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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Ad Hoc Working Group on Environmental Monitoring
(Fourth session, 4-5 September 2003)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FOURTH SESSION

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
starting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 4 September

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Adoption of the report of the third session.
3. Follow-up to the Kiev Ministerial Conference.
4. Preparations for the fourth assessment report on the state of the environment.
5. Strengthening and harmonizing national monitoring activities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.
6. Progress in specific activities:
 - (a) Environmental networking and information systems;
 - (b) Air pollution monitoring and emission inventories;
 - (c) Assessing the monitoring of inland surface waters;
 - (d) Waste classifications and inventories;
 - (e) Environmental indicators and reporting;
 - (f) Remote sensing for environmental assessments.
7. Environmental monitoring and assessment activities in other international forums.
8. Other business.

PRELIMINARY TIME SCHEDULE

Thursday, 4 September 2003

10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Items 1 - 4

3 p.m. – 6 p.m. Items 5 and 6 (a)

Friday, 5 September 2003

10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Items 6 (b) – (d)

3 p.m. – 6 p.m. Items 6 (e), 7 and 8

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

The Working Group is open to all member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Other Member States of the United Nations, specialized agencies of the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may also participate in a consultative capacity, according to the terms of reference of UNECE (E/ECE/778/Rev.3, paras. 11, 12 and 13). The registration procedure is described in the annex. In addition to the regular circulation, meeting documentation will be uploaded on the Working Group's web site: <http://www.unece.org/env/europe/wg1.html>.

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

The Working Group is invited to adopt its agenda.

Item 2: Adoption of the report of the third session

The Working Group is invited to adopt the report as contained in document CEP/AC.10/2002/15.

Item 3: Follow-up to the Kiev Ministerial Conference

The Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" held in Kiev, Ukraine, from 21 to 23 May 2003, adopted a declaration (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1) that contains a number of provisions relating to environmental monitoring and assessment. These provisions will be summarized in document CEP/AC.10/2003/3.

The Environment Ministers endorsed the Recommendations on Strengthening National Environmental Monitoring and Information Systems (ECE/CEP/109), and the Guidelines for the Preparation of Governmental Reports on the State-of-the-Environment in these countries (ECE/CEP/113). They supported the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and stressed the need to further develop the cooperation framework provided by it.

Pursuant to specific provisions of the Kiev Declaration, the Working Group is expected to discuss, inter alia, practical ways and means to:

- (a) Improve data collection and enhance the international comparability of environmental information in priority areas such as air emissions, urban air quality, transboundary inland and groundwater pollution, marine pollution, chemicals, hazardous waste, waste management, human health and biodiversity;
- (b) Promote the use of indicator-based mechanisms for periodic environmental assessments and evaluation of the effectiveness of environmental policies and decision-making;
- (c) Improve the coordination and optimization of environmental assessments, including outlooks, and reporting;
- (d) Strengthen further environmental information and observation capacity in the 12 countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;

(e) Raise donor support for the Working Group and the preparation of the fourth assessment report.

The Working Group is invited to revise its terms of reference taking into account a proposal by the secretariat (CEP/AC.10/2003/4), for adoption by the Committee on Environmental Policy.

Item 4: Preparations for the fourth assessment report on the state of the environment

Representatives of the European Environment Agency (EEA) will be invited to inform the Working Group about meetings organized in various UNECE countries to promote the third assessment report on the state of the environment (Kiev Assessment) prepared by EEA with the support of the Working Group.

The Environment Ministers in Kiev welcomed the Kiev Assessment and called on EEA to prepare the fourth assessment report for their next "Environment for Europe" conference, building on new partnerships, especially with UNECE and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

A brainstorm will be organized jointly by UNECE and EEA on 3 September 2003 in Geneva with the participation of selected experts in their personal capacity to exchange views on specific features of the post-Kiev assessment report to be finalized by the end of 2006 or 2007, depending on the precise dates of the next Ministerial Conference. The experts would address issues such as: (a) assessing country progress in achieving environmental targets by indicators; (b) using results of country environmental performance reviews conducted by UNECE and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); (c) assessing the effectiveness of donor environmental support; (d) selecting two to three areas (e.g. local environmental health, chemicals or waste management) for in-depth analysis; (e) possible use of remote sensing for hot-spot evaluations in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia; and (f) coordination with other international organizations in assessment reporting (UNEP, World Health Organization, etc).

The Working Group will be informed about the outcome of the brainstorm. Participants may wish to comment on preliminary preparations for the fourth assessment report.

Item 5: Strengthening environmental information and observation capacity in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

The Working Group will discuss progress made in the implementation of the Tacis project on strengthening environmental information and observation capacity in the 12 countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. EEA will present the summary conclusions of the intermediate report submitted by EEA to the European Commission on overall progress with the project. The presentation will include a perspective on future Tacis funding from 2004 onwards to ensure continuation of funding with minimum discontinuity to the work already begun.

