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The Eighth “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference

Requirements for hosting the Eighth “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Reform Plan of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process stipulates that ministerial conferences should be held every four to five years, with each conference lasting for two-and-a-half to three days maximum (ECE/CEP/S/152 and Corr.1, annex I, para. 13 (a)). Accordingly, the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference should be held in 2015 or 2016.

In order to facilitate choosing a venue for the next EfE conference, the Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) requested the secretariat to prepare the present document (ECE/CEP/2013/22, para. 39). The document presents the requirements for hosting an EfE ministerial conference, based on past EfE conferences and taking into account the relevant provisions of the EfE Reform Plan. The current document’s provisions are indicative. More specific provisions are to be stipulated in a host country agreement to be concluded between the host country and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

The Bureau suggested circulating this document to CEP, inviting countries to consider the requirements presented and to express their interest in hosting the conference. Countries are asked to submit their expressions of interest by the end of September 2013 to the CEP Bureau, via the ECE secretariat.

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I. Introduction

1. According to the Reform Plan of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process, ministerial conferences should be held every four to five years. Each conference should last for two-and-a-half to three days maximum (ECE/CEP/S/152 and Corr.1, annex I, para. 13 (a)).
2. Hence, the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference is expected to be held in either 2015 or 2016. In its report to the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) on its latest meeting (ECE/CEP/2013/22), the CEP Bureau recommends that CEP organize the next EfE conference in 2016, given that the mid-term EfE review is being organized in 2013, and that its results should be taken into account in preparing the next conference.
3. At the Astana Ministerial Conference in 2011, ECE ministers invited offers from Governments to host the next EfE ministerial conference.
4. The CEP Bureau, in its report, further points out that the host country for the next conference has not yet been identified. It underscores, moreover, that the input of the future host country will be crucial for the discussion about the substance (themes) of the next conference.
5. To facilitate the choice of a conference venue, the Bureau requested the secretariat to circulate the country requirements to host a ministerial conference.
6. The country requirements presented in this document are based on past EfE ministerial conferences. However, the requirements may have to be further specified, according to the agenda of the conference and local context. The document thus only provides an indication of the requirements to be met by the host country.

II. Participation

7. Participation in the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference is expected to include approximately:
 - (a) 700 official delegates from States and the European Commission;
 - (b) 100 delegates from United Nations organizations, including the ECE secretariat;
 - (c) 150 delegates from other intergovernmental organizations;
 - (d) 200 representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
 - (e) 100 representatives of business.
8. Thus the total number of people who need to be accommodated by the host country is approximately 1,250.
9. Up to 200 additional participants may be present to attend side events and other activities linked to the conference.
10. The host Government will be expected to provide travel support, including costs of travel and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) to two conference delegates per country from countries that are eligible to receive financial support (pursuant to the decision of CEP, see annex).

III. Hotels and transportation to/from the conference venue and the airport

11. The host Government will be expected to ensure a sufficient number of hotel rooms of a good standard at affordable rates. The hotels will need to be easily accessible from the conference venue. Moreover, it will need to be possible to book these rooms at least three months in advance of the conference and in at least one of the hotels up to three weeks before the start of the conference.

12. Several choices of accommodation for conference participants are expected to be provided, taking into consideration the different financial resources and needs of the conference participants. In particular, at least 200 rooms will need to be available for booking for the duration of the conference at a rate not exceeding the equivalent of US\$ 100 per day.

13. The host country will be expected to develop a list of hotels for the conference participants, including room rates and a brief description of each hotel. The list will need to be submitted to ECE for final approval.

14. Following the agreement with ECE on the final list of hotels, this list with daily rates and all other relevant information regarding the hotels and the host country liaison officer responsible for the bookings will need to be posted on the dedicated website (preferably in all official languages of the conference, but in the English and Russian languages at a minimum) at the latest three months before the conference takes place.

15. An information/welcome desk will need to be organized at the airport concerned, to ensure the transfer of the conference participants to the hotels.

16. The host Government will be expected to ensure the transfer of the conference participants between the airport and their hotels. Moreover, regular and sufficient shuttle services should be provided between the officially approved hotels and the venue of the conference, free of charge for conference participants.

