



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Committee on Environmental Policy

#### Twenty-seventh session

Geneva, 3–5 November 2021

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

#### Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

### Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-seventh session

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on  
Wednesday, 3 November 2021\*

#### I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Outcomes of the work of the Bureau.
3. Sustainable development in the region.
4. Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference:
  - (a) Draft agenda of the Conference;
  - (b) Background thematic documents;
  - (c) Pan-European environmental assessment;
  - (d) Other documents;
  - (e) Organizational issues;
  - (f) Resource requirements;
  - (g) Host country preparations.
5. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting.
6. Environmental performance reviews.
7. Cross-sectoral activities.

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\* There are accreditation procedures for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to complete the online registration form (<https://indico.un.org/event/34745/>). Registration will be open from Monday, 4 October 2021. On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the Security and Safety Section of the United Nations Office at Geneva, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see map and other practical information available from the ECE website at <https://unece.org/practical-information-delegates>). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 2682.



8. Criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events.
9. Annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2022 and outline of key components of the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2023.
10. Presentation and exchange of views on the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme.
11. Calendar of meetings.
12. Election of officers.
13. Impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including on the Environment for Europe process.
14. Other business.
15. List of decisions.
16. Closure of the meeting.

## **II. Annotations**

### **1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

1. The Chair of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy will open the twenty-seventh session. The Committee will then be invited to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document (ECE/CEP/2021/1). The provisional time schedule is presented in information paper No. 1.<sup>1</sup>

### **2. Outcomes of the work of the Bureau**

2. At its twenty-sixth session (Geneva and online, 9 and 10 November 2020), the Committee mandated its Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to proceed with the necessary organization of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including preparing, for the next session of the Committee, the following: the first drafts of the two background thematic documents; a first draft of the provisional annotated agenda for the Conference; and a new document regarding organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference. The Bureau was also mandated to carry out a number of activities, including to: (a) prepare the Committee's twenty-seventh session; and (b) prepare revised criteria for providing financial support for participation in meetings and events.<sup>2</sup>

3. During the intersessional period, due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Bureau worked by means of electronic consultations, including an online meeting on 2 June 2021.

4. The Committee will be invited to consider the outcomes of the Bureau's work under the respective agenda items as presented in document ECE/CEP/2021/3.

### **3. Sustainable development in the region**

5. The secretariat will inform the Committee of the main developments at the regional level regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the key outcomes of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the United Nations Economic

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<sup>1</sup> Information and materials for the meeting are available on a dedicated web page on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) website (<https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/27th-session-committee-environmental-policy>).

<sup>2</sup> See ECE/CEP/2020/2, paras. 22, 26 (c), 29, 57 and 77.

Commission for Europe Region (virtual meeting, 10–18 March 2021), submitted as the contribution of the ECE region to the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development 2021 (New York, 6–15 July 2021).

6. The Committee may wish to consider, as appropriate, the information provided.

#### **4. Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference**

7. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee decided to reschedule the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries (Nicosia), for 5–7 October 2022.<sup>3</sup>

8. The Committee will be invited to consider a number of issues with a view to advancing the preparatory process.

##### **(a) Draft agenda of the Conference**

9. In accordance with the Reform of the “Environment for Europe” process: reform plan, a decision on the agenda of the Conference should be taken at the regular meeting of the Committee approximately 12 months prior to the Conference, and further preparatory work should then commence.<sup>4</sup>

10. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee mandated the Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to prepare a first draft of the provisional annotated agenda for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference. The Bureau at its virtual meeting on 2 June 2021 discussed the first outline of the annotated provisional agenda and provided further guidance to the secretariat while drafting the agenda for the Conference.

11. The Committee will be invited to consider the draft annotated provisional agenda for the Conference (ECE/CEP/2021/6), with a view to agreeing on the organization of the Conference’s work.

##### **(b) Background thematic documents**

12. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee considered draft outlines of two background thematic documents on the themes for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and asked:

- The Committee members to make concrete suggestions and proposals on draft outlines of two background thematic documents on the themes for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and send them to the secretariat by the end of 2020.
- The Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to continue working to prepare, for the next regular session of the Committee, the first drafts of the two background thematic documents.

13. Following the call by the Committee at its twenty-sixth session, the secretariat received suggestions and proposals on draft outlines from Czechia, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden and the European Investment Bank.

14. The consultant contracted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) prepared an information note on the current key principles, policies and approaches of green and circular economy in the two thematic areas – sustainable infrastructure and sustainable tourism – with the view to further elaboration into the background thematic documents. The consultant presented to the Bureau at its virtual meeting on 2 June 2021 the main contents of the information note, highlights of the opportunities available for the region and region-specific examples of challenges, as well as an identification of the next steps in further developing the information base contributing to the preparation of the thematic background

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., para. 19 (a).

<sup>4</sup> See ECE/CEP/S/152, annex I, para. 12 (a).

papers for the Ninth Ministerial Conference. The Bureau discussed the information note and guided the consultant and the secretariat on the next steps in developing the background thematic documents.

15. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided, including the first drafts of the two background thematic documents on: “Greening the economy in the pan-European region: working towards sustainable infrastructure” (information paper No. 2); and “Applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism” (information paper No. 3). The Committee will also be invited to decide on the next steps and to provide guidance on developing further the thematic documents.

**(c) Pan-European environmental assessment**

16. At its twenty-fifth session (Geneva, 13–15 November 2019), the Committee requested the secretariat and UNEP, working in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency, to prepare a limited indicator-based and thematic assessment,<sup>5</sup> subject to the availability of resources.

17. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee expressed its appreciation to those member States that had provided financial contributions to support preparation of the next pan-European environmental assessment, encouraged member States to provide further support in terms of expertise and funding, and requested the secretariat to continue to inform the Bureau of progress made.<sup>6</sup>

18. The Committee will be provided with information on progress in the preparation of a limited indicator-based and thematic pan-European environmental assessment and a summary of its key findings and policy messages (information paper No. 4).

**(d) Other documents**

19. The secretariat has prepared a list of documents being produced for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (information paper No. 5). The Committee will be invited to consider the list of documents.

**(e) Organizational issues**

20. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee considered the document regarding organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2019/19) and recommended reducing the maximum size of delegations for the Conference by 20 per cent.<sup>7</sup>

21. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee asked the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to prepare for the next session of the Committee a new document regarding organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference taking into account the new dates of the Conference (5–7 October 2022).<sup>8</sup>

22. The Committee will be invited to consider the document regarding organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2021/7).

**(f) Resource requirements**

23. The Environment for Europe reform plan stipulates that, for the preparatory process of the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and the Conference itself, the necessary extrabudgetary financial resources will have to continue to be provided to ECE to supplement the United Nations core budget resources. The plan also states that the host country should assume relevant financial commitments.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 37 (k) (ii).

<sup>6</sup> See ECE/CEP/2020/2, para. 38 (f).

<sup>7</sup> See ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 27 (d).

<sup>8</sup> See ECE/CEP/2020/2, paras. 28 and 29.

<sup>9</sup> See ECE/CEP/S/152, annex I, para. 12 (g) and (h).

24. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee welcomed information paper No. 19 on estimated resource requirements for preparing the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, and invited interested countries and organizations to make contributions (in cash and in kind) for the preparation of the Conference.<sup>10</sup>

25. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee expressed gratitude to the countries for their pledges to contribute financially to the preparation of the Conference and invited interested countries and organizations to make contributions (in cash and in kind) for the preparation of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.<sup>11</sup>

26. The Committee will be briefed on the current situation with regard to resource requirements and pledges for the preparation of the Conference. Interested countries and organizations may inform the meeting about envisaged contributions for the preparation of the Conference.

**(g) Host country preparations**

27. The Committee at its previous session expressed appreciation to Cyprus as the host of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries, for the information provided.<sup>12</sup>

28. The representative of Cyprus will be invited to inform the Committee about the ongoing preparations for the hosting of the Conference.

29. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided.

## **5. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting**

30. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee took note of the information provided and welcomed the activities of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, especially in support of the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System, and the activities of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, especially regarding the review of the ECE set of environmental indicators and how the Joint Task Force seeks to address environmental and health information together.<sup>13</sup>

31. The Committee also decided to extend the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group to mid-2023 to allow the Working Group to prepare a new draft mandate and terms of reference after the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.<sup>14</sup>

32. The Committee will be informed of the outcomes of the twenty-third session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva, 4 and 5 May 2021). Furthermore, it will be informed of the decisions taken by the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators at its eighteenth session (Geneva, 18 and 19 October 2021 (information paper No. 6).

33. The Committee will also be provided with information on progress in preparing a final review report on the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System.

## **6. Environmental performance reviews**

34. At its current session, the Committee will conduct a peer review of the environmental performance of Morocco. The Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews will finalize the recommendations for the review at a meeting to be held in Geneva from 27 to 29

<sup>10</sup> See ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 30.

<sup>11</sup> See ECE/CEP/2020/2, para. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., para. 35.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., para. 38 (a), and (d).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., para. 38 (c).

September 2021. The Committee will consider the recommendations presented in information paper No. 7, with a view to their prospective adoption.

35. Furthermore, the Committee will consider the recent and planned activities under the Environmental Performance Reviews Programme.

## **7. Cross-sectoral activities**

36. The Committee will be invited to consider a document prepared by the secretariat detailing the recent developments, plans for the future and expected decisions by the Committee with regard to cross-sectoral activities under the auspices of the ECE Environment subprogramme (ECE/CEP/2021/4).

## **8. Criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events**

37. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee decided to continue using the criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events approved at its twenty-fifth session for another year, and requested the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to periodically verify the availability of data for 2019 and, if available for all countries with economies in transition, to prepare revised criteria for financial support for approval by the Committee at its next session.<sup>15</sup> At its current session, the Committee may consider updating the criteria for financial support or continuing to use the current criteria for another year, on the basis of the Bureau's recommendation.

