



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2008/1  
05 December 2007

Original: ENGLISH

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
CONVENTION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION,  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND  
ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Working Group of the Parties to the Convention

Ninth meeting  
Geneva, 13–15 February 2008

**ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA  
FOR THE NINTH MEETING**

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
starting at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 13 February 2008<sup>1</sup>

**I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

1. Adoption of the agenda

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<sup>1</sup> New accreditation procedures have been introduced for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to complete the registration form available on the Convention's website ([www.unece.org/env/pp/practical.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/pp/practical.htm)), and to transmit it to the Convention secretariat no later than two weeks before the meeting – namely, by **30 January 2008** – either by fax (+ 41 22 917 0634) or by e-mail ([public.participation@unece.org](mailto:public.participation@unece.org)). On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the Convention's website). In case of difficulty, please contact the Convention secretariat by telephone at + 41 22 917 1502 / 2682.

2. Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers
3. Preparations for the third ordinary meeting of the Parties
4. Pollutant release and transfer registers
5. Genetically modified organisms
  - (a) Draft decision on the interpretation of article 14 of the Convention
  - (b) Workshop on genetically modified organisms
6. Public participation in international forums
7. Access to justice
8. Electronic information tools and the clearing-house mechanism
9. Public participation in strategic decision-making
10. Reporting requirements
11. Compliance mechanism
12. Capacity-building
13. Long-term strategic plan
14. Financial status report
15. Financial arrangements
16. Any other business

## **II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

### **Item 1: Adoption of the agenda**

The Working Group of the Parties will be invited to adopt the agenda as set out in the present document.

### **Item 2: Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers**

The secretariat will provide the Working Group with an overview of the status of ratification of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention, and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs). Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments with respect to the ratification of these instruments in their respective countries.

**Item 3: Preparations for the third ordinary meeting of the Parties**

The representative of Latvia, as host country of the third ordinary meeting of the Parties, and the secretariat will report on the organizational preparations for the meeting and the overall programme of events, including events marking the 10-year anniversary of the adoption of the Convention. The secretariat will present the draft provisional agenda for the meeting, prepared in consultation with the Bureau. The Chairperson, Ms. Hanne Inger Bjurstrøm (Norway), will present a first draft of the “Riga Declaration” (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2008/L.2). The Chairperson of the Working Group on PRTRs, Mr. Michel Amand (Belgium), will be invited to present a draft statement prepared by the Bureau of that Working Group for adoption at the proposed special session on PRTRs (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2008/L.3). The Working Group is expected to take note of the preparations for the meeting and to discuss, revise as necessary, and finalize the draft provisional agenda for the meeting and to forward it for adoption by the Meeting of the Parties. The Working Group is also expected to discuss the draft Riga Declaration and the draft PRTR statement with a view to forwarding these documents for adoption by the Meeting of the Parties.

**Item 4: Pollutant release and transfer registers**

The Chairperson of the Working Group on PRTRs and the secretariat will be invited to report on relevant developments in the field of PRTRs, including regarding the preparations for the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on other relevant developments. The Working Group of the Parties is expected to take note of any such developments and to consider any implications for the third meeting of the Parties to the Convention.

**Item 5: Genetically modified organisms**

**(a) Draft decision on the interpretation of article 14 of the Convention**

At its sixth meeting, the Working Group mandated the secretariat to prepare a draft decision of the Meeting of the Parties on the interpretation of article 14 of the Convention. The draft was to be developed in consultation with the Bureau and the United Nations Office for Legal Affairs and with the support of an ad hoc group of legal experts nominated by delegations (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2006/2, para. 20). At the seventh and eighth meetings of the Working Group, the secretariat reported on the progress in the preparation of the draft decision. The secretariat will present a draft decision prepared in accordance with the agreed procedure (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2008/L.4), and if available, any formal advice received from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs with respect to the draft decision. The Working Group will be invited to review the draft decision, revise it as necessary, and forward it for consideration and possible adoption by the Meeting of the Parties.

**(b) Workshop on genetically modified organisms**

The Netherlands and the secretariat will report on steps taken to prepare an international expert meeting on access to information, public participation and access to justice in the field of genetically modified organisms, scheduled to take place in Germany immediately following the fourth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as

the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol with the financial support of the Netherlands (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/2, paras. 18–23). The Working Group is expected to take note of the preparations.

