



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 April 2010

Original: English

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

Twelfth meeting

Geneva, 30 June–2 July 2010

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twelfth meeting

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 30 June 2010*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.
3. Overseeing implementation and compliance:
 - (a) Compliance mechanism;
 - (b) Reporting requirements;
 - (c) Provision of country-specific needs-based advice and assistance;

* As part of the accreditation procedures for delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations, delegates are requested to complete the registration form available on the Convention website (www.unece.org/env/pp/practical.htm), and to transmit it to the Convention secretariat no later than two weeks before the meeting – namely, by 16 June 2010 – 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 at Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the Convention website). In case of difficulty, please contact the Convention secretariat by telephone at + 41 22 917 2682 / 2722.

- (d) Updating of the Implementation Guide.
- 4. Sharing of experiences and capacity-building:
 - (a) Genetically modified organisms;
 - (b) Electronic information tools and the clearing-house mechanism;
 - (c) Public participation;
 - (d) Access to justice;
 - (e) Interagency coordination on capacity-building.
- 5. Promotion of the Convention:
 - (a) Accession to the Convention by States from outside the UNECE region;
 - (b) Promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums;
 - (c) Awareness-raising activities;
 - (d) Preparation of a communication strategy.
- 6. Implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011, including the financial report for 2009.
- 7. Financial arrangements.
- 8. Cooperation with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, including matters arising from the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.
- 9. Preparations for the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties:
 - (a) Update by the host country and the secretariat;
 - (b) Discussion on possible elements of the provisional agenda.
- 10. Recent and forthcoming developments relevant to the Convention or Protocol.
- 11. Other business.

II. Annotations

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

The Working Group will be invited to adopt the agenda as set out in the present document.

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

The secretariat will provide the Working Group with an overview of the status of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with respect to the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments concerning the ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with respect to these

instruments in their respective countries. The Working Group is expected to take note of these developments.

Item 3: Overseeing implementation and compliance

(a) Compliance mechanism

The secretariat will report on the work of the Compliance Committee carried out since the previous meeting of the Working Group. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided.

(b) Reporting requirements

Through decision III/5, the Working Group of the Parties was requested to review the system of preparation of the national implementation reports whereby the reports are translated and circulated in the three official languages, including the resource implications thereof, in the context of a general review of the reporting system (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.7, paras. 20–21). The secretariat will present a discussion paper, prepared in consultation with the Bureau, on options for addressing the matter. The paper includes the additional information requested by the Working Group at its eleventh meeting (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/2). The Working Group is expected to review the paper and explore ways of finding a practical solution. Delegations will be invited to raise any other matters related to the reporting procedure, including matters arising from the training session scheduled to be held immediately prior to the meeting pursuant to decision III/5 (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.7, para. 26).

(c) Provision of country-specific needs-based advice and assistance

Various capacity-building needs have been identified through the compliance and reporting mechanisms of the Convention and the work of its task forces. With a view to strengthening countries' abilities to meet their obligations under the Convention, the Working Group will be invited to consider the possibility of providing country-specific needs-based advice and assistance, based on experiences with similar mechanisms under other conventions (e.g. in-kind expertise, training, national multi-stakeholder dialogues or fact-finding missions). Such an assistance mechanism could operate at countries' request, be facilitative in nature and foster cooperation with partner organizations and civil society, providing support in areas such as accession to, ratification of or transposition into national law of the Convention and its amendment, as well as improving implementation and practical application of relevant national legislation.

(d) Updating of the Implementation Guide

The secretariat will report on progress made with respect to preparing an updated version of *The Aarhus Convention: An Implementation Guide* (United Nations, 2000), including procedural and timing aspects. The Working Group will be invited to take note of this information.

Documentation

Discussion paper on the system of national reporting on the implementation of the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2010/8)

Item 4: Sharing of experiences and capacity-building

(a) Genetically modified organisms

The secretariat will report on the preparations for a workshop organized jointly with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on the topic of genetically modified organisms, scheduled to take place in conjunction with the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010. The secretariat will further report on other relevant developments related to genetically modified organisms. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of these reports and developments.

