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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials

“Environment for Europe”

**REPORT OF THE SIXTH SESSION**

Introduction

1. The sixth session of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials was held from 3 to 4 April 2003, in Geneva.
2. The meeting was attended by delegates from Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and United States of America.
3. Representatives of the Commission of the European Communities (EU) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) also attended, as did representatives from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization’s Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO) and the World Bank.
4. The following additional intergovernmental organizations were represented: the Council of Europe, the EAP Task Force Secretariat of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

(MCPFE), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS), and the Project Preparation Committee (PPC).

5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Eco-Accord, European Eco-Forum and European Environmental Bureau.

6. Also represented were the Regional Environmental Centre for the Russian Federation, the Regional Environmental Centre for the Republic of Moldova and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC).

## **I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

7. The meeting was opened by the Chair, Mr. Vasyl Shevchuk, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Ukraine, who stressed the importance of the Kiev Conference not only for the region, but also for the world. The Working Group adopted its agenda (CEP/AC.11/2003/3).

## **II. EAST-WEST ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: EECCA ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY**

8. The representative of Georgia informed the Working Group of the outcome of the meeting of the Steering Group for the elaboration of the environment strategy for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), which had taken place in Kiev (Ukraine) on 25-26 March 2003. Representatives from ten EECCA countries and a number of delegates from other countries in the UNECE region as well as from international organizations had participated in the meeting. On the basis of comments provided at that meeting, a revised draft of the strategy was prepared (CEP/AC.11/2003/26/Rev.1)<sup>1/</sup> and submitted to the Working Group

9. In order to resolve the few outstanding issues in the paper, the Chair established a parallel drafting group on 3 April under the leadership of the representative of Georgia. The drafting group further revised the paper and submitted an amended version to the Working Group on 4 April (CEP/AC.11/2003/26/Rev.3). The Working Group welcomed the paper and agreed that it should be edited and forwarded to the Kiev Conference. Delegates were invited to provide the Chair of the drafting group with written comments for the final editing. It was also agreed that the paper would be given the following title: "Environmental Partnerships in the UNECE region: Environment Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Strategic Framework"

10. The Working Group confirmed that the strategy was an important initiative and should be one of the most important items on the agenda of the Kiev Conference. It was agreed that procedural issues related to the implementation of the strategy could be resolved during negotiation of the Ministerial Declaration.

### **III. ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

11. The representative from the Energy Charter secretariat presented a draft policy statement on energy efficiency (CEP/AC.11/2003/24)<sup>1/</sup> as a possible input to the Ministerial Declaration and as a category I document. He also informed the Working Group that the delegation of Greece, speaking on behalf of the EU, had decided to withdraw the document on energy efficiency circulated at the previous session of the Working Group and to support the statement prepared by the Energy Charter secretariat.

12. At the request of the Chair, a drafting group, led by the representative of Norway, met in parallel to the plenary to revise the document as well as to consider the paragraphs in the draft ministerial declaration (paras. 41 to 44) of relevance to energy. On 4 April, the Chair of the energy drafting group reported to the delegates that consensus had been reached on most but not all points. The Chair of the Working Group invited delegates to provide their written comments to the Energy Charter secretariat, which would finalize the paper and submit it to the Kiev Conference.

### **IV. FUTURE OF THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” PROCESS**

13. The Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy, who had served as Chair of the drafting group on the future of the “Environment for Europe” process, noted that the paper (CEP/AC.11/2003/7/Rev.3) had been revised at the request of the Working Group at its fifth session and on the basis of the comments provided by the member States and observers. He further noted that Part One of the paper had been agreed and that the options discussed in Part Two would continue to be considered by the Working Group in the context of the draft ministerial declaration. He therefore proposed that the paper be submitted in its current form as a basis for discussion under the relevant item on the agenda of the Kiev Conference.

14. The Working Group agreed that the paper on the future of the “Environment for Europe” process could be forwarded to the Kiev Conference as a basis for discussion, with indication that agreement had not yet been reached on Part Two.

### **V. MINISTERIAL DECLARATION**

15. The Chair introduced the draft ministerial declaration (CEP/AC.11/2003/6/Rev.2) prepared on the basis of the discussions of the drafting group on 4 December 2002 and on 7 February 2003 and on the comments provided by delegates. The Working Group welcomed the paper and emphasized that significant progress had been made.

16. The Working Group commenced its first reading of the draft ministerial declaration and worked on paragraphs 1 to 32 and on paragraphs 41 to 44, dealing with energy. At the request of the Chair, it was agreed that an open-ended drafting group would be convened in late April or early May to complete the first reading of the draft declaration. The Working Group would continue with the second reading at its seventh session, which was scheduled to take place on 17 and 19 May, in Kiev.

