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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

Third meeting

Riga, 11-13 June 2008

Item 5 (f) of the provisional agenda

Substantive issues: public participation in international forums

DRAFT DECISION III/4

**PROMOTING THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF
THE CONVENTION IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS**

Draft decision prepared by the Working Group of the Parties

The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling article 3, paragraph 7, of the Convention, which requires each Party to promote 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,

Recalling also decision II/4 through which the Meeting of the Parties adopted the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention¹ in International Forums,

¹ The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

Welcoming the work undertaken by the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums under the chairmanship of France, and in particular the consultation process carried out by the Task Force on the Almaty Guidelines,

Believing that there is no need to revise the Almaty Guidelines at the present time,

Recognizing that significant work remains to be done to implement article 3, paragraph 7, of the Convention and that the principal focus of common work on this issue in the next intersessional period should be to assist Parties to do so,

Underlining the importance of increasing understanding of the challenges faced, and the good practices employed, by international forums with respect to public participation, through further exchange of experience between the Convention and other international forums,

[1. *Requests* each Party to report once in the intersessional period on its progress in applying the Almaty Guidelines, in addition to its regular reporting through the national implementation reports, in accordance with a format to be approved by the Working Group of the Parties;]

2. *Decides* to continue to apply the Almaty Guidelines in an exemplary manner within the subsidiary bodies established under the Convention, including those related to the Protocol;

3. *Also decides* to extend the mandate of the Task Force, subject to the availability of human and financial resources, and requests it, with the assistance of the secretariat:

(a) To continue outreach to interested international forums, but in a more focused way, e.g. through joint workshops, on a bilateral or limited multilateral basis, or by inviting representatives of interested international forums to attend meetings of the Convention bodies,

(b) To prepare a document evaluating the outcomes of the consultation process on the Almaty Guidelines carried out by the Task Force in the last intersessional period and to circulate this to the international forums involved, together with information on proposed future activities on the topic;

(c) To prepare a compendium of case studies of good practice on promoting public participation in international forums for broad dissemination;

(d) To circulate a questionnaire inviting Parties and relevant stakeholders to review the Parties' efforts to implement article 3, paragraph 7, and to prepare a report synthesizing the Parties and relevant stakeholders' responses;

(e) To organize a workshop or workshops for Parties to share their good practices and challenges regarding their efforts to implement article 3, paragraph 7;

4. *Encourages* outreach by individual Parties to non-governmental organizations, such as through regular national dialogues on policymaking in international forums and twinning initiatives between countries with experience and other interested countries;

5. *Also encourages* collaborative activities by groups of Parties to promote the Almaty Guidelines and the principles of the Convention in international forums whose practices do not presently reflect the Guidelines or the principles of the Convention;

6. *Requests* that the above activities be designed, where appropriate, to facilitate the participation of non-English speakers and to ensure the inclusion of a wide range of perspectives, including participants involved in other international forums and academia.
