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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Twenty-eighth session

Geneva, 1–3 November 2023

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-eighth session

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on
Wednesday, 1 November 2023*

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. Outcomes of the seventieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe.
5. Follow-up to the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and preparation of the mid-term review of the Conference's main outcomes.
6. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting.
7. Environmental performance reviews.
8. Cross-sectoral activities.
9. Regional advisory services and collaboration activities.
10. Presentation and exchange of views on the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme.
11. Annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2024 and outline of key components of the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2025.

* 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/1002228/>). 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 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe website at <https://unece.org/practical-information-delegates>).

12. Criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events.
13. Calendar of meetings.
14. Election of officers.
15. Other business.
16. List of decisions.
17. 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-eighth session. The Committee will then be invited to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document (ECE/CEP/2023/1). The provisional time schedule is presented in information paper No. 1.¹

2. Outcomes of the work of the Bureau

2. At its special session (Nicosia, 3–4 October 2022), the Committee mandated its Bureau to follow up on the Committee's decisions, including by preparing the documents and reports necessary for the Committee's work at its next special session.²

3. During the intersessional period, the Bureau worked by means of electronic consultations, including an online meeting on 8 March 2023, and met in Geneva, on 8 June 2023.

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/2023/3.

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 Commission for Europe Region (Geneva (hybrid), 29–30 March 2023), submitted as the contribution of the ECE region to the high-level political forum on sustainable development 2023 (New York, 10–19 July 2023).

6. The Committee will be briefed on recent developments and planned activities under the multilateral environmental agreements serviced by the Environment subprogramme. The Committee may wish to consider, as appropriate, the information provided.

4. Outcomes of the seventieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe

7. The Committee will be briefed on the outcomes of the seventieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva, 18–19 April 2023).

¹ 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/info/Environmental-Policy/Committee-on-Environmental-Policy/events/379785>).

² See ECE/CEP/S/2022/6 (advance version), para. 38 (b).

5. Follow-up to the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and preparation of the mid-term review of the Conference's main outcomes

8. During and after the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Nicosia, 5–7 October 2022) the secretariat received oral and written feedback from several delegations. The secretariat also conducted a brief survey to collect feedback from the participants on the preparation, organization and running of the Nicosia Conference. The results of the evaluation survey, with the lessons learned, are summarized in information paper No. 2.

9. The Nicosia Conference resulted in a number of outcomes related to its two main themes: greening the economy in the pan-European region: working towards sustainable infrastructure; and applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism. The Conference outcomes are included in the Ministerial Declaration (ECE/NICOSIA.CONF/2022/2/Add.1), the Co-Chair's Summary of the Conference (ECE/NICOSIA.CONF/2022/2/Add.3) and the Report of the Conference (ECE/NICOSIA.CONF/2022/2). The results of the segment on education for sustainable development are reflected in the Nicosia Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development and in the Co-Chairs' Summary of the Segment on Education for Sustainable development (ECE/NICOSIA.CONF/2022/2/Add.2 and Add.4, respectively).

10. The Committee will be invited to discuss possible ways to fulfil the Nicosia mandate on the regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructures, namely, as stated in the Ministerial Declaration:

We will explore the way forward for the pan-European region, including through innovation, nature-based solutions and engagement with the private sector. The future regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure should provide the basis for common goals, targets and criteria for policymaking, financing, performance monitoring and replicability of practices that best suit domestic and transboundary needs.³

11. The intention expressed in the quote above has been reflected in the revised strategy of the Environment subprogramme in the draft proposed programme budget of ECE for 2024.

12. Member States and organizations that have made commitments under the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy may wish to brief the Committee on progress in their implementation during Batumi Initiative on Green Economy pre-coffee chats.

13. In their Declaration, ministers invited the Committee on Environmental Policy to convene a mid-term review in 2025 to assess progress in the implementation of the main outcomes of the Nicosia Conference.⁴ The mid-term review could be organized in a similar manner to the 2019 mid-term review⁵ of the Batumi Conference main outcomes (see ECE/CEP/2017/16). The Committee may wish to consider asking the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, to prepare a document proposing the scope, format and modalities for organizing the mid-term review, which could be discussed by the Committee at its twenty-ninth session (Geneva, 6–8 November 2024).

6. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

14. At its special session in October 2022, the Committee took note of the proposal made to convert the Joint Task Force into a standing body and decided to have an in-depth discussion based on detailed information provided by the secretariat at the next regular session of the Committee in November 2023.⁶

³ ECE/NICOSIA.CONF/2022/2/Add.1, para. 9.

⁴ Ibid., para. 23.

⁵ Initially planned for 2018, but later rescheduled for 2019.

⁶ ECE/CEP/S/2022/6 (advance version), para. 31 (b).

