPECIFIC NEEDS**

17. Due to the very limited number of responses, the Bureau requested the secretariat to continue the collection of “needs”, extending the deadline for submissions to 1 June 2007.

## **VII. FUTURE WORK OF THE BUREAU**

18. The Bureau agreed to continue its ongoing work via e-mail. It will hold its next meeting back to back with the Belgrade Conference (the date will be decided in due course) and thereafter will meet prior to the next meeting of the Steering Committee.<sup>2</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

---

<sup>1</sup> An educational network programme on energy and environment initiated by Friends of the Earth (Norway).

<sup>2</sup> The documents for the meeting are available at <http://www.unece.org/env/esd/SC.Bureau.htm> and <http://documents.un.org>