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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

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

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING

1. The second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Convention was held in Geneva on 3-4 May 2004.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives from the Governments of Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan. The Commission of the European Communities was also represented.
3. Representatives from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) attended the meeting.
4. The following non-governmental organizations were present: European ECO Forum and GLOBE Europe.
5. The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) was also represented.
6. Mr. Marc Pallemarts (Belgium), Chairman of the Working Group, opened the meeting.

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

7. The Working Group adopted the agenda for the meeting as set out in document MP.PP/WG.2/2004/1.

II. STATUS OF RATIFICATION

8. The Chairman drew the attention of delegations to an informal paper prepared by the secretariat giving an overview of the current status of ratification of the Convention and signing of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs). He also invited delegations to report on any recent developments on this subject in their countries.

9. The representative of the European Commission reported on its preparations for the ratification of the Protocol by the European Community. The Commission had been working on preparing a legal instrument to transpose the Protocol into Community law, so that the registers established to meet the requirements of the European pollutant emission register would be further developed into PRTRs that would fully meet the requirements of the Protocol by 2006.

III. POLLUTANT RELEASE AND TRANSFER REGISTERS

10. The secretariat reported on the first meeting of the Working Group on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs), which had been held on 16-18 February 2004. The Working Group had reviewed national preparations for the implementation and ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs. The secretariat had informed the Working Group that between the Kiev Conference and the end of 2003, when the Protocol had ceased to be open for signature, no additional States had signed it.

11. The secretariat had convened meetings with UNITAR, UNEP and REC to review PRTR capacity-building activities and prepare a framework proposal to support such work. Together with the other organizations, the secretariat had developed a tentative proposal for a framework programme on regional, subregional and national PRTR capacity-building, which would be open to other interested organizations.

12. The Working Group on PRTRs had recognized the need to provide guidance documentation for the implementation of the Protocol and the secretariat had presented an informal document which was elaborated into a structure for the guidance document. The Working Group had amended and accepted it. The European Commission had reported that it had received a request for financial support for this document, and was considering a financial contribution for 2004. The guidance would be prepared for the second meeting of the Parties.

13. The secretariat reported that the Working Group on PRTRs had considered the development of a compliance mechanism and rules of procedure, and agreed that the secretariat should prepare background papers outlining various options for these for consideration at its second meeting. The Working Group of the Parties welcomed the initiative and hoped that the work that the secretariat was doing could progress rapidly with the support of all parties involved.

14. UNITAR then announced the launch of the 'virtual classroom', which had been generously supported by the Government of the Netherlands. Delegates were invited to register and use this

online tool. The "virtual classroom" was a pilot project on sharing knowledge PRTRs among Parties to the Aarhus Convention and participating organizations. Its main objectives were: to facilitate and support the development of national PRTR systems; to allow countries to access individuals and organizations with experience and knowledge on PRTRs; and to create a virtual environment to share information on PRTR-related issues, by using modern technology. Any person involved in PRTR issues could participate in this initiative by registering to this site (<http://prtrvc.unitar.org>).

IV. GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

15. On behalf of the Chairman of the Working Group on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), who was not present, the secretariat presented the report of the third meeting of that Working Group, which had taken place on 24-26 March 2004 (MP.PP/AC.2/2004/2). The Working Group had continued to examine possible options for taking a legally binding approach to further developing the application of the Convention in the field of GMOs, as required under its mandate (decision I/4). A number of specific options had been considered and annexed to the report. Delegations had been asked to reflect further on these options during the intersessional period so that further progress could be made at the next meeting of the Working Group.

16. Ireland, on behalf of the European Union, informed the Working Group of the Parties of its commitment to further examine these options in the forthcoming period and to inform the Working Group on GMOs of the outcome of its consultations at the fourth meeting. Other delegations reiterated the need to concentrate on the options that had received support from a large number of delegations and expressed concern that, unless the Working Group on GMOs focused on a smaller number of options in its deliberations, it would not be able to fulfill its mandate in time for the second meeting of the Parties. However, Ireland, on behalf of the European Union, stated that the EU countries were not yet ready to narrow down the range of options under consideration.

