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Economic Commission for Europe**Committee on Environmental Policy****Twenty-sixth session**

Geneva, 9–11 November 2020

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-sixth session****To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on
Monday, 9 November 2020*****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. The Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference:
 - (a) Dates for the Conference
 - (b) Draft agenda of the Conference;
 - (c) Background thematic documents;
 - (d) Organizational issues;
 - (e) Resource requirements;
 - (f) Host country preparations.
5. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting.
6. Environmental performance reviews.
7. Cross-sectoral activities.

* 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/31305/>). The registration period is 25 September – 6 November 2020. On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva's Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see map and other practical information available from the ECE website at www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 2682.



8. Criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events.
9. Annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2021.
10. Presentation and exchange of views on the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme.
11. Calendar of meetings.
12. Election of officers.
13. Impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic, including on the Environment for Europe process
14. Other business.
15. List of decisions.
16. 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-sixth session. The Committee will then be invited to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document (ECE/CEP/2020/1). The provisional time schedule is presented in information paper No. 1.¹

2. Outcomes of the work of the Bureau

2. At its twenty-fifth session (Geneva, 13–15 November 2019), the Committee mandated its Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to proceed with the necessary organization of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including preparing, for the next session of the Committee, the following: the first drafts of the two background thematic documents; a first draft of the provisional annotated agenda for the Conference; other documents that might be recommended by the Bureau. The Bureau was also mandated to carry out a number of activities, including to: (a) prepare the Committee's twenty-sixth session; (b) prepare revised criteria for providing financial support for participation in meetings and events; and (c) follow up on the progress made on the next pan-European environmental assessment (ECE/CEP/2019/15, paras. 21 (c), 50 and 69).

3. During the intersessional period, due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Bureau worked by means of electronic consultations, including online consultations on 15 April and an online meeting on 4 June 2020.

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/2020/3.

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 (virtual meeting, 19 March 2020), submitted as the contribution of the ECE region to the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable

¹ Information and materials for the meeting are available on a dedicated web page on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) website (www.unece.org/index.php?id=54631).

development 2020 (New York, 7–16 July 2020), and the Issue-based Coalition on Environment and Climate Change.

6. The Committee may wish to consider, as appropriate, the information provided.

4. The Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

7. At its twenty-fifth session (Geneva, 13–15 November 2019), the Committee decided to organize the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries, in Nicosia from 3 to 5 November 2021. The Committee also agreed on the following two themes for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference: (a) greening the economy in the pan-European region: working towards sustainable infrastructure; and (b) applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism. The Committee mandated the Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to proceed with the necessary organization of the Conference (ECE/CEP/2019/15, paras. 21 (b) and (c) and 27 (b)).

8. The Committee will be invited to consider a number of issues with a view to advancing the preparatory process.

(a) Dates for the Conference

9. The currently agreed dates for the Conference (3–5 November 2021) overlap with the new dates for the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (new dates: 1–12 November 2021). The Bureau at its virtual meeting on 4 June 2020 agreed to recommend that the Committee consider rescheduling the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference to take place in 2022 (preferably late spring – beginning of summer 2022). The Bureau also agreed that, when doing so, the host country ought to be consulted and its preferences taken into account.

10. The Committee may wish to come back to a discussion on dates for the Conference. At the request of the Bureau, the secretariat prepared a list of global/regional meetings scheduled to take place in 2022 to facilitate the informed discussion by the Committee (information paper No. 8).

(b) Draft agenda of the Conference

11. In accordance with the Reform of the “Environment for Europe” process: reform plan (see ECE/CEP/S/152, annex I), a decision on the agenda of the Conference should be taken at the regular meeting of the Committee approximately 12 months prior to the Conference, and further preparatory work should then commence.

12. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee mandated the Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to prepare a first draft of the provisional annotated agenda for the Nicosia Conference (ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 21 (c) (ii)). The Bureau at its virtual meeting on 4 June 2020 agreed to come back to drafting the agenda of the Conference in due time, pending the discussion and possible decision on the dates of the Conference by the Committee at its twenty-sixth session.

13. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided.

(c) Background thematic documents

14. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee mandated the Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to prepare the first drafts of the two background thematic documents.

15. During its online consultations on 15 April, the Bureau discussed the relevance of the two themes for the Nicosia Conference taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ECE countries and their economies. With regard to the first theme “Greening the economy in the pan-European region: working towards sustainable infrastructure”, the Bureau recommended that it be kept unchanged. With regard to the

second theme “Applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism”, the Bureau recommended that sustainable tourism be kept, but that the focus be changed to make it more relevant to the countries taking into consideration the current situation regarding the pandemic and its heavy impact on the tourism sector.

16. During its online meeting on 4 June, the Bureau discussed the first drafts of outlines of two background thematic documents. The Bureau agreed to: seek further comments/proposals on the first drafts of outlines by the Bureau members and partner organizations; discuss the revised drafts at its next (virtual) meeting in September 2020; agree on the structure; and advise the secretariat on further steps.

17. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided, including the first draft outlines of the two background thematic documents on: greening the economy in the pan-European region: working towards sustainable infrastructure (information paper No. 5); and sustainable tourism (information paper No. 6).

