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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Conference of European Statisticians

Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators

Twentieth session

Geneva, 16 and 17 October 2023

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twentieth session

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 9.30 a.m. on
Monday, 16 October 2023

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs.
3. Adoption of the report of the nineteenth session.
4. Implementing the mandate and terms of reference.
5. Ongoing developments with relevance for the work of the Joint Task Force.
6. Review of the Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators.
7. Ongoing and planned capacity development activities.
8. Data needs, statistics and indicators to manage environment-related human health issues.
9. Other business.
10. Closure of the meeting.

II. Annotations

According to its terms of reference (ECE/CEP/2017/12, annex), the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators assists the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in their efforts to:

- (a) Apply the Shared Environmental Information System principles and methodologies for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) core environmental indicators and data production in line with international statistical standards;



- (b) Analyse and communicate environmental data;
- (c) Develop capacity to implement the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting;
- (d) Develop capacity for the compilation and integration of environmental data in support of measuring progress in the context of sustainable development and green economy initiatives.¹

The Joint Task Force also assists the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in evaluating the application of internationally accepted methodologies and statistical standards in data production and provides a forum for sharing experience on the communication of environmental information to users.² The Joint Task Force is open to environmental experts and statisticians from all ECE member States.

The work of the Joint Task Force is supported by the European Environment Agency, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Representatives of other international organizations dealing with environmental statistics are welcome to participate in the meetings of the Joint Task Force.

The twentieth session of the Joint Task Force is expected to be held on 16–17 October 2023 as a two-day meeting. Participation by eligible delegates is supported financially by Austria, Portugal, Switzerland and the European Union.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Chair will invite the Joint Task Force to adopt the agenda for its twentieth session as set out in the present document.³

2. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs

At its eighteenth session (Geneva, 18–19 October 2021), the Joint Task Force elected for a period of two years Ms. Ševala Korajčević (Bosnia and Herzegovina) as its Chair and Ms. Marina Klevakina (Russian Federation) and Mr. Oleg Prokopenko (Ukraine) as its Vice-Chairs.⁴

Its terms of reference specify that: “The Joint Task Force shall elect its Chair and Vice-Chair for a term of two years, and these officers shall be eligible for re-election for one additional term.”⁵ Members of the Joint Task Force will need to elect a new chair and vice-chairs or re-elect the current chair and vice-chairs at the twentieth session. Members are invited to start consultations on possible candidates prior to the session.

3. Adoption of the report of the nineteenth session

The secretariat will summarize the outcomes of the nineteenth session of the Joint Task Force (Geneva, 2–3 November 2022) as contained in the corresponding report (ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2022/2) and invite the Joint Task Force to adopt the report. The secretariat will inform the Joint Task Force of the status of implementation of the decisions and recommendations made at the nineteenth session.

¹ ECE/CEP/2017/12, annex, paras. 2–3.

² Ibid., para. 3 (a) and (d).

³ Documentation for the meeting and other relevant information will be posted on the meeting web page: <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/twentieth-session-joint-task-force-environmental-statistics-and-0>.

⁴ ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2021/2, para. 10.

⁵ ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2021/3, annex, para. 13.

4. Implementing the mandate and terms of reference

At its one hundred and twenty-sixth session (Geneva, 13 January 2023), the Executive Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe extended the mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators until 31 December 2023.⁶

The Joint Task Force supported its conversion into a standing body with a broadened mandate, scope and geographical coverage, named the Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, at its nineteenth session and approved the revised version of the mandate and terms of reference through a 14-day silence procedure. The Joint Task Force also requested the secretariat to support the new body in preparing a workplan for the next five years, taking into account the outcomes of the discussion at the meeting, and in assessing resource requirements and to inform the Committee on Environmental Policy and the Conference of European Statisticians.⁷

In June 2023, the Conference of European Statisticians endorsed the mandate and terms of reference for a Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators as a standing body under the Conference of European Statisticians and the Committee on Environmental Policy pending approval also by the Committee.

The secretariat will provide an overview of the proposed workplan (outline of activities) of the proposed Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators for the period 2024–2028 in order to help address challenges related to environmental statistics and indicators, including for emerging policy themes.

The Joint Task Force will be invited to discuss and endorse the outline of activities.