17. The Working Group took note of the results of the third meeting of the Working Group on GMOs and again urged it to work towards the timely fulfillment of its mandate by focusing on the most appropriate options for a legally binding approach, for submission to the Parties and, if appropriate, adoption at their second meeting. The Working Group on GMOs should focus on the options currently on the table, with a view to narrowing down the discussion so that a result would be achieved at the second meeting of the Parties.

V. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

18. The Chairman, in his capacity as Chairman of the Task Force on Access to Justice, introduced the report of its second meeting, held in November 2003 (MP.PP/WG.1/2004/3), and informed the Working Group of the plans for future work. At its third meeting, scheduled for 4-6 October 2004, the Task Force would aim to complete the preparation of a draft decision for consideration and possible adoption by the Meeting of the Parties. In advance of that meeting, the lead country was planning to distribute a questionnaire on the issue of criteria for standing in the context of access to justice under article 9, paragraph 3, of the Convention. The responses would be compiled by the secretariat for the meeting. A letter would also be sent to international, regional and subregional organizations of legal professionals requesting input on the specific needs for capacity-building in their professions with respect to environmental law and access to

justice in environmental matters and comment on the elements that might be considered for inclusion in a draft decision for submission to the Meeting of the Parties (MP.PP/WG.1/2004/3, annex).

19. The Working Group discussed the activities of the Task Force and a number of different views were put forward. One delegation proposed that, considering the importance of the topic, a decision should be made at the second ordinary meeting of the Parties to create a working group to continue this work. This view was supported by other delegations, which took note that, without official interpretation at the meetings of the Task Force, it would be difficult to focus on the examination of good practices and capacity-building, which were considered an important part of the Task Force's mandate. In this context, it was also suggested that an alternative report could be prepared for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties, focusing on the experiences of countries with economies in transition, since access to justice was directly linked to the rule of law and the high level of development of civil society.

20. The Working Group took note of the discussion and the progress in the work of the Task Force and urged the Task Force to conclude its work at the third meeting with a view to submitting its final report through the Working Group of the Parties to the Meeting of the Parties.

VI. ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TOOLS

21. The secretariat introduced the report of the second meeting of Task Force on Electronic Information Tools, held in January 2004 (MP.PP/WG.1/2004/4), and informed the Working Group of its plans for future work. It reported on the sharing and documenting of good practices, and in particular on the establishment of web sites and portals with information on the national status of implementation of the Convention and various regional initiatives undertaken by BlueLink Network, Milieukontakt Oost-Europa, REC, Russian Regional Environmental Centre and UNEP to expand capacity in this area.

22. The Task Force had considered draft recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools, including elements of general policy and a possible legislative framework. Many delegations expressed the view that any such recommendations should be non-mandatory and rely on practical aspects. Some delegations felt it would be important to have legislative recommendations to assist with implementation of the Convention. The Task Force proposed to continue to elaborate these elements at its next meeting, which would be held on 8-9 July 2004.

23. The Working Group took note of the views of the Task Force and requested it to conclude its work with a view to submitting draft recommendations at its next meeting with a special emphasis on the practical aspects of applying electronic tools to the Working Group.

VII. CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

24. The secretariat reported on progress in the development of the clearing-house mechanism and, with the assistance of GRID-Arendal, presented the pilot web site. The clearing-house mechanism had contained a database of references to useful resources for the implementation of the Convention. Delegations and their national focal points were invited to view and test this interactive electronic tool during the next six-month phase of the mechanism's development, and

encouraged to post information to the clearing house through its content management system. The secretariat was preparing the clearing house's formal launch following resolution of some technical issues. Many delegations welcomed the development of the clearing house mechanism.

25. GRID-Arendal reported on capacity-building in three East European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries in support of national focal points for the clearing-house mechanism.

VIII. CAPACITY-BUILDING

26. The secretariat reported on the further elaboration of a framework proposal addressing the needs and prospects for capacity-building, technical support and information exchange in PRTR development, undertaken by UNECE, UNEP, UNITAR and REC subsequent to the meeting of the Working Group on PRTRs.

27. The secretariat and UNEP/GRID-Arendal informed the Working Group of the progress in the establishment of Aarhus information centres in the East European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries as a part of the joint Environment and Security initiative of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the United Nations Development Programme and UNEP (www.iisd.org/natres/security/envsec/). Another UNEP project in four countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) implemented with the financial support of the United Kingdom was aimed at promoting the dissemination of environmental information and capacity-building on reporting systems (www.participate.org/publications/Pollution_final.pdf).