(d) Organizational issues

18. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee considered the document regarding organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2019/19) and recommended reducing the maximum size of delegations for the Conference by 20 per cent (ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 27 (d)). Pending the Committee’s discussion at its twenty-sixth session and possible decision on the dates of the Conference, the Bureau at its virtual meeting on 4 June 2020 agreed to put on hold the preparation of the new document regarding organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2020/8) as it will be based on the dates of the Conference.

19. The Committee on Environmental Policy will be invited to consider the information provided.

(e) Resource requirements

20. The Environment for Europe reform plan stipulates that, for the preparatory process of the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and the Conference itself, the necessary extrabudgetary financial resources will have to continue to be provided to ECE to supplement the United Nations core budget resources. The plan also states that the host country should assume relevant financial commitments (ECE/CEP/S/152, annex I, para. 12 (g) and (h)).

21. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee welcomed information paper No. 19 on estimated resource requirements for preparing the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, and invited interested countries and organizations to make contributions (in cash and in kind) for the preparation of the Conference (ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 30).

22. The Committee will be briefed on the current situation with regard to resource requirements and pledges for the preparation of the Conference. Interested countries and organizations may inform the meeting about envisaged contributions for the preparation of the Conference.

(f) Host country preparations

23. The Committee at its previous session expressed its gratitude to the Government of Cyprus for the proposal to host the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries, in Cyprus (ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 27).

24. The representative of Cyprus will be invited to inform the Committee about the ongoing preparations for the hosting of the Conference.

25. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided.

5. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

26. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee took note of the annual timetable of activities for 2020 of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and invited the Working Group to oversee the preparation of a final review report on the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System in Europe and Central Asia for consideration by the Committee, with a view to its subsequent forwarding to the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference as an information document. The Committee also requested the secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), working in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency, to prepare a limited indicator-based and thematic assessment, subject to the availability of resources (ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 37 (a), (j) and (k) (ii)).

27. The Committee will be informed of the outcomes of the Working Group's twenty-second session (Geneva, 27 October 2020) and invited to consider the draft mandate and terms of reference for the Working Group for the period 2022–2026 (information paper No. 7) and take note of the Working Group's draft annual timetable of activities for 2021 (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2020/3). Furthermore, it will be informed of the outcomes of the seventeenth session of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (Geneva, 26 October 2020).

28. The Committee will also be provided with information on progress in preparing a final review report on the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System and a limited indicator-based and thematic pan-European environmental assessment.

6. Environmental performance reviews

29. At its present session, the Committee will conduct a peer review of the environmental performance of Romania. The Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews will finalize the recommendations for the review at a meeting to be held in Geneva from 20 to 23 October 2020. The Committee will consider the recommendations presented in information paper No. 2, with a view to their prospective adoption.

30. At its twenty-fourth session (Geneva, 29–31 January 2019), the Committee requested the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews to start working, in cooperation with the reviewed countries, on proposals for the fourth cycle of environmental performance reviews and to prepare a paper on that issue for the Committee's twenty-sixth session (ECE/CEP/2019/2, para. 31 (f)).

31. The Committee will be invited to consider a document on the Environmental Performance Review Programme: fourth cycle (ECE/CEP/2020/6).

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

7. Cross-sectoral activities

33. 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 ECE Environment subprogramme (ECE/CEP/2020/4).

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

34. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee approved the revised criteria for providing financial support for participation in meetings and events and requested the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to periodically verify the availability of data for 2018 and, if available, for all countries with economies in transition, to prepare revised criteria for financial support for approval by the Committee at its next session (ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 50). 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.

9. Annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2021

35. In December 2017, at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly (New York, 12 September–24 December 2017), the States Members of the United Nations approved the change from a biennial to an annual budget period on a trial basis from 2020 onwards.² The Committee will be invited to adopt the draft annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2021 (ECE/CEP/2020/5) and recommend that it be approved by the Executive Committee. The draft programme of work for 2021 follows the annual format introduced from 2020 onwards, with enrichments reflecting General Assembly resolution 74/251 on programme planning (A/RES/74/251) adopted on 27 December 2019.

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

36. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee welcomed the information provided by UNEP on the outcomes of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the ongoing preparations for the fifth session, and invited UNEP to continue to inform the Committee of relevant developments under the Assembly (ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 57). The Committee will be invited to consider information provided by UNEP and exchange views on the preparation of the fifth session of the Assembly (Nairobi, 22–26 February 2021).

11. Calendar of meetings

37. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee approved the proposed schedule of Committee and Bureau meetings until 2022 (ECE/CEP/2019/15, para. 60). The Committee will be invited to review its schedule of meetings for 2021–2023 (information paper No. 3).

12. Election of officers

38. 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. 4).

13. Impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic, including on the Environment for Europe process

39. The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis that affects everyone. The pandemic has exposed the fragility of our societies and economies in the face of global shocks. However, at the same time, the pandemic is an opportunity to reset our environmental future. As we recover, we must rethink and rebuild for the better, for people and for the planet.

40. The Committee will be invited to exchange ideas and reflections on how this wave of COVID-19 has affected our societies, and on how the ECE member States anticipate the effects and profound marks that the current pandemic will have on the environment, environmental policy and governance, with a particular focus on ECE Environment subprogramme priorities and instruments, and possible needs to adapt and coordinate their actions.

² See General Assembly resolution 72/266 on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations (A/RES/72/266).

14. Other business

41. 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.

15. List of decisions

42. Every 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.

16. Closure of the meeting

43. 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.
