



UNECE Weekly

United Nations

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 243 – 29 October - 2 November 2007

Five Regional Commissions sign cooperation agreement with United Nations Development Programme

Reaffirming their commitment to work together to enhance the impact of United Nations development activities, the Regional Commissions and UNDP signed on 24 October a Cooperation Framework at UNDP Headquarters in New York.

The Regional Commissions and UNDP have agreed to collaborate, coordinate and complement each other in assisting Member States achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. They also commit to sharing knowledge on policy development issues, programmes, and emerging priorities to support sustainable human development; and to address issues likely to benefit from regional or multi-country involvement.

Using their comparative strengths, the Regional Commissions and UNDP will work together to encourage organizational effectiveness at the global and regional level and also, where relevant, at the national and local levels. Joint collaboration is expected to focus on a number of areas, including human resources development; country-level planning processes; follow-up to United Nations Summits and international conferences; regional coordination; knowledge management; regional and inter-regional technical cooperation; advisory services at the country level; and joint products and initiatives at the regional and global levels.

On behalf of the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the agreement was signed by Mr. Marek Belka, UNECE's Executive Secretary.



Environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises

Preparation of pan-European environmental assessments, data collection for country environmental performance reviews and reporting under multilateral environmental agreements have reconfirmed that substantial improvements in environmental monitoring and data collection are needed in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, especially in areas such as air emissions, water discharges and waste management. Such improvements are difficult to achieve without the commitment and cooperation of enterprises.

The UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy recently adopted Guidelines for Strengthening Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises* for these countries. The Guidelines are the result of an examination of good practices throughout the UNECE region and discussions between government bodies, business representatives and civil society organizations.

To implement the Guidelines, public authorities need to improve the legal and regulatory framework for enterprise environmental monitoring and streamline the requirements for reporting. Mandatory monitoring requirements could relate, first of all, to enterprises with a certain threshold capacity in the main polluting sectors. Legislation might include requirements regarding measurement programmes, basic parameters, reference standards and the validation of results. This could help prevent disputes between the public authorities and individual operators.

To facilitate enterprise data management, it is recommended that public authorities establish standardized reporting formats for operators and provide them with guidance documents. Information obtained through



Daddy You can Save the Planet!

A colouring book and games for kids who want to educate their parents

Saving the planet starts early in the morning by taking a shower instead of a bath, closing the tap when shaving, repairing water leakages, recycling paper, not overheating ... All these little gestures that we sometimes forget and which our children remind us to do.

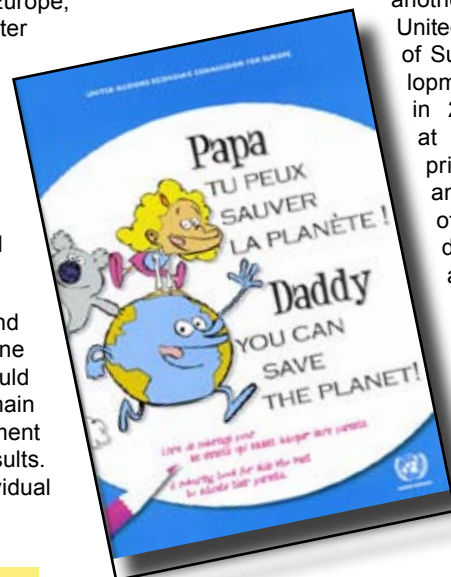
Following the latest Environment for Europe ministerial conference, UNECE is more invested than ever in the environmental cause. To this end UNECE has published a colouring book *Daddy you can save the planet!* – A book for “kids who want to educate their parents”.

Introducing the adorable Juliette and her improbable koala, we follow their adventures as they fight to educate Juliette's father in simple environmental gestures.

Since the more the better, the colouring book comes with a CD-Rom. Through interactive, instructive and fun games like a quiz, a puzzle, a memory game, and a “spot the error” game, children from 6 to 96 can check and improve their environmental knowledge.

This initiative is just another step in the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Development that started in 2005 and aims at integrating the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. ✨

For more information contact the UNECE Information Service.