28. The Ecoforum presented its publication Your Right to Know About Sources of Pollution, prepared in an attempt to provide a simple and clear explanation of the PRTRs.

29. The representative of REC informed the Working Group about the progress in two PRTR capacity-building projects that it was implementing with the financial support of the Governments of Norway and the Netherlands. She also reported on a project funded by the Netherlands to develop national implementation strategies for the Convention in six Southeast European countries, as well as a project funded by EuropeAid to facilitate a more effective implementation of the Convention in six EECCA countries (www.rec.org/REC/Programs/PublicParticipation.html). It was pointed out that the concrete outputs of these projects, such as methodologies, guidance and training materials, and networks of experts could be used in similar projects and initiatives both in these and in other countries of the region.

30. The representative of UNITAR reported on the implementation of a joint UNECE/UNITAR pilot project to assist countries in preparing a national profile to assess the national situation and capacities related to the implementation of the Aarhus Convention. Following a formal application procedure, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia and Montenegro, and Tajikistan were selected as pilot countries. National planning meetings in the three pilot countries were scheduled to start in June 2004. In support of this project, UNITAR/UNECE had prepared a pilot version of a national profile guidance document in English and Russian. The document outlined practical suggestions for the preparation of a national profile through the involvement of key government sectors, as well as other relevant stakeholders. The document also provided suggestions on the structure and content of the national profile. Delegations were encouraged to provide substantive comments on the pilot version of the National Profile Guidance document to UNITAR before the end of 2004.

31. The Working Group welcomed capacity-building and invited the Parties, Signatories and other States and organizations to continue to provide support to such initiatives and also thanked both those providing support and countries undertaking initiatives. The Working Group also invited delegations to provide information on other capacity-building activities to the secretariat in order to include it into the Convention's clearing house.

IX. COMPLIANCE MECHANISM

32. At the invitation of the Chairman of the Working Group, the Chairman of the Compliance Committee, Mr. Veit Koester, presented the activities of the Committee, in particular the outcome of its third meeting and its report (MP.PP/C.1/2004/2). He drew the attention of the Working Group to the fact that the Committee, taking into account concerns expressed earlier by some delegations, had reworded its information sheet so as to clarify that the compliance mechanism did not constitute an individual redress procedure. He also described the work on the Committee's modus operandi, including discussion scheduled for its fourth meeting (13-14 May 2004) with regard to electronic decision-making on certain issues under the Committee's consideration.

33. While there had been no submissions by Parties or referrals by the secretariat, the Committee had received its first communication from the public. It had been submitted by a Kazakh NGO Green Salvation and concerned an alleged violation of rights of access to information and access to justice in Kazakhstan. The Committee, in accordance with the procedure set out in decision I/7, was considering its reaction to the communication. The data sheet on this communication was available on the Committee's web site.

34. Mr. Koester also noted that the secretariat had brought to the Committee's attention information in the public domain regarding a new law of Turkmenistan on public associations as possibly relevant to the issue of compliance. The secretariat had informed the Committee that it was seeking further information from the Party.

35. At its third meeting, the Compliance Committee had focused on the links between the compliance mechanism and the reporting requirements under the Convention. The Committee had noted that its mandate included facilitation of compliance with the reporting requirement, which it considered to be important both in itself and because national implementation reports were an important source of information on compliance.

36. The Committee had also looked into the relationship between its own report and the synthesis report to be prepared by the secretariat on the basis of the national implementation reports in accordance with decision I/8. It had agreed that, as both reports dealt to some extent with information regarding the situation in individual countries and were prepared within the same time span and for the same body, there was a need to coordinate their preparation to avoid duplication of effort. To this extent the Committee, although not responsible for the synthesis report, had offered to provide its comments the draft report. For this purpose, a meeting of the Compliance Committee was envisaged at the time when the synthesis report would be in its draft stage.

37. The Committee had also advised that the synthesis report should address non-compliance only in two cases: to make a factual statement where a report had not been submitted or to reflect where a Party itself had provided information conceding that it was not in compliance.

38. The Working Group took note of the report by the Chairman of the Compliance Committee and thanked the Committee for its work.

X. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

39. The secretariat presented a possible timetable for the preparation of national implementation reports under the reporting requirements, which allowed some time for a public consultation process in accordance with decision I/8 of the Meeting of the Parties. The secretariat underlined the importance of submitting reports on time and at the latest 120 days in advance of the meeting of the Parties as provided in paragraph 4 of decision I/8, in particular to enable it to prepare the synthesis report.

40. Several delegations welcomed the idea of an indicative timetable, but pointed out that a significantly longer consultation period would be necessary in order to provide a real opportunity for the public to provide input. It would also be important to publicize the process of reporting, and in particular the envisaged consultation, on the national level.

41. The Chairman of the Compliance Committee presented the Committee's recommendations to the Working Group (MP.PP/C.1/2004/2, para. 35). The Committee in particular recommended to the Working Group to draw the Parties' attention to the importance of comprehensive and timely reporting in a manner consistent with the procedural requirements of decision I/8.

42. The Committee had also felt that an amendment of decision I/8 or a complementary decision was needed to interpret the provisions of paragraph 7 of the decision as giving an opportunity for non-governmental organizations to comment on topics contained in the national reports or more generally on national implementation issues. The Chairman of the Compliance Committee pointed out that while the requirements of decision I/8 were perfectly satisfactory in a normally functioning system, there was a possibility that, in some systems, due account might not be taken of the comments in preparing the national reports, or indeed the government might fail to produce an official report altogether. In such exceptional cases, an opportunity for the public to provide comments in a separate report to the Meeting of the Parties might be needed.

43. The Working Group agreed on the importance of comprehensive and timely reporting and on the need to provide adequate opportunities for public consultation on the draft report and urged Parties, Signatories and other States, as well as other stakeholders, to make the necessary preparations. The Working Group also agreed to annex the indicative timetable, as revised according to the discussion, to its report.

44. Many delegations felt that the existing provisions of decision I/8 with respect to the process of preparing the national implementation report and in particular the envisaged public consultation procedure would ensure a sufficient opportunity for the public to provide comments on the reports. They felt that a procedure providing for alternative reports and comments to be submitted to the Meeting of the Parties might undermine the participatory process set forth in decision I/8. Some other delegations, however, supported the view reflected by the Chairman of the Compliance Committee as reported in paragraph 42. The Working Group requested the Bureau to consider at its next meeting whether further clarification of decision I/8 was needed and if so, to prepare a draft proposal to form a basis for discussion at the next meeting of the Working Group.

45. The Working Group invited the secretariat to take account of information in the reports referred to in paragraphs 6 and 7 of decision I/8, its synthesis report, as well the information contained in the reports submitted by Parties.

46. The secretariat indicated that it might not be possible, in the light of general resource constraints, to translate the national implementation reports into all the official languages, but would look into the matter. The reports would in any case be made available on the Convention's web site within a week or so in the language in which they were submitted. The Working Group took note of this information.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

47. The secretariat presented a background paper focusing on sharing information and experiences, prepared at the request of the Working Group (MP.PP/WG.1/2004/5). The paper provided an analysis of the methodologies and tools for collecting and disseminating national experiences on public participation in strategic decision-making and identified possibilities for further activities in this area. It focused on the following four "soft" options to effectively enhance public participation in strategic decision-making through sharing information and experiences: electronic tools, publications, workshops and seminars, and coordination mechanism.

48. The Chairman thanked the secretariat for preparing the document and encouraged delegations to give their comments and, where possible, express their preferences for one or several of the options presented.

49. Most delegations felt that it would be appropriate to organize a joint workshop with the responsible bodies under the Espoo Convention in order to promote synergies between the Aarhus Convention and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment. Pursuing this option was seen as the most practical solution, although the use of electronic tools for collecting and disseminating information also received some support. However, some delegations suggested that this should be seen only as a first step in the process and that a decision, to create a more formal framework for work in this area should be prepared for possible adoption at the second meeting of the Parties.

50. The Working Group requested its Chairman and the secretariat to explore possibilities for organizing a joint workshop with the Espoo Convention and to put this proposal forward at the forthcoming third meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention. Should an agreement between the two conventions be reached, a discussion on the organizational arrangements for the workshop as well as its content would be undertaken at the next meeting of the Working Group.

XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

51. The Chairman reminded the Working Group that the Meeting of the Parties had recommended giving consideration to the possibility of developing guidelines on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international environmental decision-making processes and within the framework of international organizations in matters relating to the environment. Following up on this recommendation, the Working Group at its first meeting had

decided to establish a small ad hoc expert group to consider the scope, format and content of possible guidelines and the appropriate process for their development. Pursuant to that decision, the Bureau, with the assistance of the secretariat, had carried out preparations for the work of such an expert group, including its composition and logistics.

52. The Chairman informed the Working Group that the Bureau at its latest meeting had scheduled the first meeting of the expert group to take place on 3-4 June 2004 in Geneva. The Government of Italy had kindly offered to provide financial support for the meeting. The Bureau had invited Mr. Attila Tanzi (Italy) to chair the expert group and he had accepted. The Bureau had requested the secretariat to invite the Parties and Signatories to nominate experts and it had done so. The Bureau had also drawn up a list of possible invitees, including academics and experts from international organizations, NGOs and bodies of other multilateral environmental agreements. While not all of them had confirmed their participation as yet, the list of those approached included three experts from other bodies of the United Nations, including UNEP and Department of Economic and Social Affairs, several experts from other intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies, secretariats of six multilateral environmental agreements and approximately five NGO experts and three experts from academia or independent research institutes. Overall, the Bureau felt that in order to work efficiently the group should not exceed 25-30 experts.

53. Mr. Tanzi informed the Working Group about his intentions regarding the organization of the expert group's work. He noted the significant extent of work already done in the field of public participation in international forums, which would provide a rich resource for the group to draw upon. He pointed out that the Parties and Signatories had recognized the need for some guidance material in their Lucca Declaration. He also stated his intention to focus the work on the scope and content of the guidance as the first step and only then to move on to the issue of possible format, with a view to having adequate proposals ready for submission to the Parties at its next meeting.

54. Several delegations welcomed the progress made in getting the process under way and emphasized the importance of the issue.

55. The Working Group took note of the composition of the expert group and the intentions of the Chairman regarding its work. It agreed that the Bureau should consider the report of the expert group at its next meeting in July 2004 and decide whether a second meeting should be held to enable the expert group to complete its work and to have a draft of possible guidance material ready for the Parties to consider at their next meeting.

XIII. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

56. Mr. Olivier Martin (France), the Chairman of the Task Force on Financial Arrangements, reported on the outcome of its first meeting held on 23 March 2004. The lead country had prepared a background paper for the meeting focusing on possible options for establishing stable and predictable financial arrangements for the Convention. The paper analysed the implications of a system of contributions based on a scale of assessment that could be applied to both a mandatory and a voluntary system of financial arrangements. The Task Force had agreed that a voluntary system based on 'shares' was still the preferred option, but also acknowledged the importance of fairly sharing the burden. It had, therefore, proposed to introduce certain elements to increase the stability and predictability of the system as well as to ensure a more equitable

system of financial arrangements by facilitating the participation of more States.

57. Based on these conclusions, the Task Force had proposed to prepare a draft decision for review at the third meeting of the Working Group of the Parties. Since the important issues were resolved at its first meeting, the Task Force would finalize this work electronically.

58. The Working Group took note of the outcome of the Task Force's meeting and requested it to continue its work on developing recommendations on financial arrangements for discussion at the next meeting of the Working Group and eventual adoption at the second ordinary meeting of the Parties.

XIV. OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES FOR 2003

59. The secretariat presented a paper, prepared in consultation with the Bureau, providing an overview of contributions and expenditures for 2003, a financial report on the funds received and the expenditures incurred in the implementation of the work programme, including the funds made available from the regular UNECE budget (MP.PP/WG.1/2004/6). It was noted that the overview of contributions did not include a large Italian contribution for the year 2003, comprising five 'shares', because it had arrived in the trust fund of the Convention in 2002. The revised status of contributions received for 2003 is annexed to this report.

