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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment
in a Transboundary Context
Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment
(Second meeting, Geneva, 29-31 May 2000)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SECOND MEETING
to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, 29 May 2000

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Activities undertaken pursuant to the work-plan adopted at the first meeting of the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/5-13).
3. Further preparations for the second meeting of the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/14-15).
4. Strategic environmental assessment (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/16).
5. Cooperation with the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy.
6. Activities for promoting the implementation and ratification of the Convention (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/3 and 4).
7. Other business.
8. Closing of the meeting.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The second meeting of the Working Group is convened in accordance with a decision by the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/3). The agenda and its explanatory notes have been prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau of the Meeting, in accordance with rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure.

Item 1. Adoption of the agenda

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure adopted at the first meeting of the Parties, the President, Mr. A. McGlone, will open the meeting.

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

Item 2. Activities undertaken pursuant to the work-plan adopted at the first meeting of the Parties

The Working Group will assess the ongoing implementation of the work-plan, which is set out in appendix I to decision I/6 taken at the first meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.EIA/2). The Working Group will make suggestions on how to continue and/or improve the following activities with a view to finalizing them for adoption at the second meeting of the Parties:

(a) Reviews of strategies and policies

The secretariat will inform the Meeting of the preparation of the 1998-2000 biennial review, as included in item 1 of the work-plan, for consideration at the second meeting of the Parties. The secretariat has prepared a draft biennial review on recent developments in the national strategies and policies for applying environmental impact assessment (EIA) in a transboundary context, based on the information provided by Parties and non-Parties, for discussion and possible adoption at the second meeting of the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/5).

(b) Aspects of bilateral and multilateral cooperation

The delegation of the Netherlands, lead country for this activity, will present a report (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/6) including a draft decision, guidance and a compendium of existing bilateral and/or multilateral agreements or arrangements. A workshop was held in February 2000 in order to prepare guidance for bilateral and/or multilateral agreements or arrangements to meet the obligations under the Convention for adoption at the second meeting of the Parties.

(c) Practical application of the Convention

The delegations of Finland and Sweden, lead countries for this activity, will present their report based on a questionnaire through which information on the application of EIA in a transboundary context has been collected and

analysed and on the outcome of a workshop on this issue. The Working Group may wish, in particular, to discuss the report and a draft decision for finalization and subsequent adoption at the second meeting of the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/7).

(d) Public participation in a transboundary context

The delegation of the Russian Federation, lead country for this activity, will present a progress report (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/8). On the basis of existing legislation, guidelines and research documents and international and national experiences with public participation as well as on the basis of the outcome of a workshop to be held in May 2000, draft guidance on this issue will be prepared.

(e) Non-compliance guidelines

The delegation of the United Kingdom, lead country for this activity, will present a draft decision on a possible non-compliance system under the Convention, for finalization and subsequent adoption at the second meeting of the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/9).

(f) Recent EIA developments and links with other ECE Conventions

The delegation of Italy, lead country for this activity, will present a draft report (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/10) analysing recent developments in environmental impact assessment as well as links with other ECE Conventions. The report will also focus on proposals for future work and a draft decision prepared by the lead country for adoption at the second meeting of the Parties.

(g) Evaluation of the database

The delegation of Hungary, lead country for this activity, will present its draft interim report of the evaluation study of the database (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/12) to the Working Group. The usefulness of the database has been reviewed so that a recommendation on its continuation can be presented at the second meeting of the Parties.

(h) Database on environmental impact assessment

The delegation of Poland, lead country for this activity, will present a report (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/11) with a user's manual and technical documentation on the database. A final report with a draft decision based on the evaluation of the technical database will be prepared for the third meeting of the Working Group for possible adoption at the second meeting of the Parties.

(i) Subregional activities

On the basis of the outcome of a pilot workshop, the delegation of Bulgaria will present a draft decision. It will include a proposal for

future work on ways to support countries in transition through an exchange of information on the application of the Convention and also through bilateral and multilateral partnerships between Parties and non-Parties. This document will contain suggestions on activities that can be tackled at subregional level, for discussion, finalization and possible adoption at the second meeting of the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/13). Representatives from countries in transition are expected to make proposals on this issue.

Item 3. Further preparations for the second meeting of the Parties

(a) The delegation of Bulgaria will provide further information on the organization of the second meeting of the Parties, which is expected to take place in Sofia (Bulgaria) from 24 to 27 February 2001, pursuant to the recommendations of the Bureau;

(b) Pursuant to paragraph 13 of the Oslo Ministerial Declaration (ECE/MP.EIA/2, annex IX), in which Parties were invited to consider possibilities for allowing non-ECE member countries to become a Party to the Convention, the Meeting will discuss a paper on this issue prepared by Mr. McGlone (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/14) for adoption at the second meeting of the Parties;

(c) The Bureau has suggested establishing a task force with a view to developing a package of amendments for adoption at the second meeting of the Parties;

(d) The Working Group will also discuss a draft work-plan for the implementation of the Convention (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/15) for adoption at the second meeting of the Parties;

(e) The Meeting is expected to develop elements for a ministerial declaration for adoption at the second meeting of the Parties;

(f) The Meeting is expected to develop a proposal on financial issues to be reflected in a decision for adoption at the second meeting of the Parties.

Item 4. Strategic environmental assessment

The Meeting will also discuss the possible development of a legally binding instrument on strategic environmental assessment (SEA) on the basis of a report prepared by the secretariat with the help of a consultant (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/16).

Item 5. Cooperation with the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy

The Meeting will be informed of a discussion paper to be prepared by a consultant, in cooperation with the Conventions' and the Committee's secretariats. This paper will be prepared to back up the round-table discussion to be held at the Committee's annual session (September 2000) on

cooperation among ECE Conventions and potential synergies, aimed at strengthening their implementation.

Item 6. Activities for promoting the implementation and ratification of the Convention

The Working Group will be informed of the status of ratification of the Convention. Representatives of non-Parties will report on the steps that they are taking to become a Party to the Convention. Delegations will report on how they are implementing the subsequent procedural steps of the Convention. The Working Group will consider the report of the second and third meetings of the Bureau (MP.EIA/WG.1/2000/3 and 4).

Item 7. Other business

The third meeting of the Working Group will be on 9-11 October 2000 in Geneva. Delegations are invited to inform the Working Group about meetings of relevance to the Convention.

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

Item 8. Closing of the meeting

The President will close the meeting by presenting the main decisions taken for adoption by the Working Group.