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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
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HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH
THE PEP Steering Committee
(Fourth session, 10-11 April 2006)

**PREPARATIONS FOR THE THIRD HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON TRANSPORT,
ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH (2007)**

Note from the secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. The present document reviews briefly the decisions made at the Second High-level meeting on Transport, Environment and Health in 2002 as regards the implementation of THE PEP and the third High-level Meeting to be convened no later than 2007 to monitor the implementation and assess the progress achieved¹. The document contains also a summary of the main points made by THE PEP Steering Committee at its third session (April 2005) in relation to the preparations for the third High-level Meeting.

2. On the basis of the discussions held by the Bureau of the Steering Committee at its meeting in December 2005, the document presents, in its second part, proposals for the Steering Committee's consideration concerning the programme, documentation, preparatory steps, date and venue of the Meeting.

I. BACKGROUND

A. Decisions by the Second High-level Meeting

¹ Para. 10 of the Declaration adopted by the Second High-level Meeting, ECE/AC.21/2002/8–EUR/02/5040828/8

3. On 5 July 2002, at the second High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health, Ministers and representatives of the Member States of the UNECE and WHO/Europe had recognized that the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 confer responsibilities to each sector for the achievement of sustainable transport at global and national levels.

4. The World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place a few months later in 2002 in Johannesburg put emphasis on the importance of regional initiatives for better implementing the global commitments. In this context, the High-level Meeting had wished to convey to the Summit that “European countries will further strengthen the implementation of the relevant provisions of Agenda 21 through national actions and a concrete regional initiative in which, in an effective manner, national and international activities are coordinated and advanced with a view to integrating environmental and health aspects into transport policies”².

5. The Meeting had given credit to the considerable efforts already undertaken for the establishment and follow-up to two regional initiatives, namely the 1997 UNECE Programme of Action on Transport and Environment and the 1999 WHO Charter on Transport, Environment and Health. The Meeting had, nevertheless, been convinced of the need to take further steps for the integration of transport, environment and health policies within the UNECE – WHO/Europe region, in line with the requirements of the Agenda 21.

6. These further efforts were deemed justified also considering the prevailing situation in the region, where increases in transport volumes had resulted in growing environmental and health impacts and continued pressures on natural resources and eco-systems.

7. The High-level meeting had estimated that it was premature to start negotiations for a legal instrument and had considered instead the establishment of THE PEP, a programme administered jointly by the UNECE and the WHO/Europe, to be the appropriate means for promoting sustainable and healthy transport in the region notably through the integration of transport, environment and health policies.

8. The Meeting had adopted the policy framework of THE PEP with priority areas³ and specific actions as well as an institutional setting for the implementation of the activities⁴. The delegations had also committed themselves to ensuring effective implementation of the Programme as well as to supporting participation of representatives from the Eastern Europe,

² Declaration adopted by the Second High-level Meeting, ECE/AC.21/2002/8–EUR/02/5040828/8

³ Integration of environmental and health aspects into transport policy; demand side management and modal shift; urban transport; and “cross-cutting issues” i.e. (a) specific needs and problems of the EECCA and South East European countries and (b) sensitive areas of the region

⁴ Document [ECE/AC.21/2002/9–EUR/02/5040828/9](#) (THE PEP Work Plan)

Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East European countries, including through allocation of adequate resources and financial means.

9. In addition, the three Co-chairpersons of the Meeting had been invited to transmit THE PEP to the secretariat of the World Summit in order to be considered as part of the list of partnerships presented in Johannesburg, on the grounds that “THE PEP is a regional initiative, which launches new cooperative actions among countries of the WHO/Europe and UNECE regions in an area of crucial importance for sustainable development⁵.”

10. The High-level Meeting had reserved the right to monitor the implementation of the newly established Programme deciding to “assess the progress achieved at a High-level Meeting to take place no later than 2007”⁶.

B. Conclusions of THE PEP Steering Committee

11. At its third session on 11-12 April 2005, THE PEP Steering Committee held preliminary discussions on the preparations for the third High-level Meeting⁷.