#### **Item 6: Public participation in international forums**

The Chairperson of the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums, Mr. Laurent Mermet (France), together with the secretariat, will present the report of the third meeting of the Task Force, including (a) the summary of comments submitted by Parties, Signatories, other interested States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other relevant actors on their experiences with the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums pursuant to the procedure put in place by the Working Group at its seventh meeting, and (b) the outcome of discussions of possible future directions for the work on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2008/3). The Chairperson of the Working Group will present a draft decision on the topic, prepared pursuant to the Working Group's request made at its eighth meeting (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2008/L.5). Pursuant to its mandate under decision II/4, paragraph 8, and taking into account the report on the Task Force meeting, the Working Group is expected to review the draft decision, revise it as necessary, and forward it for consideration and possible adoption by the Meeting of the Parties.

#### **Item 7: Access to justice**

The secretariat will report on the progress in planning and implementing further capacity-building activities in the field of access to justice. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on other relevant developments. The Chairperson of the Working Group will present a draft decision on access to justice, prepared by the Bureau pursuant to the request made by the Working Group at its eighth meeting (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2008/L.6). Taking into account the report on the third meeting of the Task Force presented at the eighth meeting of the Working Group (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.10), the Working Group is expected to review the draft decision, revise it as necessary, and forward it for consideration and possible adoption by the Meeting of the Parties.

#### **Item 8: Electronic information tools and the clearing-house mechanism**

The Chairperson of the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools, Mr. Chris Jarvis (United Kingdom), will present the report on the sixth meeting of the Task Force and the associated mini-conference (Geneva, 13–14 December 2007). The secretariat will report on other relevant activities undertaken since the previous meeting of the Working Group, including in relation to the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on other relevant developments. The Working Group is expected to take note of these activities. The Chairperson of the Working Group will present a draft decision on electronic information tools, prepared by the Bureau pursuant to the request of the Working Group at its eighth meeting (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2008/L.7). The Working Group is expected to review the draft decision, revise it as necessary, and forward it for consideration and possible adoption by the Meeting of the Parties.

**Item 9: Public participation in strategic decision-making**

The delegations of Austria and Bulgaria will report on the outcome of the workshop on public participation in strategic decision-making (Sofia, 3–4 December 2007). The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and to consider possible further steps in this field following the third meeting of the Parties, taking into account the experience gained through the Sofia workshop.

**Item 10: Reporting requirements**

The secretariat will report on the status of submission of national implementation reports, including with respect to the timeliness and completeness of reports. Delegations will be invited to comment on their experiences with the preparation of the national implementation reports, including experiences with the application of the guidance that was endorsed by the Working Group at its seventh meeting (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.4). The secretariat will report on the progress in preparing the synthesis report, and may provide information orally on any trends emerging from its examination of the reports. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and to consider any implications for the discussion of the reports by the Meeting of the Parties.

**Item 11: Compliance mechanism**

The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the outcome of the eighteenth meeting of the Compliance Committee (28–30 November 2007) and the preparations for its nineteenth meeting (4–6 March 2008), at which it is expected to prepare its report to the Meeting of the Parties.

**Item 12: Capacity-building**

Delegations will be invited to report on capacity-building activities carried out since the last meeting of the Working Group. Delegations will also be invited to provide information on capacity-building needs. The Working Group will be invited to take note of the various developments and activities as well as the needs described, and to consider any implications for the discussion of the topic by the Meeting of the Parties.

**Item 13: Long-term strategic plan**

The Chairperson of the Working Group will present on behalf of the Bureau a new draft of a long-term strategic plan, revised on the basis of the comments made at the previous meeting or submitted subsequently in writing according to the procedure agreed by the Working Group (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2008/L.8). The Working Group is expected to review the new draft, revise it as necessary, and forward it for consideration and possible adoption by the Meeting of the Parties.

**Item 14: Financial status report**

The secretariat will report on the status of financial contributions received in 2007 and early 2008 and the expenditures incurred in 2007. Delegations will be invited to provide information on their contributions for the remainder of 2008. The Working Group will be invited to take note

of the financial situation and to consider any implications for the implementation of the 2006–2008 work programme.

**Item 15: Financial arrangements**

The Working Group is expected to continue the preparation of a draft decision on financial arrangements on the basis of the draft that was discussed at its previous meeting (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.13 and ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/5, paras. 56–60), if necessary establishing a contact group to assist with the process.

**Item 16: Any other business**

Delegates wishing to propose points under this item are requested to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

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