## **9. Annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2022 and outline of key components of the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2023**

38. In December 2017, at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly (New York, 12 September–24 December 2017), the States Members of the United Nations approved the change from a biennial to an annual budget period on a trial basis from 2020 onwards.<sup>16</sup>

39. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee:

- Adopted the draft annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2021 (ECE/CEP/2020/5) and recommended that it be approved by the Executive Committee.
- Requested the Bureau to address the issue of timing in the definition of the programme of work and to oversee the appropriate balance with regard to its activities.<sup>17</sup>

40. The ECE Executive Committee at its 112th meeting (Geneva, 14 December 2020) discussed preparation of the draft programmes of work at the sectoral committees. Member States then requested to ensure that, when considering their draft programmes of work for the next year, sectoral governing bodies could also provide recommendations on key elements of their future programmes of work. That way, those recommendations could be reflected in the draft ECE proposed programme plan to be presented to the Executive Committee in December of the current year.<sup>18</sup> As a follow-up to that request, the ECE secretariat developed a document entitled "Sequential review of the proposed programmes

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., para. 57.

<sup>16</sup> See General Assembly resolution 72/266 on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations (A/RES/72/266), para. 6.

<sup>17</sup> See ECE/CEP/2020/2, para. 60.

<sup>18</sup> See Chair's conclusions (EXCOM/CONCLU/115), para. 36. Available at <https://unece.org/116th-excom-meeting-17-may-2021>.

of work of ECE subprogrammes” (informal document 2021/8),<sup>19</sup> which was approved by the Executive Committee at its 115th meeting on 5 March 2021.<sup>20</sup>

41. In line with the sequential review procedure, the Committee will be invited to adopt the draft annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2022 (ECE/CEP/2021/5) and recommend that it be approved by the Executive Committee. The programme of work is based on the ECE proposed programme budget for 2022 (A/76/6 (Sect.20)). It reflects the annual format presented in 2020 in line with General Assembly resolution 72/266, with enrichments reflecting General Assembly resolutions 74/251 on programme planning (A/RES/74/251), adopted on 27 December 2019, and 75/243 on programme planning (A/RES/75/243), adopted on 31 December 2020.

42. Based on the sequential review procedure, the Committee will be also be invited to consider the “Outline of key components of the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2023” (Information paper No. 9) and to provide recommendations on those components, as necessary. Those recommendations agreed by the Committee and included in its decisions will be reflected in the proposed programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2023.

## **10. Presentation and exchange of views on the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme**

43. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee welcomed the information provided by UNEP on the ongoing preparations for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP, and invited UNEP to continue to inform the Committee of relevant developments under the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP.<sup>21</sup>

44. The Committee will be invited to consider information provided by UNEP and exchange views on the outcomes of the online meeting of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (Nairobi (online), 22 and 23 February 2021) and preparation of a resumed in-person meeting, to be held in February 2022.

## **11. Calendar of meetings**

45. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee approved the proposed schedule of Committee and Bureau meetings until 2023.<sup>22</sup> The Committee will be invited to review its schedule of meetings for 2022–2024 (information paper No. 10).

## **12. Election of officers**

46. The Committee will be invited to elect a Chair and other members of the Bureau. A list of proposed candidates will be circulated by email in advance of the meeting (information paper No. 11).

## **13. Impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including on the Environment for Europe process**

47. The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis that affects everyone. The pandemic has exposed the fragility of the world’s societies and economies in the face of global shocks. However, at

<sup>19</sup> Available at <https://unece.org/115th-excom-meeting-5-march-2021>.

<sup>20</sup> See Chair’s conclusions (EXCOM/CONCLU/115), para. 39. Available at <https://unece.org/116th-excom-meeting-17-may-2021>.

<sup>21</sup> See ECE/CEP/2020/2, para. 63.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., para. 66.

the same time, the pandemic is an opportunity to reset the world's environmental future. Recovery must involve rethinking and rebuilding for the better, for people and for the planet.

48. At its twenty-sixth session, the Committee welcomed the information provided by the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe on how the pandemic could be used as an opportunity to reset the world's environmental future and how a COVID-19 response could better support further progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee agreed to further discuss the impact of the pandemic, including on the Environment for Europe process, at its next regular session.<sup>23</sup>

49. The Committee will be invited to further exchange ideas and reflections on how the pandemic has affected societies, and on the profound effects that the pandemic has already had and will have on the environment, environmental policy and governance in the ECE member States, with a particular focus on ECE Environment subprogramme priorities and instruments, and possible needs to adapt and coordinate their actions.

#### **14. Other business**

50. The Committee will be invited to discuss any other business that might be brought to its attention. Delegations wishing to propose subjects for discussion under this item are invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

#### **15. List of decisions**

51. Each morning, the Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, will sum up the conclusions and decisions of the Committee from the previous day. The list of decisions will be finalized before the closure of the meeting.

#### **16. Closure of the meeting**

52. The Chair will close the meeting. The report of the meeting and the list of participants will be finalized by the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, for circulation to the Committee after the meeting. These documents will be posted on the meeting website.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., paras. 73 and 74 (c).