12. The Committee considered, first of all, the implementation of the Programme during its first two years of existence, evaluating whether it is fulfilling its mandate and fitting with the scope and purpose that were adopted by the second High-level Meeting. The Committee addressed in particular questions related to:

- Representation of interests of each of the three sectors by the programme activities;
- The extent to which the three priority areas were covered by the ongoing activities;
- Involvement of the Governments and organizations in the programme implementation;
- Coordination and collaboration with other relevant international initiatives;
- Adequacy of the mechanisms chosen for the implementation of the activities;
- Operation of the institutions (Steering Committee, Bureau, ad hoc task forces) and of the network of focal points and provision of joint secretariat services by the UNECE and WHO/Europe secretariats⁸;
- Availability of resources and financial means for implementing the activities;

⁵ THE PEP was launched as a partnership for sustainable development, with the thematic focus of health and sustainable development as well as of transport. For more details see:

<http://webapps01.un.org/dsd/partnerships/public/partnerships/204.html>

⁶ Para. 10 of the Declaration adopted by the Second High-level Meeting, ECE/AC.21/2002/8–EUR/02/5040828/8

⁷ Document ECE/AC.21/2005/11-EUR/05/5046203/11, prepared by the secretariat

⁸ Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee adopted by the second High-level Meeting (Document ECE/AC.21/2002/9–EUR/02/5040828/9, paras. 6-12 and Annex 3) and Rules of Procedure for the Steering Committee adopted by the Committee at its first session (Summary report of the first session of the Steering Committee ECE/AC.21/2003/6–EUR/03/5040828/6)

- Impact of the activities and their potential to facilitate the policy integration in the countries in the future.

13. Following the discussion, the Committee:

- (a) Agreed on the usefulness of THE PEP as a unique forum bringing together the three sectors throughout the region;
- (b) Considered that the streamlining and merging of the Vienna and London processes into one process that is administered jointly by the UNECE and the WHO/Europe was a highly positive development;
- (c) Estimated that THE PEP constitutes a pioneering process in cross-sectoral and inter-agency cooperation;
- (d) Felt that THE PEP brings/will bring particular benefits for EECCA and SEE⁹;
- (e) Confirmed that the key priorities and the institutional setting remain valid;
- (f) Considered that much progress has been achieved considering the novelty of the Programme and the scarcity of the resources available.

14. In spite of its overall positive evaluation of the early years of THE PEP, the Steering Committee identified also the following issues to be further tackled for improving the implementation of the Programme in the future:

- (a) The number of member States providing active political support and resources for the implementation of the Programme was considered to be too limited. The relative lack of a wider and more active support for the Programme was estimated to stem, to a certain extent, from the current political context, seen as fairly unfavourable to policy integration. Certain delegates felt, furthermore, that the Programme lacked “teeth” due to the absence of a legally binding basis for action.
- (b) It was seen necessary to renew political impetus and high-level commitment for the process – at the occasion of the third High-level meeting.
- (c) One of the recommended means for increasing the political support for the Programme consisted in strengthening of the links to the existing legal agreements or global processes, such as the follow-up to the implementation of the Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of implementation on Sustainable Development.
- (d) The present funding mechanisms for the activities were not considered sustainable enough. Furthermore, as long as only little means were made available for the

⁹ These abbreviations refer to the former Soviet Union countries in East-Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and in South-East Europe.

implementation of the Programme, it was seen advisable to concentrate the work on a few items and avoid taking up new activities unless their financing was ensured. Volunteering as lead countries for the implementation of the activities was seen as one of the viable alternatives to financial pledges to the UNECE and WHO/Europe trust funds.

- (e) It was seen essential to ensure that the three sectors are equally involved in the process. The participation of the transport sector was considered to be of particular importance for the success of the process and was to be further stimulated e.g. through projects that attract the transport sector more.

15. Regarding the agenda, the date and the venue of the third High-level Meeting, the Steering Committee:

- (a) Highlighted the importance of attracting Ministers and high-level representatives from all the three sectors and the sub-regions alike;
- (b) Identified a need to increase the visibility of THE PEP in civil society and within the media;
- (c) Recommended strengthening of the links between THE PEP and related international processes, such as the “Environment for Europe” and the “Environment and Health” Ministerial processes as well as that of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT);
- (d) Invited the secretariat to explore opportunities for holding the High-level Meeting back to back to related events in 2007.

