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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Meeting of the Signatories to
the Convention on Access to Information,
Public Participation in Decision-making and
Access to Justice in Environmental Matters
(Second meeting, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 3-5 July 2000)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE MEETING

to be held in Cavtat, Dubrovnik, Croatia,
starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, 3 July 2000

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda (CEP/WG.5/2000/1).
3. Activities for promoting the ratification of the Convention and its effective application pending its entry into force.
4. Preparations for the first meeting of the Parties:
 - (a) Draft rules of procedure (CEP/WG.5/2000/3);
 - (b) Report of the task force on compliance (CEP/WG.5/2000/4);
 - (c) Report of the task force on pollutant release and transfer registers (CEP/WG.5/2000/5);
 - (d) Report of the task force on genetically modified organisms (CEP/WG.5/2000/6).
5. Other elements in the workplan or arising from the first meeting of the Signatories or the sixth session of the Committee on Environmental

Policy:

- (a) Report on the workshop on public participation at local level
(CEP/WG.5/2000/7);

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- (b) Report on the workshop on the Convention in Central Asia and plans for further workshops;
 - (c) Implementation Guide on the Convention;
 - (d) Development of information and outreach tools;
 - (e) Future activities on access to justice (CEP/WG.5/2000/8);
 - (f) Possible instrument on strategic environmental assessment (CEP/WG.5/2000/9);
 - (g) Public participation in plans, programmes, policies and legislation (CEP/WG.5/2000/10);
 - (h) Electronic information (CEP/WG.5/2000/11);
 - (i) Relevant outcomes of the Third European Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health;
 - (j) Interlinkages between ECE Conventions.
6. Funding of activities under the Convention.
 7. Future meetings.
 8. Relevance of the Convention to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly marking the 10th anniversary of the Earth Summit, 2002
 9. Any other business.

Provisional timetable

Monday, 3 July 2000	Morning	Items 1, 2, 3
	Afternoon	Item 4 (a) and (b)
Tuesday, 4 July 2000	Morning	Item 4 (c) and (d)
	Afternoon	Item 5 (a) and (e)
Wednesday, 5 July 2000	Morning	Item 5 (f)-(j)
	Afternoon	Items 6 - 9
	5.00 p.m.	Close of meeting

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The second meeting of the Signatories is convened in the light of the recommendation of the Signatories at their first meeting and the decision of the Committee on Environmental Policy at its sixth session (CEP/WG.5/1999/2, para. 32; ECE/CEP/69, para. 14). The provisional agenda and explanatory notes have been prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau.

Item 1 Election of officers

The Meeting will elect a chairperson and may elect other officers if it so decides.

Item 2 Adoption of the agenda

The Meeting is expected to adopt the agenda as set out in the present document.

Item 3 Activities for promoting the ratification of the Convention and its effective application pending entry into force

The secretariat will provide an overview of the status of ratification, accession, approval and acceptance. Representatives of the States that have ratified, approved, accepted or acceded to the Convention will be invited to inform the Meeting of their activities, including measures to apply the Convention pending its entry into force. Representatives of other Signatory and non-Signatory States and the European Community will be invited to inform the Meeting of steps being taken to ratify or, as appropriate, approve, accept or accede to the Convention, including the likely time frame, as well as of measures taken to apply the Convention pending its entry into force. Representatives of intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other bodies will be invited to inform the Meeting of their related activities.

Item 4 Preparations for the first meeting of the Parties

The Meeting will be informed of the activities aimed at preparing for the first meeting of the Parties, referred to in the workplan adopted at the first meeting of the Signatories (CEP/WG.5/1999/2, annex, notably paras. 33-48). In each of the fields of activity referred to in the notes on sub-items (a) to (d) below, the Meeting is expected to consider the relevant documentation, including any recommendations contained therein, and to make such recommendations for further action as it sees fit.

Sub-item (a) Draft rules of procedure

The secretariat will present the preliminary draft rules of procedure (CEP/WG.5/2000/3), prepared pursuant to the request of the Signatories at their first meeting of (CEP/WG.5/1999/2, para. 43). The Meeting will be invited to discuss the draft rules and decide upon a procedure for further elaboration of the text.

Sub-item (b) Report of the task force on compliance

The delegation of the United Kingdom, the lead country for this activity, will present the report of the first meeting of the task force, which took place in London, on 11-12 November 1999 (CEP/WG.5/2000/4).

