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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

Eighth meeting
Geneva, 31 October–2 November 2007

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTH MEETING

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 31 October 2007¹

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

¹ 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, which is available from the Convention's website (www.unece.org/env/pp/practical.htm), and to transmit it to the Convention secretariat no later than 2 weeks before the meeting – namely, by **30 August 2007** – either by fax (+ 41 22 917 0634) or by e-mail (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.

3. Pollutant release and transfer registers
4. Genetically modified organisms
5. Public participation in international forums
6. Access to justice
7. Electronic information tools and the clearing-house mechanism
8. Public participation in strategic decision-making
9. Reporting requirements
10. Compliance mechanism
11. Capacity-building
12. Long-term strategic plan
13. Financial status report
14. Financial arrangements
15. Preparations for the third ordinary meeting of the Parties
16. Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”
17. Any other business

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

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

The secretariat will provide the Working Group of the Parties to the Convention 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: Pollutant release and transfer registers

The Chair of the Working Group on PRTRs, Mr. Michel Amand (Belgium), will be invited to report on the outcome of the fifth meeting of that Working Group, scheduled to be held from 22 to 24 October 2007. The Working Group of the Parties is expected to take note of the activities of the Working Group on PRTRs and, in the light of the rate of progress towards entry into force of the Protocol, to take a decision, at least provisionally, on whether the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol should take place back to back with the third meeting of the Parties to the Convention.

Item 4: Genetically modified organisms

The Working Group of the Parties to the Convention is expected to discuss the progress made towards the entry into force of the amendment on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) adopted through decision II/1, taking into account the information provided under agenda item 2. The secretariat will report on the steps taken to develop a draft decision of the Meeting of the Parties for discussion at the eighth meeting of the Working Group according to the procedure agreed upon at the seventh meeting of the Working Group (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/2, paras. 15 and 17). The Working Group will be invited to review the progress made in developing the draft decision and to provide further guidance as necessary. The Chair of the Working Group, Ms. Hanne Inger Bjurstrøm (Norway), will report on steps taken to prepare a regional or international expert meeting on access to information, public participation and access to justice in the field of GMOs (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/2, paras. 18 – 23). The Working Group is expected to review the preparations and to provide guidance as appropriate.

Item 5: Public participation in international forums

The Chair of the Working Group, together with the secretariat, will report on the outcome of the meeting on the involvement of the public in international forums, which was held in Geneva on 20 and 21 June 2007 (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/L.8 and L.9). The secretariat will also report on the preparations for the third meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums, scheduled to be held on 8 and 9 November 2007. That meeting is expected, inter alia, to review the comments submitted by Parties, Signatories, other interested States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other relevant actors pursuant to the procedure put in place by the Working Group at its seventh meeting (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/2, paras. 27 and 30). The Working Group will be invited to review the progress achieved and to provide guidance as appropriate.

Item 6: Access to justice

The secretariat will report on the outcomes of the sub-regional seminar on access to justice for the higher judiciary, held in Kiev on 4 and 5 June 2007, and the second meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice, scheduled to take place from 10 to 12 September 2007 in Geneva (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/L.10 and L.11). It will also report on the plans for further work in this area as discussed by the Task Force at the request of the Working Group (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/2, para. 37). The Working Group will be invited to take note of these activities and plans, and to consider various options for future work on access to justice to be considered and decided at the third meeting of the Parties.

Item 7: Electronic information tools and the clearing-house mechanism

The Chair of the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools, Mr. Chris Jarvis (United Kingdom), will report on the preparations for the sixth meeting of the Task Force, scheduled to be held in Geneva on 13 and 14 December 2007. The Chair and the secretariat will report on capacity building activities undertaken since the previous meeting of the Working Group, in particular in relation to the development of the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy. The Working Group is expected to take note of these activities and give guidance as necessary. The Working Group is also expected to discuss the possibilities for future work following the third meeting of the Parties.

Item 8: Public participation in strategic decision-making

The delegations of Austria and Bulgaria will report on the preparations for the workshop on public participation in strategic decision-making scheduled to take place in Sofia on 3 and 4 December 2007. The Working Group is expected to take note of the preparations and to consider possible further steps in this field following the third meeting of the Parties.

Item 9: Reporting requirements

Delegations will be invited to comment on the progress in preparing the national implementation reports, including on the application of the guidance that was endorsed by the Working Group at its previous meeting (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/2, para. 55). The secretariat will report on the steps taken to prepare for drafting the synthesis report. The Working Group is expected to take note and provide further guidance as necessary.

Item 10: Compliance mechanism

The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the outcomes of the sixteenth and seventeenth meetings of the Compliance Committee, held in Geneva from 13 to 15 June 2007 and from 26 to 28 September 2007.

Item 11: Capacity-building

The secretariat will report on the implementation of capacity-building activities since the previous meeting. The Working Group will be invited to take note of the various developments and activities and to encourage Parties, Signatories, other States and other relevant bodies to continue to provide support for them, taking account of the needs and priorities identified during the discussion.

Item 12: Long-term strategic plan

The Chair of the Working Group will present on behalf of the Bureau a draft of a long-term strategic plan, drawn up on the basis of draft elements prepared by the Expert Group on Long-Term Strategic Planning. The Working Group is expected to discuss the draft and revise it as necessary for further consideration at its next meeting or by the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/L.12).

Item 13: Financial status report

The secretariat will report on the interim status of financial contributions received and the expenditures incurred in 2007. Delegations will be invited to provide any updated information on their contributions for the remainder of 2007 and for 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 14: Financial arrangements

The Chair will present a draft decision on financial arrangements prepared by the Bureau pursuant to the request of the Working Group at its seventh meeting (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/2, para. 79). The Working Group will be invited to discuss the draft and, if necessary, establish a contact group to further develop the draft (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/L.13).

Item 15: Preparations for the third ordinary meeting of the Parties

The representative of Latvia, the host country of the third ordinary meeting of the Parties, and the secretariat will report on preparations for the meeting. The Working Group is expected to consider these preparations, to discuss the main elements for the programme and agenda of the meeting on the basis of draft elements prepared by the Bureau, and to decide upon further steps in the preparatory process (ECE/MR.PP/WG.1/2007/L.14). In the event that it is decided, at least provisionally, that the meeting will take place back to back with the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the Working Group is also expected to discuss any implications arising from this.

Item 16: Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”

The secretariat will report on any relevant aspects and outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, scheduled to be held in Belgrade from 10 to 12 October 2007, including two side-events concerning the Convention and the PRTR Protocol.

Item 17: Any other business

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