IV. Meeting venue facilities

17. The host Government will be expected to provide a conference venue with sufficient space and facilities for all official conference proceedings, exhibitions and side events, as well as with sufficient room for coordination and preparation activities. In particular, the facilities will have to meet the following requirements:

(a) Have seating capacity for approximately 1,250 delegates and be equipped for simultaneous interpretation into at least three official languages of ECE (English, French and Russian);

(b) The room will need to be accessible by members of the ECE secretariat and other authorized staff 24 hours a day during the conference.

18. The EfE Reform Plan stipulates that discussions at EfE ministerial conferences should be arranged in an interactive manner and combine various types of sessions, round tables and moderated panel discussions, with a limited number of main speakers from different stakeholders. The Reform Plan, moreover, suggests that, when possible, interactive sessions could be run in parallel. Therefore, the host Government may be required to ensure parallel meetings, which may require:

(a) Two to three meeting rooms, each able to seat approximately 400 delegates;

(b) These rooms may need to have seating arrangements that facilitate interactive discussions, e.g., round tables;

(c) These rooms may need to be equipped for simultaneous interpretation into at least the three ECE languages.

19. The conference venue will, moreover, have to provide for space for coordination, information and organizational activities. Therefore, the host country will be expected to ensure that the conference facilities offer:

(a) A meeting room able to seat approximately 200 people for the preparatory meeting of CEP, to be held back to back with the conference;

(b) A suite of approximately 10 rooms, with a total capacity of at least 25 seats, for the working offices of the ECE secretariat, including required office equipment (e.g., personal computers connected in a network, high-performance printers and photocopying machines, A4 paper, etc.);

(c) A press centre, including a room for press conferences and working space for journalists;

(d) An office for the European Union (EU) Presidency accessible 24 hours a day;

(e) A meeting room for approximately 200 people for EU coordination meetings;

(f) One meeting room for approximately 50 persons for negotiations or informal consultations;

(g) An office for the secretariat of the participating NGOs with desks and equipment (dates to be fixed, office facilities and equipment subject to agreement between the European ECO-Forum and the host Government);

(h) A meeting room for approximately 200 people for NGO coordination meetings. This room must also be accessible 24 hours a day;

(i) A sufficient number of small rooms to serve as offices for participating delegations and organizations that request them;

(j) A number of the above-mentioned rooms will need to be accessible 24 hours a day, starting one week before the conference;

(k) If the main conference venue does not provide a sufficient number of rooms to accommodate all the rooms and offices described above, an additional venue will be provided by the host Government. This venue will be located in close proximity to the main conference venue.

V. Arrangements for additional events and side events during the conference

20. The host Government will be expected to ensure the provision of ample space for exhibitions, outside of the main conference room. This space and necessary equipment will be provided by the host Government at no cost for displays of the United Nations organizations and NGOs. The cost of rental of the exhibition space for other interested parties will be subject to the decision of the host Government.

21. A sufficient number of rooms are expected to be made available by the host Government for registered side events. This space and necessary equipment will be provided by the host Government at no cost for the United Nations organizations and NGOs.

22. If the main conference venue does not provide a sufficient number of rooms to host all relevant side events, an additional venue will be provided by the host Government. This venue will be located in proximity to the main conference venue.

VI. Arrangements for the conference venue

23. The conference venue will be expected have the following facilities and services available for all registered participants:

- (a) A registration/information desk near the entrance to the conference premises;
- (b) A documentation centre for distribution of possible in-session documents, as appropriate, and written messages (e.g., in the form of pigeonholes);
- (c) A photocopying centre for the use of delegates;
- (d) A computer centre accessible to delegations with Internet connection and with all standard office software installed;
- (e) A facility to exchange foreign currency as well as an automated teller machine (ATM) for cash withdrawal;
- (f) Banking facilities on the premises or close to the venue (with facilities to cash traveller's cheques);
- (g) A desk for migration authorities, manned by staff authorized to handle registration and visa issues and able to speak in English and Russian;
- (h) High-quality secure Wi-Fi with public access will be available during the conference and the preparatory meeting of CEP on the entire conference premises free of charge. The equipment installed in the main conference room will be capable of maintaining simultaneous connections for not less than 1,250 users. An additional Wi-Fi router/access point will be installed in the cafeteria of the conference facility;
- (i) In case side events and exhibitions are scheduled at a venue outside of the main conference premises, similar arrangements are to be provided at this venue.

VII. Arrangements for the main conference room

24. The host Government will be expected to ensure the provision and installation of projectors, screens, video camera(s), a main podium, large monitors next to the podium, two appropriately equipped computers at/near the podium, as well as a printer, nameplates, Government flags, stands for the United Nations and the host country flags, flowers and other decoration of the conference room, including materials (e.g., posters, banners) promoting the EfE process and the themes of the conference.