15. The Committee also decided to extend the mandates and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators until end-2023 to allow the Working Group and the Joint Task Force to present new draft mandates and terms of reference after the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference to the Committee and, in the case of the Joint Task Force, the Conference of European Statisticians.⁷

16. The Committee will be informed of the outcomes of the twenty-fifth session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva (hybrid), 2–3 May 2023). Furthermore, it will be informed of the decisions taken by the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators at its nineteenth session (Geneva, 3–4 November 2022) and its twentieth session (Geneva, 16–17 October 2023).

7. Environmental performance reviews

17. At its special session in October 2022, the Committee agreed to postpone the adoption of the recommendations of the Third Environmental Performance Review of Kyrgyzstan to its next session, while taking note of the commitment of Kyrgyzstan to provide to the ECE secretariat comments to the draft recommendations of the Environmental Performance Review, underpinned by complete and accurate information, at the latest by the end of 2022.⁸

18. The Committee also invited the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews to prepare additional guidance on the conduct of the fourth cycle of environmental performance reviews for the consideration of the Committee on Environmental Policy at its twenty-eighth session in November 2023.⁹

19. At its current session, the Committee will conduct peer reviews of the environmental performance of Kyrgyzstan and Mauritania. The Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews will finalize the recommendations for the two reviews at a meeting to be held in Geneva from 9 to 10 October 2023. The Committee will consider the recommendations presented in information papers Nos. 3 and 4, with a view to their prospective adoption.

20. The Committee will be also invited to consider the documents Guidance on the conduct of the fourth cycle of environmental performance reviews (ECE/CEP/2023/6) and Options for the conduct of the fourth cycle of environmental performance reviews (ECE/CEP/2023/7). Results of the survey on the conduct of the fourth cycle of the environmental performance reviews are presented in information paper No. 8.

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

8. Cross-sectoral activities

22. 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 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Environment subprogramme (ECE/CEP/2023/4).

9. Regional advisory services and collaboration activities

23. The Regional Advisor will brief the Committee on regional advisory services in environment and on cooperation with other international organizations, including United Nations resident coordinators and United Nations country teams.

⁷ Ibid., para. 31 (a).

⁸ ECE/CEP/S/2022/6 (advance version), para. 29 (c).

⁹ Ibid., para. 29 (j)

10. Presentation and exchange of views on the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

24. At its special session in May 2022, the Committee welcomed the information provided by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the outcomes of the resumed meeting of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (Nairobi (hybrid), 28 February–2 March 2022) and invited the UNEP Europe Office to continue to inform the Committee of relevant developments under the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP.¹⁰

25. The Committee will be invited to consider information provided by UNEP and exchange views on the preparation for the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (Nairobi, 26 February–1 March 2024).

11. Annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2024 and outline of key components of the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2025

26. In line with the “Sequential review of the proposed programmes of work of ECE subprogrammes”,¹¹ approved by the Executive Committee at its 115th meeting (Geneva, 5 March 2021),¹² the Committee will be invited to adopt the draft programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2024 (ECE/CEP/2023/5) and recommend that it be approved by the Executive Committee. The programme of work is based on the ECE proposed programme budget for 2024 (A/78/6 (Sect. 20)) and follows the annual budget format approved by General Assembly resolution 77/267 on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: review of changes to the budgetary cycle, of 30 December 2022.¹³

27. Based on the sequential review procedure, the Committee will also be invited to consider the “Outline of key components of the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2025” (information paper No. 5) 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~~plan~~ of the Environment subprogramme for 2025.

12. Criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events

28. At its twenty-seventh session (Geneva (hybrid), 3–5 November 2021), the Committee approved the revised criteria for providing financial support for participation in meetings and events, as presented in information paper No. 9, and requested the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to periodically verify the availability of data for 2021 and, if available for all countries with economies in transition, to prepare revised criteria for financial support for subsequent approval by the Committee.¹⁴ 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.

¹⁰ ECE/CEP/2022/2, para. 55 (a)–(b).

¹¹ Informal document No. 2021/8, available at <https://unece.org/115th-excom-meeting-5-march-2021>.

¹² See Chair’s conclusions (EXCOM/CONCLU/115), para. 39. Available at <https://unece.org/116th-excom-meeting-17-may-2021>.

¹³ A/RES/77/267.

¹⁴ ECE/CEP/2021/2, para. 63.

13. Calendar of meetings

29. At its twenty-seventh session, the Committee approved the proposed schedule of Committee and Bureau meetings until 2024.¹⁵ The Committee will be invited to review its schedule of meetings for 2024–2026 (information paper No. 6).

14. Election of officers

30. 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. 7).

15. Other business

31. 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.

16. List of decisions

32. 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.

17. Closure of the meeting

33. 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.

¹⁵ Ibid., para. 72 (a).