## VI. UPDATE ON UNECE MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

### A. The UNECE protocols

17. The secretariat informed the Working Group of the status of the preparations for the following legal instruments:

- The draft protocol on strategic environmental assessment (SEA) to the Espoo Convention;
- The draft protocol on pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTR) to the Aarhus Convention; and
- The draft protocol on civil liability and compensation for damage caused by the transboundary effects of industrial accidents on transboundary waters within the scope of both the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

18. Negotiations on all three protocols had been successfully concluded. Both the texts of the protocols and the ministerial resolutions had been finalized and were available on the UNECE web site. In addition, all three protocols had been translated into Russian and French.

19. The secretariat confirmed that during the Kiev Conference extraordinary sessions of the Parties for each of the Conventions would be organized. The secretariat further emphasized the necessity for delegations to ensure that their representatives at the Kiev Conference obtain the appropriate powers for signing the Convention.

20. The Chair and other members of the Working Group welcomed the progress in the work and stressed the importance of these legal instruments.

### B. The Carpathian Convention

21. The representatives of UNEP introduced a note on the status of the preparatory process for the Carpathian convention and reported on the outcome of the fifth meeting on the Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians held on 20-21 March 2003 (Bolzano, Italy). He informed the Working Group that the text of the convention had been finalized and was ready for adoption, and that a draft resolution for inclusion into the Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries had also been prepared and agreed upon by the representatives of the Carpathian countries participating in the meeting at Bolzano. Final consultations on a few outstanding matters were being conducted at the bilateral level.

22. The representative of UNEP confirmed that the Carpathian convention would be open for signature during the Kiev Conference.

23. Delegates welcomed the finalization of the negotiations on the Carpathian convention and note that this initiative was an important and successful example of subregional cooperation. UNEP expressed its appreciation for the financial support provided by Italy, Austria and the Netherlands in this process.

## VII. ORGANIZATION OF WORK AT THE KIEV CONFERENCE

24. The Chair introduced a document on the organization of work for the Kiev Conference (CEP/AC.11/2003/4/Rev.3)<sup>1/</sup>, prepared by the Kiev Secretariat on the basis of comments made during the fifth session of the Working Group. The revised draft responded, in particular, to the main concern of the delegations that more time should be provided to Ministers to speak during the Conference.
25. The Chair thanked the Kiev Secretariat for its work and indicated that the organization of work provided a good basis for discussion and consideration of all important items during the Conference.
26. The EAP Task Force, recalling the recommendation of the Working Group at its fifth session to consider issues related to environmental financing during the Kiev Conference, submitted a draft category II paper on environmental financing in economies in transition. Eco-Forum distributed a revised programme for the joint session between Ministers and environmental NGOs.
27. The delegations made no other additional comments on the organization of work.

## VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

### A. Organizational issues for the Ministerial Conference

28. The Chair informed the Working Group that the new venue for the Conference has good facilities for the efficient organization of the event. He also confirmed that the host country would take all necessary measures to ensure both constructive work during the sessions and a pleasant stay in Kiev.
29. The Chair also introduced a document on side events prepared by the Kiev Secretariat and informed delegations that the Government of Ukraine had decided to accommodate all registered side events (CEP/AC.11/2003/10)<sup>1/</sup>.
30. In order to provide delegations with information on additional organizational issues, the Kiev Secretariat made available at the meeting a calendar of the official preparatory meetings and the NGO parallel conference (CEP/AC.11/2003/4/Add.1)<sup>1/</sup>. It also distributed an informational package containing detailed contact information on companies responsible for logistics.

### B. Speakers

31. At the request of the Chair, the secretariat advised participants that it was opening a speakers' list for the Kiev Conference. Delegations were requested to indicate to the secretariat who the head of their delegation would be and on which issues he or she might wish to speak during the Conference. The deadline for this information was 15 April 2003.

### C. Financial support of participants

32. The secretariat informed delegations that it would be able to provide financial support to two representatives per eligible country through the UNECE Trust Fund. To this end, members were asked to send their requests for financial assistance by 21 April 2003. The secretariat also reported, on behalf of the Kiev Secretariat, that Ukraine would support the travel and accommodation of the head of delegation of each country eligible under the rules established by the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy.

### D. Other information

33. At the request of the Working Group at its fifth session, the secretariat had prepared an information note on the initiative on education for sustainable development (WGSO-6/INF on ESD). This note provided an update on the consultations between UNECE and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) concerning the possible lead regional role for education for sustainable development following the Kiev Conference. Specifically, the note stated that while UNESCO was the lead agency and coordinator with regard to education for sustainable development at the global level, it was not in a position to take the lead at the regional level. UNESCO expressed its appreciation for the work on education for sustainable development undertaken within the "Environment for Europe" framework and its hope to be a partner with UNECE and to participate in the process post-Kiev. However, due to a lack of time, this issue was not discussed during the sixth session.

34. The secretariat also made available the revised list of documents for the Kiev Conference (CEP/AC.11/2003/8/Rev.3)<sup>1/</sup>.

### Note

<sup>1/</sup> Due to its late submission this was not formally processed.