VIII. Arrangements for other main meeting rooms

25. Should the agenda foresee parallel, interactive discussion sessions, the host Government will be expected to ensure that those main meeting rooms will be appropriately equipped. This may include the provision and installation of one data projector, one screen, video camera(s), an appropriately equipped computer and printer, nameplates and stands for delegations and officers as well as decoration of these rooms, including materials (e.g., posters) promoting the EfE process and the themes of the conference.

IX. Arrangements for the offices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe secretariat

26. The ECE secretariat offices will need to be provided with the following equipment:
- (a) Six personal computers (PCs) with Microsoft Office Suite version 2010 or later, including word processing program, with English interface and keyboards and high-speed Internet access to be connected to printers to be installed (two individual and two network printers) in the ECE secretariat offices. Both network printers will need to be capable of printing not less than 10 copies per minute, with a two-sided printing option. At least one printer will need to be able to print colour pages of standard laser printer quality. Spare cartridges for both printers will be provided and stored at the ECE secretariat office;
 - (b) Two efficient photocopying machines, with a two-sided printing option and sorting and stapling functions, capable of printing not less than 15 copies per minute and recycled paper, with a back-up contract in case the machines break down. At least one of these machines will need to be capable of making colour copies;
 - (c) Phones with international landlines and a fax machine, at least one desk phone per two ECE staff based in the ECE secretariat office. The phones will need to be capable of both receiving and placing outside calls. At a minimum, there must be three outside landlines available for simultaneous use;
 - (d) No less than 20 mobile phones with subscriber identity module (SIM) cards, local numbers and sufficient credit will be provided to ECE and United Nations staff servicing the conference for local communications;
 - (e) Office supplies (paper, staples, etc.) will need to be provided at the secretariat office with additional storage at the designated places at the site of the conference.

X. Host secretariat

A. Personnel

27. A conference manager responsible for coordination of all organizational arrangements on behalf of the host country will need to be appointed by the host Government within a reasonable time before the date of the conference (e.g., at least one year in advance of the conference). This person should have a proven record of organizing international meetings and be fluent in English and the local language. She/he will remain available throughout the preparatory period and up to at least two months after the conference.
28. A liaison officer responsible for visa issues will need to be appointed within a reasonable time before the date of the conference (in accordance with the host country's relevant procedures). The contact details of the liaison officer, able to communicate in English and the local language, will be expected to be made available to interested participants, in particular on the conference website. The visa liaison officer will be responsible for communication with conference participants who need to obtain entry visas for travel to the host country.
29. A person, fluent in English, responsible for the financial arrangements, including distribution of subsistence allowances to the eligible participants and the ECE and other United Nations staff servicing the conference will need to be appointed within a reasonable time before the date of the conference (as per agreement with the ECE secretariat).

30. A focal point responsible for arranging side events will need to be appointed by the host Government within a reasonable time before the date of the conference (as per agreement with the ECE secretariat). This focal point will need to be fluent in English.
31. A person responsible for coordination of all formalities related to shipment of the materials and equipment by ECE and other United Nations agencies and other conference participants will need to be appointed by the host Government within a reasonable time before the date of the conference (as per agreement with the ECE secretariat).
32. A person responsible for coordination of all arrangements regarding the accommodation of the participants, including the compilation of the list of hotels and organizing hotel bookings for participants, will need to be appointed by the host Government within a reasonable time before the date of the conference (as per agreement with the ECE secretariat). This person should be fluent in English.
33. Ten persons, able to communicate in English, must be engaged to service the registration/information desk on the first day of the conference to ensure the registration of conference participants. On the second and third days of the conference, the registration desk should be staffed from 8:30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. by at least two persons, able to communicate in English and preferably also in Russian.
34. One interpreter from the host country, able to interpret into English and/or French, must be engaged by the host Government to support the United Nations Security team during their preliminary mission to the host country.
35. Ten persons will need to be appointed by the host country to work with the ECE secretariat to assist in the meeting rooms, collect official statements made by the delegations, make photocopies as necessary, distribute documents and take care of all clerical tasks; at least five of these staff must be able to communicate in English, at least two in Russian and one must be able to communicate in French.
36. The host Government must provide technical personnel, with at least one person fluent in English, responsible for the functioning of technical equipment, including PCs, video, audio, communication and lighting equipment.
37. A list of names of responsible personnel, including their areas of responsibility and contact information with mobile phone numbers, will be provided to the ECE secretariat at least four weeks before the conference.

