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Preface

The ECE Committee on Environmental Policy included the Environmental Performance Review of Moldova in its work programme in May 1996. In October of the same year, the preparatory mission for the project was organized, and a team of both national and ECE experts was formed to carry out the review. The Governments of Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and the United Kingdom made national experts available for the task. The Bilthoven Division of the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health contributed its expertise and resources for the preparation of the review of environmental health issues. The travel expenses of experts from countries in transition and from the ECE secretariat were covered by extra-budgetary funds, which had been provided by Austria, Finland, Italy, Netherlands and Norway. The successful conclusion of the project would not have been possible without the generous support from all these sources.

The review team prepared a report on the environmental performance of Moldova before, during and after the review mission in Chisinau in May 1997. The Moldovan partners in discussion with the review team did not spare time or effort in responding to the queries and requests made. The report by the review team, including draft recommendations for the solution of existing problems in national environmental policy and management, was submitted for evaluation by the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy at its annual session in Geneva, on 16 March 1998. A high-level delegation from Moldova attended this session. It was headed by the Director-General of the Department for Environmental Protection and also included representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, and the Ministry of Economics and Reforms. The evaluation by the Committee was based on the in-depth preparation by two reviewing countries, Italy and Latvia. At the end of its evaluation, the Committee agreed on a final set of recommendations, replacing the draft recommendations of the review team for inclusion in this publication.

The discussion by the Committee revealed the considerable efforts that have been made in Moldova in favour of environmental protection, as well as the enormous difficulties for successful environmental policy and management in the light of a particularly complex and thorny transition process. The scarcity of financial means acts as a substantial impediment to the improvement of the environmental situation of the country - also with regard to the development of long-term soil conservation as one major objective of sustainable agricultural development. It also appears that environmental problems do not occupy the place on the political agenda they would merit in the light of the sometimes very difficult environmental problems.

The ECE Committee on Environmental Policy and the ECE review team wish the Moldovan environmental managers success in implementing and following up the policy recommendations that are included in this review.

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The preparatory mission for the project took place on 28-29 October 1996. The review mission was organized from 12 to 21 May 1997, and the peer review was held in Geneva on 16 March 1998. The ECE Committee on Environmental Policy adopted the recommendations set out in this publication.

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