Sub-item (c) Report of the task force on pollutant release and transfer registers

The delegation of the Czech Republic, the lead country for this activity, will present the report of the first meeting of the task force, which took place in Prague, on 21-23 February 2000 (CEP/WG.5/2000/5). It will also present other information materials prepared for the purpose of supporting the work of the task force.

Sub-item (d) Report of the task force on genetically modified organisms

The delegation of Austria, the lead country for this activity, will present the report of the first meeting of the task force, which took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 6-7 April 2000, hosted by the Bulgarian Ministry for Environment and Water (CEP/WG.5/2000/6).

Item 5 Other elements in the workplan or arising from the first meeting of the Signatories or the sixth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy

Sub-item (a) Report on the workshop on public participation at local level

The delegation of the United Kingdom will report on the outcome of an international workshop on public participation at local level, held in Newcastle, United Kingdom, on 6-7 December 1999 (CEP/WG.5/2000/7). Copies of a handbook of good practices drawing on some of the case studies that were presented at the workshop, which is being published in English and Russian, will be available at the meeting.

Sub-item (b) Report on the workshop on the Convention in Central Asia and plans for further workshops

The Meeting will be informed of the outcome of a workshop on the Convention held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on 4-7 May 2000, involving participants from governments and non-governmental organizations from the five Central Asian member States of the ECE. The secretariat will inform the Meeting of other similar planned workshops.

Sub-item (c) Implementation Guide on the Convention

The Implementation Guide on the Convention, produced as a collaborative project of the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), the Danish Environmental Protection Agency and ECE, will be presented. Copies of the Guide will be circulated before the meeting.

Sub-item (d) Development of information and outreach tools

The secretariat will inform the Meeting of the measures taken, or planned, for the purpose of improving the communication and dissemination of information about the Convention and activities under its auspices (e.g. ECE Web site, translations, publications and national focal points).

Sub-item (e) Future activities on access to justice

At their first meeting, the Signatories gave their Bureau a mandate to consider whether it was possible to establish a task force on access to justice and to refer the matter to the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP/WG.5/1999/2, para. 72 (e)). The matter was discussed at the sixth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy, which in turn referred the question back to the Signatories (ECE/CEP/69, para. 14). The Meeting will be invited to consider whether a task force on access to justice should be established, taking into account a paper on the topic prepared by the European ECO Forum (CEP/WG.5/2000/8).

Sub-item (f) Possible instrument on strategic environmental assessment

Following proposals made at the Third European Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (London, 16-18 June 1999), the Committee on Environmental Policy at its sixth session requested the Meeting of the Signatories to give consideration to the possibility of drawing up a protocol on strategic environmental assessment (ECE/CEP/69, annex I, 1.2). A background paper on various options for developing a legally binding ECE

governing bodies of the five ECE Conventions to provide an opportunity for sharing experience on implementation and enforcement mechanisms and to consider measures to increase cooperation and synergies between the different multilateral environmental agreements and enhance their overall effectiveness.

This event has been planned to take place within the framework of the seventh session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (Geneva, 25-29 September 2000). The Meeting of the Signatories may wish to review preparations for the round table and consider what recommendations it might submit.

Item 6 Funding of activities under the Convention

The medium-term and long-term needs for funding of activities under the Convention will be discussed. The Meeting may wish to consider preparing for a discussion by the Meeting of the Parties on the establishment of financial arrangements as provided for under article 10, paragraph 3, of the Convention.

Item 7 Future meetings

The Meeting is expected to consider whether a third meeting of the Signatories is required before the Convention enters into force; to consider where and when either this meeting or the first meeting of the Parties might take place; and to make a recommendation to the Committee on Environmental Policy on the matter. The Meeting will also be informed of any other meetings to be held under the auspices of or in connection with the Convention.

Item 8 Relevance of the Convention to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, marking the 10th anniversary of the Earth Summit, 2002

In his foreword to the Aarhus Convention Implementation Guide, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, describes the Convention as 'by far the most impressive elaboration of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration', and notes that the fact that the Convention will be open to accession by non-ECE countries gives it the potential to serve as a global framework for strengthening citizens' environmental rights. Specifically, he refers to the 2002 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly marking the 10th anniversary of the Earth Summit as a timely occasion to examine the relevance of the Aarhus Convention as a possible model for strengthening the application of principle 10 in other regions of the world. The Meeting of the Signatories may wish to consider to what extent and in what way activities under the Convention can support the preparation of the Special Session and, more generally, the application of principle 10 in other regions of the world.

Item 9 Any other business

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