The Working Group is invited to provide comments.

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Item 6: Progress in specific activities

A secretariat note on progress made in individual activities under the work plan will be made available (CEP/AC.10/2003/5). The Working Group is expected to provide comments and guidance regarding activities, as follows:

(a) Environmental networking and information systems

The Scientific and Production Association 'Typhoon' of the Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environment Monitoring, the lead organization of the Task Force on Tools and Guidelines, will inform the Working Group about the outcome of the Workshop on Environmental Networking and Information Systems held in Obninsk, Russian Federation, on 2-3 June 2003. Representatives of countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and the secretariat will report on progress made since at the country level and in UNECE, respectively.

(b) Air pollution monitoring and emission inventories

The delegation of Kazakhstan and the secretariat will inform the Working Group about the outcome of two national workshops on emission inventories and modelling held in Almaty (Kazakhstan) on 26-28 May 2003, and the preparations for two subsequent international workshops to be held in the same city on 8-10 October 2003 with the aim of preparing recommendations for the rationalization and of strengthening air pollution monitoring in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and of strengthening their capacity to comply with their data collection and reporting obligations under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution.

(c) Assessing the monitoring of inland surface waters

Representatives of the European Topic Centre on Water and EEA will be invited to inform the Working Group about progress in the project on the in-depth study of the situation with inland surface water monitoring in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

(d) Waste classifications and inventories

The delegation of Georgia and the secretariat will report on the outcome of the first workshop held in Tbilisi on 7-8 July 2003 to assess the current situation in the Caucasian States with data collection and reporting on waste, and the use of indicators. They will also inform the Working Group about the preparations for the second workshop (Tbilisi, 2-3 October 2003) intended to prepare recommendations to countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia for improving national waste classification systems, routine waste data collection and reporting through the use of indicators on waste and material flows that are compatible with those applied in EEA countries.

(e) Environmental indicators and reporting

Representatives of EEA and the secretariat will report on the results of the EEA/UNECE Workshop on Environmental Indicators and Networking held on 24-25 February 2003 in Geneva.

The Working Group will be informed about the outcome of the Workshop on Environmental Indicators for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia held near St Petersburg (Russian Federation) on 27-28 June 2003 and the preparation of a trial indicator-based report on the countries of this subregion.

The Working Group will consider a secretariat review of the current situation with the use of environmental indicators in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The delegation of Armenia will present an extended outline of the state-of-the-environment report that this country is preparing following the UNECE Guidelines for the Preparation of Governmental Reports on the State and Protection of the Environment and with the support from the Tacis project.

The secretariat will present the publication on Environmental Monitoring and Reporting in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (ECE/CEP/118), which is expected to be published by the time of the meeting.

EEA will report on indicator-development process in this organization.

The Working Group may wish to discuss, in particular, approaches to the development, by a joint effort of all international bodies concerned, of a concise and well-defined framework for environmental indicators to improve comparability and consistency, and to facilitate international assessments.

(e) Remote sensing for environmental assessments

The European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC), lead organization of the Task Force on Remote Sensing, will inform the Working Group on the outcome of the Workshop on Remote Sensing Application for Environmental Monitoring, held on 19-20 May 2003 at the JRC headquarters in Ispra (Italy). The delegation of Azerbaijan and the secretariat will report on the preparations for the second follow-up workshop to be held on 25-26 September 2003 in Baku with the aim of preparing a pilot project proposal for environmental assessments of the Eurasian region using a key set of indicators derived from remote sensing data.

Item 7: Environmental monitoring and assessment activities in other international forums

Following the decision taken by the Working Group at its third session, relevant international organizations and institutions will be invited to update the information in the inventory of major international environmental databases (CEP/AC.10/2002/19 and Add.1).

Participating international organizations and institutions may wish to provide information on their ongoing or planned activities on environmental monitoring and assessment in the UNECE region.

Item 8: Other business

At the time of writing, the secretariat had no points to propose under this item.

Annex

REGISTRATION

According to the accreditation procedures, all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations are requested to fill in a registration form in English. It can be downloaded from the Web <http://www.unece.org/stats/geneva.html> .

The completed registration form should be sent to Ms. E. Mary, UNECE Environment and Human Settlements Division (e-mail: elisabeth.mary@unece.org, fax: +41 22 917 06 30) as soon as possible, but no later than one week before the beginning of the session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring.

Registered participants will have to pick up their identification badges for entry in the Palais des Nations before the meeting at the Security and Safety Section's Pass and Identification Unit. This is located at the Villa des Feuillantines, 13 Avenue de la Paix (the map can be consulted on the above-mentioned web site). The Unit is open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.