60. The Chairman invited delegations from countries to indicate, where appropriate, the status of pledges made at the first meeting of the Working Group and to provide any other relevant additional information. The following information was given by delegations regarding their intentions:

| Country or delegation | Shares (1 share = US\$ 20,000) |
|------------------------------|--|
| Austria | ½ share for the year 2004 confirmed and already contributed. |
| Belgium | €7,789 for 2004 and 1 share for the year 2005, subject to budget approval. |
| Spain | 1 share for 2004 confirmed and already contributed. 1 share for 2005, subject to budgetary approval. |

XV. PREPARATIONS FOR THE SECOND ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARTIES

A. Information by the host country about the national preparatory process

61. The Delegation of Kazakhstan, the host country, thanked the secretariat for its support and assistance and informed the Working Group about the national preparatory process for the organization of the second meeting of the Parties to the Convention. It confirmed the dates and the venue of the meeting. The meeting itself would take place on 25-27 May 2005 and a final preparatory meeting would take place on 23 May. 24 May would be reserved for the finalization and translation of the documents. To ensure an efficient preparatory process, a working group had been set up within the Ministry of Environmental Protection and an order had been issued on the establishment of an interdepartmental body that would include all key ministries that were involved in the preparatory process, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Kazakhstan was

finalizing a paper on financial matters in relation to the organization of the meeting and would possibly seek support from donors. It was in communication with the secretariat over the development of a draft agreement between the host country and the United Nations concerning the hosting of the meeting.

62. The Delegation of Kazakhstan also reported on the recent developments that were taking place in Kazakhstan in relation to public participation. Two new councils had been established, the Environmental Public Council operating under the Minister of Environmental Protection and the Council on Sustainable Development established under the Government of Kazakhstan, both of which ensured stakeholder participation.

B. Discussion of the draft agenda

63. The secretariat introduced the document on the elements for the provisional agenda of the second meeting of the parties (MP.PP/WG.1/2004/7). Delegates provided a number of comments on the document. There was general consensus on having a high-level segment at the end of the meeting. This would allow Ministers and others to adopt the declaration and the decisions that should be finalized during the meeting. Delegates also exchanged views on possible themes for the high-level segment. It was agreed that global and regional developments related to principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development were an important subject for the discussion by Ministers and therefore should be considered as a theme for this segment. The secretariat informed the Working Group that UNECE had been supporting UNEP to develop a proposal for a global project on the promotion of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, involving national, regional and global activities. A high-level discussion during the second meeting might provide an appropriate opportunity for the UNECE region to provide regional input to the global process envisaged in the project.

64. The Working Group agreed to include some new items in the draft agenda. An item would be added on synergies between the Aarhus Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements. In this respect, the secretariat was asked to bring this initiative to the attention of the Bureaux of the UNECE Conventions at their next joint meeting scheduled for 7 June 2004 and to inform the Working Group of the Parties about the outcome of the discussion. The second proposed item was on the special needs of countries with economies in transition in relation to the implementation of the Aarhus Convention. It was suggested to include it under item 7 "Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention" (between (d) and (e)). The issue could also be addressed during the high-level segment. Some indicated that these two items could also be discussed in relation to the development of the programme of work and operation of the Convention (item 9) and other relevant items where appropriate.

65. It was agreed that each subsidiary body would be responsible for the preparation of its respective documents according to its mandates and that the secretariat would present them to the Working Group of the Parties for transmission to the Parties at its second meeting in the appropriate format. With regard to the Declaration, the Working Group agreed to follow the same approach as at the first meeting, namely to develop and adopt it as a joint declaration of governments, NGOs and other stakeholders present.

66. The Working Group asked the Bureau and the secretariat to prepare a revised and annotated version of the draft agenda that would take into account the comments made during the meeting. To this end, the Chairman also invited delegations to further consider the issues raised and to provide further feedback on items that might be included in the draft agenda prior to the next

meeting of the Working Group.

XVI. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A. Development of a Convention logo

67. The Chairman informed the Working Group of the latest developments in the efforts to gain official approval for the Convention's logo, which had been developed at the request of the Bureau.

68. The Chairman, with the assistance of the secretariat and in consultation with the Bureau, had written to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs expressing concern and asking it to reconsider its position. Mr. Kaj Bärlund, Director of the UNECE Environment and Human Settlements Division, had also contacted the Office of Legal Affairs in order to resolve the issue. However, an official response was still awaited.