II. PROPOSALS REGARDING THE CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE THIRD HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

16. At its meeting of 2 December 2005, the Bureau of the Steering Committee discussed in detail the substantive contents and the organizational aspects of the High-level Meeting, such as the programme, documentation, preparatory steps, date and venue of the Meeting.

17. The Steering Committee is invited to deliberate and decide upon the proposals below (A – E) that are based on the discussions held by the Bureau.

A. Further emphasis to the linkage between THE PEP and the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development

18. Considering that the second High-level Meeting had established THE PEP in 2002 to serve as a forum for implementing relevant provisions of the Agenda 21 in the UNECE –

WHO/Europe region, it is proposed that the third High-level Meeting, if held ahead of spring 2007, would report to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), at its 15th meeting in spring 2007, on the activities carried out and the recommendations made for further work. Reporting to the CSD would be particularly relevant at this point of time, given the focus of the CSD in 2006-2007 on sustainable energy, air pollution and climate change issues that are linked with transport activities.

19. At the Second Regional Implementation Forum (RIF) on Sustainable Development, organized by the UNECE in Geneva on 15-16 December 2005, the member countries of the UNECE and the relevant organizations reiterated that urgent action is required to meet the objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving the global environment, cutting air pollution and enhancing energy security. The RIF stressed, moreover, that to achieve real and sustainable progress in all of these areas, it was necessary to adopt an integrated approach within the Governments. Planning and transport policy were given as specific examples where addressing issues in an integrated fashion would bring particular benefits for the thematic cluster of issues under consideration by the CSD 14 and 15.

20. Means of implementation were deemed critical for achieving tangible results. The RIF considered that improved governance, finance, as well as capacity, technology and education were all essential means of implementation. It was seen important, in addition, to make sure that the efforts taken at the national and international level and in various forums would complement each other. Comprehensive national strategies were considered to play a key role in coordinating the various efforts.

21. The Meeting considered also that, in order to bring about progress in sustainable development, it was essential to estimate and take account of the costs of inaction including adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

22. Putting more emphasis on the role of THE PEP in the regional implementation of the Agenda 21 and Johannesburg commitments should be seen as one of the ways of invigorating the political interest of the countries for the Programme implementation.

23. One should, therefore, not lose the opportunity of using the High-level Meeting as an interesting showcase of the regional implementation of Agenda 21 for the global level. The Ministers and high-level representatives would have the occasion to make reference to the Meeting and its outcome in their interventions at the 15th CSD meeting in New York. In addition, THE PEP could be presented on the occasion of a side event that could be organized at the CSD-15.

B. Proposed items for the programme of the third High-level Meeting

24. Regarding the principal items in the programme of the High-level Meeting, it is proposed that:

- (a) The Meeting would first be invited to reflect on the development of sustainable transport and policy integration in the region, looking at the progress achieved and the challenges encountered over the past ten years, since the Vienna Conference on Transport and Environment, held in 1997.
- (b) It would then be asked to assess the policy response to date by the UNECE and WHO/Europe Member States, with a focus on assessing the first years of implementation of THE PEP, looking at the main outcomes as well as the main challenges and opportunities for improving the programme implementation further.
- (c) Finally, building on the above items, a Ministerial panel would be organized to allow for the representatives from the three sectors to discuss together the challenges the region faces today and to reflect on the joint action to be taken at international, national and regional level to further integrate environment, health and transport objectives within the framework of THE PEP, in line with the responsibilities conferred by the Agenda 21. The Ministers could consider how the cross-sectoral forum provided by THE PEP could be made increasingly use of, e.g. for furthering the various means of implementation identified recently by the Second Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development. Evaluation of the cost of non-integrated and unsustainable transport policies, including their adverse impacts on human health and the environment in the region, could constitute one of the key activities to be pursued within THE PEP.