5. Ongoing developments with relevance for the work of the Joint Task Force

At its nineteenth session, the Joint Task Force took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the outcomes of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Nicosia, 5–7 October 2022) and decided to integrate those outcomes, as appropriate, into its work. The Joint Task Force also invited the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment to regularly inform the Joint Task Force on relevant outcomes of its sessions and activities and requested international and regional organizations and its members to provide it with regular updates on recent developments in the implementation of their activities.⁸

The secretariat will provide an overview of activities implemented in support of the outcomes of the Nicosia Conference, the main outcomes of the twenty-fifth session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva (hybrid), 2–3 May 2023), the eighth joint OECD/ECE seminar on the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (Geneva, 13–15 March 2023), the seventh expert meeting on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (Geneva, 12–13 April 2023), the Third Global Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics (Bangkok, 5–9 June 2023), the related outcomes of the seventy-first plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Geneva, 22–23 June 2023) and the Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-related Statistics (Geneva, 29–30 September 2023).

Other international and regional organizations, including the European Environment Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the World Health Organization, OECD and the United Nations Statistics Division, will be invited to give an update on their activities related to the production and sharing of environmental statistics and indicators. The Joint Task Force will discuss and identify possible areas for

⁶ ECE/EX/2023/L.2, para. 7 (c).

⁷ ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2022/2, para. 21 (a)–(b) and (d).

⁸ ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2022/2, paras. 23 and 27.

which collaboration could be strengthened (e.g., measuring circular economy, sustainable infrastructure, chemicals and waste and/or the BioTrade Initiative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development).

The secretariat will also inform the meeting about activities of other related expert groups, such as the Task Force on Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters and the Task Force on Measuring Circular Economy.

ECE member States will then be invited to share the latest developments and experience related to the production and use of environmental statistics and indicators with the members of the Joint Task Force, including on air- and circular economy-related statistics and indicators.

6. Review of the Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators

At the sixteenth session of the Joint Task Force (Geneva, 28–29 October 2019), the secretariat recalled that the Joint Task Force had requested the secretariat to revise the ECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators⁹ to better inform global policies, link them with statistical frameworks, and increase the user-friendliness of the metadata.¹⁰

At the nineteenth session, the Joint Task Force requested the secretariat to make final updates to the document, decided on a 21-day silence procedure for final approval of the revised guidelines and that metadata would be completed gradually in the English and Russian languages for all approved indicators and provided to its members under a silence procedure.

Furthermore, the Joint Task Force requested the secretariat to present an updated version of the revised Guidelines as an official document, as well as completed metadata sheets, at its next session and to prepare the revised Guidelines as an official publication in English, French and Russian in electronic and paper editions.¹¹

At the current session, the secretariat will present the latest developments related to the revised Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators (ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2023/4) and the official publication of the 2023 edition. The Joint Task Force will be invited to discuss the next steps.

7. Ongoing and planned capacity development activities.

The secretariat, UNEP and other international and regional organizations, including the European Environment Agency and OECD, will report on ongoing and planned capacity-development activities related to environmental statistics and indicators, the Shared Environmental Information System and Sustainable Development Goal indicators. The secretariat and Environment Agency Austria will provide an update on a European Union-funded project entitled “EU4 Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data” and other capacity-development activities, as appropriate.

Members of the Joint Task Force will be invited to present national capacity-development activities and identify concrete capacity-development needs.

⁹ See www.unece.org/env/indicators.html.

¹⁰ ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2019/2, para. 53.

¹¹ ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2022/2, para. 38 (c)–(g).

8. Data needs, statistics and indicators to manage environment-related human health issues

At its nineteenth session, the Joint Task Force reiterated its invitation to its members, international organizations and partners to provide it with regular updates on recent developments related to environment and health statistics, indicators and data.¹²

International and regional organizations and country representatives will be invited to share their experience in producing environment- and health-related data and indicators and their use for policymaking.

9. Other business

The Joint Task Force will be invited to discuss any other business that might be brought to its attention. Members of the Joint Task Force wishing to propose items are invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

10. Closure of the meeting

The Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, will sum up the conclusions of the Joint Task Force, present the decisions and close the meeting. The report of the meeting will be finalized by the secretariat after the meeting and will be posted on the meeting web page in due course.

III. Organization of work

Detailed information on the organization of work will be released closer to the meeting date and will be posted on the meeting web page.

¹² ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2022/2 para. 48 (b).