Not an official record - For information only

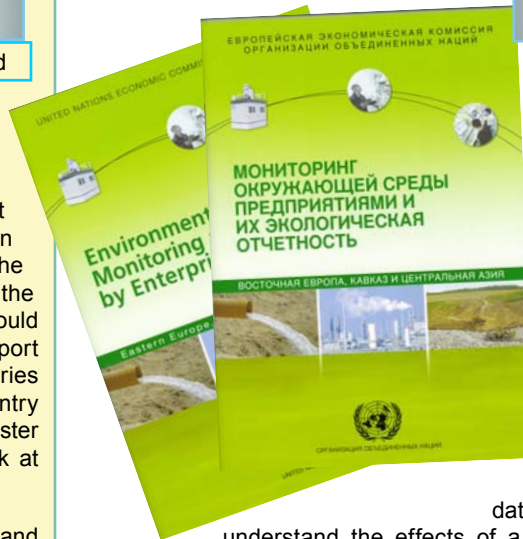
Regional Commissions and UNDP

continued

Upon the signing of the new agreement, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, and current Coordinator of the Regional Commissions, stressed that the implementation of the Cooperation Framework, through channelling the comparative strengths and capacities of the Regional Commissions and UNDP, should result in more effective and efficient support and service delivery to the developing countries in the various regions and to UN country development work. This should also foster more coherence in UN development work at the country, regional and global levels.

Mr. Kemal Derviş, UNDP Administrator and Chair of the United Nations Development Group, emphasized that strong partnerships are critical to the provision of quality development services and expressed confidence that the new Cooperation Framework will mark a new stage in this partnership for results. He also pledged UNDP's continuing support to building a more responsive and effective United Nations at the country and regional levels. ✎

For more information contact the UNECE Information Service.



Environmental monitoring

continued

mandatory self-reporting needs to be made available to the general public. Public authorities should encourage operators to enhance monitoring programmes so that they go beyond regulatory requirements. This could be done through the promotion of voluntary auditing and environmental management systems at enterprises, publication of corporate environmental and sustainability reports, and training programmes.

Effective monitoring programmes by enterprises have added value. Better data collection helps management to better understand the effects of a company's environmental performance on profitability, market value and investment decisions. It also helps increase in overall cost-effectiveness, since good environmental monitoring provides enterprises with valuable information on energy use and materials flow.

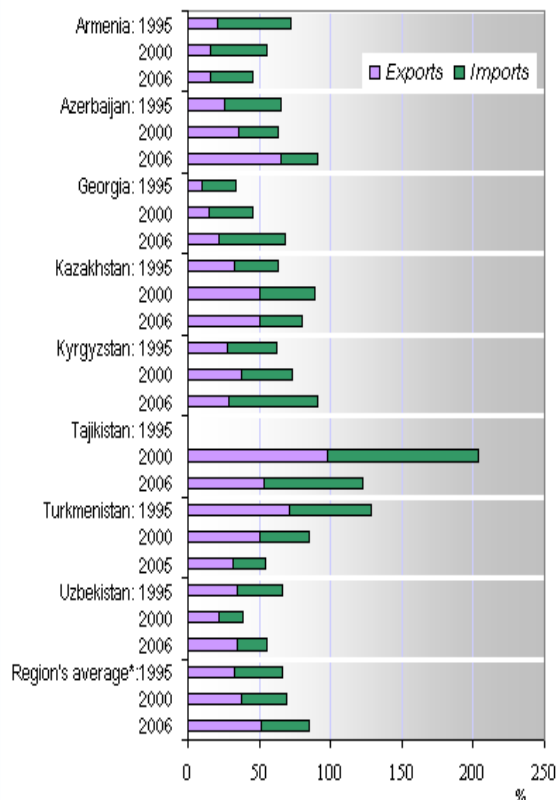
The Guidelines were endorsed by the Ministers and Heads of delegation of States of the pan-European region and the European Commission, who met at their Sixth "Environment for Europe" Conference in Belgrade on 10-12 October 2007. ✎

* *Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises: Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*, available from the UN Publications, Sales and Marketing Section (unogbookshop@unog.ch).

For more information contact Mikhail Kokine (monitoring.wgem@unece.org).

Facts and Figures

Openness to trade in Central Asia and the Caucasus (ratio of merchandise exports and imports to GDP)



How significant is foreign trade in Central Asia and the Caucasus?

Over the last decade, the Central Asian and Caucasian countries experienced a strong growth in trade flows. But how significant was and currently is trade in their overall economic activity? Openness to trade, calculated as the sum of a country's total exports and imports as a percentage of GDP, presented in the chart, is a simple and widely used measure to gauge it.

In terms of trade in goods, on average the region's total exports and imports currently account for 86% of GDP, as compared to about 67% in 1995. During the last decade, trade openness increased in four out of the eight countries under consideration. Rising exports were the major factor in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, while in the other countries it was more often imports. There is a significant variation across these countries, with trade openness in Tajikistan reaching 125% in 2006, while the corresponding measure for Armenia is only 46%. However, for cross-country comparisons it has to be borne in mind that openness to trade is influenced by a range of factors, including country size and location, the tradable natural resource base and the extent and ease of capital inflows. ✎

Source: UNECE Statistical database (www.unece.org/stats/data) and Asian Development Bank.

Note: Merchandise exports and imports as reported in balance of payments statistics.

* All listed countries.