B. Other arrangements

38. The host secretariat will be responsible for media accreditation.
39. The host secretariat will be expected to maintain a website with information on logistical arrangements, including, inter alia, tourist information about the country, the conference venue, side events, media accreditation and hotels. The website will have a link to the website of the ECE secretariat.
40. The host secretariat will be expected to provide storage for materials and equipment used by participants during the conference and side events for subsequent return shipment for up to at least one month after the conference.

XI. General communication needs

41. The conference will require substantial communication between delegates and their home countries and internally between the secretariats and delegates. The media has similar needs. For these purposes, the following is recommended:

- (a) Installation of a limited number of payphones for general use;
- (b) Installation of a kiosk/booth where starting packages for mobile phones can be purchased and mobile phone accounts can be recharged;
- (c) Fax machines for delegates (payment for use subject to decision by the host Government).

XII. General photocopying needs

42. The conference will aim to be a paper-smart event. Conference documents will be provided on the ECE website dedicated to the conference. At the same time, a complete set of conference documents will need to be provided to the simultaneous interpreters. Also, possible in-session documents (e.g., a ministerial declaration and the Chair's summary of the meeting) will need to be made available to delegates rapidly during the conference.

43. The photocopying and printing needs of delegates will be met in a photocopying room separate from the secretariats' offices (payment for use subject to decision by the host Government).

XIII. Interpretation needs and equipment

44. The host Government will be expected to provide simultaneous interpretation in all three working languages of ECE, that is, in English, French and Russian. This will require a sufficient number of teams of qualified interpreters, interpretation facilities and equipment in both the main meeting room and in the rooms for round tables, as well as in the meeting room for the preparatory meeting of CEP.

45. ECE can assist the host Government in providing a team of qualified interpreters. These interpreters will work in accordance with United Nations standard rules and regulations for interpreters. The host country, however, will have to cover the cost of their travel, per diem, terminal expenses and fees.

46. In addition, the host Government may wish to provide simultaneous interpretation for its own national language.

47. The requirements of the International Standard ISO 2603 for booths for simultaneous interpretation will have to be met by the Government. A copy of these requirements will be provided by the ECE secretariat.

48. The host Government will be expected to assist the organizers of the side events by providing them with access to interpretation services and necessary equipment for interpretation. The host Government may decide to charge the organizers of the side events for these services and equipment.

XIV. Shipment

49. The host Government will be expected to ensure that all printed and electronic materials (e.g. CD-ROMs, USB flash drives, etc.) that are sent to the country for official

meeting purposes, including exhibitions and side events, are delivered to the conference venue in a timely manner.

XV. Other practical arrangements

50. Cold and hot drinks (coffee, tea, water) are expected to be served during the coffee breaks for all participants and will also be available during late hours for negotiators and the secretariat.

51. Lunches at a cost not exceeding the equivalent of US\$ 15 dollars per full meal should be available at the conference venue on all days during the conference (in a sufficient amount for some 1,250 delegates).

52. In addition, a cafeteria, serving coffee, tea, water, soft drinks and snacks at reasonable prices for conference participants will need to be open on all the days of the conference. The opening hours of the cafeteria will need to correspond to the official working hours of the conference. The cafeteria is expected to have seating arrangements to accommodate at least 50 persons.

53. Safe drinking water will need to be made available to participants free of charge during official working hours of the conference in the back of the conference rooms and on the podiums.

54. An official dinner or reception can be provided by the host Government (subject to the decision of the Government).

55. A photographer provided by the host Government is expected to take photos during the conference, including a "family photo" of all ministers and heads of delegations.

XVI. Arrangements for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and other United Nations staff servicing the conference

56. The host Government will be expected to cover the full costs of travel to and from the conference location, DSA and terminal expenses in United States dollars, according to United Nations rules and up-to-date rates for the meeting location, of the ECE and other United Nations staff servicing the conference (interpreters, security). A list of the ECE and other United Nations staff servicing the conference will be provided to the host country secretariat in advance.

57. The host country will be expected to cover the cost of the technical mission of the United Nations Security Officer to the conference location, including travel expenses, full DSA and terminal expenses.