B. Course on international environmental law-making and diplomacy

69. The delegation of Finland informed the Working Group of the Parties of a course on international environmental law-making and diplomacy, organized jointly by UNEP and the University of Joensuu, Finland, from 22 August to 3 September 2004. The course, focusing on negotiation, legal drafting and monitoring of compliance of multilateral environmental agreements, would gather government officials engaged in international environmental negotiations and representatives of civil society and the private sector from all over the world. The Working Group of the Parties took note of this development and encouraged interested delegates to participate.

XVII. ADOPTION OF REPORT AND CLOSURE OF MEETING

70. The Working Group adopted its report based on a draft and entrusted its Chairman and the secretariat with finalizing the text on the understanding that the French- and Russian-speaking delegates would reserve their positions until the report was available in French and Russian as well. The Chairman thanked the delegations for their contributions to the discussions and the secretariat for its efficient assistance in the meeting. Finally, he thanked the interpreters and closed the meeting.

Annex I**INDICATIVE SCHEDULE FOR THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS PURSUANT TO DECISION I/8**

| Weeks before the meeting of the Parties | Date (week beginning) | Activity | By |
|--|------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 26 | 22 Nov 2004 | Draft reports are made available for public consultation | Parties* |
| 22 | | National consultative process | Parties |
| 21 | 27 Dec 2004 | Deadline for public to submit comments | Public |
| 20 | 3 Jan 2005 | Implementation reports updated based on public consultation and, where necessary, translated into one of the UNECE official languages | Parties |
| 17 | 24 Jan 2005 | Finalized implementation reports are submitted to the secretariat | Parties / Secretariat |
| 16 | 31 Jan 2005 | Implementation reports made available on the web site Drafting the synthesis report | Secretariat |
| 15 | | | |
| 14 | 14 February 2005 | Compliance Committee and secretariat jointly review draft synthesis report and draft Compliance Committee report to avoid overlap | |
| 13 | | Finalization of the synthesis report | Secretariat |
| 12 | 28 Feb 2005 | Internal UNECE approval process | Secretariat |
| 11 | | | |
| 10 | 14 Mar 2005 | | |
| 09 | 21 Mar 2005 | Synthesis report submitted for translation Translation | Secretariat |
| 08 | | | |
| 07 | | | |
| 06 | 11 Apr 2005 | Synthesis report issued and circulated | Secretariat |
| | 23 May 2005 | | |

* Signatories and other States which are not Parties and which intend to submit reports according to paragraph 6 of decision I/8 are also invited to follow the same timetable.

Annex II**CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FOR 2003**

| Currency | Amount | Amount in US\$ | Donor | <u>Payer Long Name</u> |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|---|
| € | 9,817.60 | 9,730.03 | Austria | BM LFW |
| In kind | | 54,700.00 | Belgium | |
| In kind | | 10,000.00 | Bulgaria | |
| \$ | 9,973.00 | 9,973.00 | Denmark | Miljoministeriet Skov OG Natursyrelsen |
| \$ | 78,216.66 | 78,216.66 | Denmark | Miljostyrelsen |
| € | 100,000.00 | 118,764.85 | EC | European Commission |
| \$ | 10,000 | 10,000.00 | Finland | Ymparistoministerio |
| € | 60,000.00 | 62,630.48 | France | Ministère de l'Ecologie et du Développement Durable |
| € | 15,000.00 | 15,657.62 | Germany | Bundeskasse |
| € | 15,000.00 | 17,667.84 | Germany | Bundeskasse |
| € | 34,094.80 | 40,158.78 | Germany | Bundeskasse |
| \$ | 100,000.00 | 100,000.00 | Italy | Ministero del Ambiente a Tutela del Territorio |
| € | 40,000.00 | 43,057.05 | Netherlands | Ministerie Van Vrom |
| \$ | 19,851.46 | 19,851.46 | Norway | Miljoverndepartementet |
| \$ | 19,913.35 | 19,913.35 | Norway | Miljoverndepartementet |
| € | 20,000.00 | 22,857.14 | Spain | Ministerio de Medio Ambiente |
| \$ | 19,975.00 | 19,975.00 | Sweden | Miljodepartementet |
| \$ | 40,000.00 | 40,000.00 | United Kingdom | DEFRA, Dept for Environment Food & Rural Affairs |

Total**\$ 693,153.26**