C. Proposed documentation for the Meeting

25. It is suggested that the background documentation to be prepared for the High-level meeting would include:

- (a) A report on the sustainable transport development in the region 1997-2007. This report would be based on internationally published facts and figures on the progression of the economic development, transport and energy consumption over the past ten years as well as on the evolution of the related impacts on the environment and human health within the region. This report would be prepared with the assistance of a consultant to the secretariat.
- (b) A review of the initial years of THE PEP implementation. This review would highlight the main outcomes reached in the various activities undertaken and the difficulties encountered as well as issue recommendations for further improving the implementation

in the future. It could also include proposals for undertaking new activities with value added that correspond notably to priority interest for EECCA and South Eastern European countries. Furthermore, the document could incorporate specific feedback from the EECCA and south Eastern European countries regarding the extent to which THE PEP has addressed their needs and facilitated the integration of health and environmental considerations into transport policies at the national level. It could also focus on the Programme's capacity to coordinate and collaborate at the international level, with other relevant organizations and entities such as the EU, ECMT, OECD, and other international processes (e.g. CEHAPE, follow-up of the Kiev Conference on Environment for Europe) and with respect to relevant international legislation in place such as the UNECE and EU regulations on Strategic Environmental Assessment. Additionally, it could include an assessment of the influence that THE PEP might have had on other processes.

- (c) A discussion paper for the Ministerial Panel – containing a concise synthesis of the main issues addressed in the first two sessions as well as a series of specific questions to facilitate the panel discussions.

26. Following the discussions, the High-level Meeting would be invited to adopt a declaration containing the main conclusions reached together with possible recommendations for the future.

D. Optional dates and venue for the 3rd High-level Meeting:

27. Regarding the date and venue for the 3rd High Level Meeting, the proposed options are as follows:

- (a) Organizing the High-level Meeting back to back to the ECMT Ministerial meeting, which is to be held in Sofia, Bulgaria in May 2007. This option is considered to maximise the participation of Ministers and high-level representatives from the transport sector, seen as the key factor for the success of the process. There is, however, a risk of an overlap with the mid-term review meeting of the WHO's Environment and Health process and with the World Health Assembly, which could limit the participation of health and environment representatives.
- (b) Holding the High-level Meeting back to back to the 5th session of THE PEP Steering Committee in 2007. The High-level Meeting would take place first and be followed by a one-day session of the Steering Committee to take stock of the decisions made and to discuss how to reflect them in its programme of work. Under this option, the High-level Meeting and the Steering Committee's session could be held either in the UN premises in Geneva or be hosted by a country. Regarding the timing of the joint meeting, two possibilities were discussed:

- (i) April 2007, to allow for reporting on the outcomes of the High-level Meeting to the 15th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development to be held in May 2007.
- (ii) Early December 2007, to have more time to prepare substantive input for the High-level Meeting.

E. Preparatory work for the 3rd High-level Meeting

28. The Steering Committee is invited to consider and decide on the time schedule and other organizational aspects of the preparatory work to be carried out for the High-level Meeting.

(a) Preparatory meetings

It is suggested that the Bureau of the Steering Committee would play a key role in the preparations for the third High-level Meeting. This work will be coordinated and facilitated by the joint secretariat. In addition, some funding has been identified for consultant support.

- (i) Time schedule: It is proposed to start drafting the background documentation for the High-level Meeting immediately after the fourth session of the Steering Committee. In addition to using electronic means of communication, the Bureau would meet as often as deemed necessary for discussing and finalizing the draft documents to be prepared by the secretariat with the assistance of consultants. A first meeting of the Bureau is preliminarily scheduled to take place back to back to the fourth session of the Steering Committee, on 12 April. The first drafts could be made available for discussion by the Bureau in autumn 2006 after which the revised versions could be further discussed in December 2006. A preliminary time schedule for the subsequent preparatory meetings should be decided upon at the fourth session of the Committee, depending on the decision that it will take on the date of the High-level Meeting itself.
- (ii) Composition: Other members of the Steering Committee are invited to indicate if they wish to attend the Bureau meetings and to contribute actively to the work to be carried out.
- (iii) Venue: The meetings could take place in Geneva or be hosted by the participating countries. The delegates concerned are invited to come forward with suggestions for meeting venues.

(iv) Modalities: The delegations may wish to address any other issue relating to the modalities of the preparatory work.

(b) Speakers at the High-level Meeting

The delegations are invited to present preliminary proposals for chairs of the sessions, participants in the Ministerial panel discussions and possible facilitators for the discussions.
