



# UNECE Weekly

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## *It's just happened ...*

### **Water, sanitation & human settlements on the agenda of first UNECE sustainable development forum**

On 15 and 16 January 2004, some 300 participants from governments, international organizations, NGOs and the private sector examined what UNECE member States are doing to improve the quality of life in our region in view of the Commission on Sustainable Development's upcoming session. More specifically, they discussed how successful they have been in meeting the sustainable development goals related to water, sanitation and human settlements set at the Johannesburg Summit. These are some of the conclusions they came to:

- Across the region water management has improved. There are laws, policies, programmes and institutions in place to protect water resources. Water users have become more involved in water management and the public has become more aware of the environmental consequences of water mismanagement.
- Nevertheless, in some subregions people's health is put at risk because they do not have access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Droughts, floods, water pollution, water waste and overexploitation of water for agriculture are also huge challenges in some parts of the UNECE region and have a big social and economic impact.
- Most municipalities are using land-use planning, land administration and urban regeneration to meet sustainable development goals. New

planning models and tools are helping them to deal with physical deprivation, social exclusion and environmental degradation in local communities. Some basic services in human settlements are now delivered through public-private partnerships and community-based initiatives.

- Some of the current housing problems, particularly in countries in transition, are the result of the wholesale privatization of the past decade. For instance, many housing estates are deteriorating fast because the new owners cannot afford the upkeep of their homes and homeowners' associations are difficult to get off the ground. Most countries, moreover, no longer have the social housing stock needed to meet demand. However, homelessness and urban poverty are also on the rise in the more prosperous subregions.

The Forum discussed the need for more investment to ensure universal access to water, sanitation, energy and shelter. Finally, the participants also stressed the importance of good governance, sustainable consumption and production patterns, information and education to meet sustainable development goals. The outcome of the Forum will be discussed in New York at the Commission on Sustainable Development's 12<sup>th</sup> session in April.

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### **Tunisia accedes to two UNECE Conventions on transport**



On 5 January 2004 Tunisia became a Contracting Party to the UNECE Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals, both concluded in 1968 in Vienna. With these accessions, the total number of States that have become Parties to the former Convention has reached 60, and 51 States are now Contracting Parties to the latter Convention. The two

Conventions, which have recently been amended to incorporate new measures to improve road safety including prohibition of the use of handheld mobile phones while driving, form the basis of national highway codes. Although administered by UNECE, both Conventions are applied by countries beyond the UNECE boundaries.

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**Not an official record - For information only**

## Coming up soon ...

### Regional Symposium on Mainstreaming Gender into Economic Policies 28-30 January 2004, Conference Room VII

The symposium is a joint event organized by UNECE and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI/DAW). Its purpose is to exchange ideas, experiences and good practices on gender mainstreaming at the regional level in the following policy areas:

- ❖ Increasing women's access to financing and assets;
- ❖ Gender budgets;
- ❖ Improving women's employability and supporting women's employment;
- ❖ Gender and pension systems;
- ❖ Institutional mechanisms for mainstreaming gender into economic policies.

The Symposium aims at supporting the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the outcome of the 23<sup>rd</sup> special session of the General Assembly (Beijing +5), and the region-specific priorities agreed at the UNECE Regional Meeting for the 5-year Review of Implementation of the Platform for Action (Geneva, 2000). It is also a contribution of the UNECE region to the 10-year review which will take place in 2005.

26-27 January	Task Force on Electronic Information Tools
26-27 January	Preparatory Meeting for the First Meeting of Signatories to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment
28-29 January	Working Group on Environmental impact Assessment
26-30 January	Joint Meeting of Experts on the Regulations annexed to the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN)
28-30 January	Regional Symposium on Mainstreaming Gender into Economic Policies

## Facts and figures:

### GDP growth, Eastern economies (percentage changes over previous year)

	2003					
	2000	2001	2002	Q1	Q2	Q3
Albania	7.7	6.5	4.7	...	...	...
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5.4	4.5	3.7	...	...	...
Bulgaria	5.4	4.1	4.8	3.8	4.4	4.3
Croatia	2.9	3.8	5.2	4.9	5.0	3.9
Czech Republic	3.3	3.1	2.0	2.4	2.4	3.4
Estonia	7.3	6.5	6.0	5.2	3.5	4.6
Hungary	5.2	3.8	3.5	2.7	2.4	2.9
Latvia	6.8	7.9	6.1	8.8	6.2	7.3
Lithuania	4.0	6.5	6.8	9.3	6.7	8.8
Poland	4.0	1.0	1.4	2.2	3.8	3.9
Romania	2.1	5.7	4.9	4.4	4.2	5.5
Serbia and Montenegro	6.4	5.5	3.8	...	...	...
Slovakia	2.0	3.8	4.4	4.1	3.8	4.2
Slovenia	4.6	2.9	2.9	2.2	2.1	2.3
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	4.5	-4.5	0.9	2.1	3.1	5.2
<b>Eastern Europe-15</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>4.0</b>
Armenia	5.9	9.6	12.9	11.4	16.9	15.6
Azerbaijan	11.1	9.9	10.6	7.9	12.2	11.3
Belarus	5.8	4.7	5.0	5.3	4.8	7.3
Georgia	1.8	4.8	5.3	6.3	11.0	7.5
Kazakhstan	9.8	13.2	9.9	10.5	9.6	7.8
Kyrgyzstan	5.4	5.3	0.0	5.2	-0.1	7.9
Republic of Moldova	2.1	6.1	7.8	5.4	7.3	5.9
Russian Federation	10.0	5.1	4.7	6.8	7.2	6.2
Tajikistan	8.3	10.2	9.5	12.1	5.2	6.6
Turkmenistan <sup>a</sup>	18.6	20.4	19.8	...	...	...
Ukraine	5.9	9.2	5.2	7.9	9.3	6.6
Uzbekistan	4.0	4.5	4.2	2.2	5.4	4.4
<b>CIS-12</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>

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Source: National statistics; direct communications from statistical offices to UNECE secretariat.

a/ Figures for Turkmenistan should be treated with caution. In particular, the deflation procedures that are used to compute officially reported growth rates are not well documented and the reliability of these figures is questionable.