58. The host Government will be expected to provide hotel rooms and pay accommodation costs for the ECE and other United Nations staff servicing the conference. Accommodation includes the provision of a sufficient number of single rooms in hotels of appropriate quality at a reasonable distance from the conference venue. All ECE staff will be accommodated in one hotel that meets the United Nations security standards and is in a close proximity to the conference venue, to be agreed between the ECE and the host country secretariats at least two months in advance of the conference.

59. The host Government will be expected to cover the expenses (travel and accommodation) and pay 50 per cent of the United Nations DSA rate to approximately 40

representatives of the NGOs, nominated in accordance with relevant decisions by CEP. The list of such NGO representatives will be agreed in advance.

60. On request, transportation between the hotel and the conference venue during the hours outside the official agenda should be provided by the host Government free of charge for the ECE and United Nations staff servicing the conference.

XVII. Security

61. The host Government will need to designate a Senior Security Officer who will be expected to coordinate with a Senior Liaison Officer of the United Nations Security and Safety Service to verify all relevant arrangements. The Senior Security Officer will need to be appointed at least six months prior to the start of the meeting. Both officers will be expected to work cooperatively in the preparation of a security plan based on a security risk assessment undertaken by the United Nations Security and Safety Service.

62. The Security Plan will need to cover, at a minimum, the following:

(a) Preparation of an accreditation, registration and badge issuing plan, with inclusion of distinctive badge layouts for the different categories of participants, such as host country staff, secretariat staff, very important persons (VIPs), official delegates, press, NGOs, special invitees, etc.;

(b) Establishment of a United Nations standardized access control strategy to ensure the unrestricted and fluid access of secretariat staff and authorized participants while keeping an adequate level of security inside the premises;

(c) Provision of sufficient human and technical resources to operate access control points to prevent delays for delegates entering the conference venue, as determined by the coordinated action of both senior security officers, and with a minimum of two screening stations fitted with two X-ray machines, four walkthrough metal detectors and four hand-held metal detectors;

(d) Preparation and implementation of a fire and safety and evacuation plan to ensure that fire and safety regulations are respected in the venue, in particular that cables and other connecting wires will be properly sealed and marked;

(e) The host country will ensure the implementation of all fire safety requirements.

63. The host Government will need to ensure the presence of medical services during working hours at the conference premises, including on the days of setting up and preparing for the conference and the days of dismantling and packing up. Equally, it must be ensured that an ambulance service for immediate medical evacuation is present during the same time period.

64. Unlimited access for the ECE secretariat personnel to the meeting premises will be ensured subject to an identity check.

65. Major decisions that may affect the normal development of the conference, such as a total or partial evacuation of the venue, will only be taken in coordination and agreement with the Senior Security Officer designated by the United Nations, who will act as adviser to the secretariat.

Annex I

Countries eligible for financial support to participate in meetings and events (2012–2013)¹

Note by the secretariat

The threshold for financial support to countries to participate in meetings and events for 2012–2013 is US\$ 4,500: (a) countries with gross domestic product (GDP) per capita between US\$ 4,000 and US\$ 4,500 are eligible for financial support (DSA only); (b) countries with a GDP per capita below US\$ 4,000 are eligible for financial support (DSA and travel expenses).

List of eligible countries, showing category of assistance, and GDP

<i>Country</i>	<i>GDP per capita (US\$)^a</i>	<i>Number of countries</i>
<i>Daily subsistence allowance (DSA) only</i>		
Turkmenistan	4 249	1
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	4 450	1
Subtotal		2
<i>Travel expenses and DSA</i>		
Tajikistan	749	1
Kyrgyzstan	865	1
Uzbekistan	1 420	1
Republic of Moldova	1 630	1
Georgia	2 624	1
Ukraine	3 015	1
Armenia	3 031	1
Belarus	3 418	1
Albania	3 797	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3 867	1
Subtotal		10
Total		12

Note: Countries are listed above in ascending order of GDP, by category.

^a GDP per capita at current prices converted to United States dollars using current exchange rates (2010; data for 2011 is not available until late 2012). Data was extracted from the ECE Statistical Division Database, which is compiled from national and international official sources (Commonwealth of Independent States, EUROSTAT, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development).

¹ As approved by CEP at its eighteenth session in 2012 and amended in accordance with the decision by the Committee's Bureau regarding Belarus. It is expected that an updated list of countries eligible for financial support will apply for the eighth EfE Ministerial Conference.