(b) Electronic information tools and the clearing-house mechanism

The Chair of the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools will report on the preparations for the eighth meeting of the Task Force and for a workshop on electronic information tools to be held back to back with the Task Force meeting. The secretariat will report on other relevant activities undertaken since the previous meeting of the Working Group, including in relation to the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the report and of these developments and may offer guidance on the planned activities.

(c) Public participation

At its third session, the Meeting of the Parties agreed to establish an Expert Group on Public Participation, which was mandated to coordinate the exchange of information on good practices in public participation and to advise the Working Group on the terms of reference for a Task Force on Public Participation through decision III/9 (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.17). At its eleventh meeting, taking into account the advice of the Expert Group, the Working Group prepared draft terms of reference for a Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/2) and forwarded them for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties will report on the outcome of the extraordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties convened on 19 April 2010 for the purpose of, inter alia, establishing the proposed Task Force. A representative of Ireland, the lead country for this area of activity, will report on the activities undertaken and planned in this area. The secretariat will report on other relevant activities relating to public participation. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and may offer guidance on the planned activities.

Documentation

Report of the first meeting of the Expert Group on Public Participation (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2010/3), report of the extraordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and decision on the establishment of a task force on public participation in decision-making (ECE/MP.PP/2010/2 and ECE/MP.PP/2010/2/Add.1)

(d) Access to justice

The Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice will present the report of the third meeting of the Task Force (Geneva, 14–15 October 2009) and, together with the secretariat, will report on other relevant activities carried out since the previous meeting of the Working Group, including preparations for the next meeting of the Task Force. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the report and of these developments and may offer guidance on the planned activities.

Documentation

Report of the third meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2010/6)

- (e) Interagency coordination on capacity-building

The secretariat will report on capacity-building activities related to the Convention, including preparations for the sixth capacity-building coordination meeting, scheduled to take place in Geneva in September 2010. Delegations will be invited to report on capacity-building activities carried out since the previous meeting of the Working Group and to provide information on capacity-building needs. The Working Group will be invited to take note of the various developments and activities as well as the needs described, and to provide suggestions for strengthening work in this area.

Item 5: Promotion of the Convention

- (a) Accession to the Convention by States from outside the UNECE region

The Working Group is expected to take note of and, as appropriate, follow up on any decisions taken by the Meeting of the Parties at its second extraordinary session in relation to the issue of accession to the Convention by States from outside the UNECE region.

- (b) Promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums

The Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums will present the reports of the fourth and fifth meetings of the Task Force, as well as a workshop held back to back with the fifth meeting (Geneva, 26–27 April 2010) and, together with the secretariat, will report on other relevant activities carried out since the previous meeting of the Working Group, as well as future plans. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the report and of these developments.

Documentation

Reports of the fourth and fifth meetings of the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums and associated workshop (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2010/4 and ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2010/5, respectively)

- (c) Awareness-raising activities

The secretariat will report on its activities aimed at raising awareness about the Convention, as mandated under activity area III of the work programme 2009–2011 (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.17), including the preparation of various publications. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on awareness-raising activities and other relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of this information.

- (d) Preparation of a communication strategy

Through decision III/9, the Meeting of the Parties agreed to develop a communication strategy for the Convention as part of activities in the area of awareness-raising and promotion of the Convention and the Protocol (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.17). At its eleventh meeting, the Working Group established an expert group on a communication strategy, inviting Parties to nominate communication experts to participate in the work of the expert group (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/2). The secretariat will report on the progress towards developing the strategy. A draft of the strategy was originally scheduled to be

presented to the Working Group at its twelfth session but owing to staff shortages, the initiation of work by the expert group was delayed and it is now expected that the strategy will be delivered for consideration by the Working Group at its thirteenth session. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided.

Item 6: Implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011, including the financial report for 2009

The secretariat will present a report on the implementation of the work programme during 2009, containing an overview of financial contributions received for use in 2009 and the expenditures incurred in 2009. The Working Group will be invited to take note of the information provided. The secretariat will also provide information on contributions received for use in 2010. Delegations will be invited to provide additional information on their contributions for 2010. The Working Group will be invited to take note of the financial situation and to consider any implications for implementation of the 2009–2011 work programme. The Working Group is also expected to consider any implications for the work programme under the Convention arising from the adoption of the work programme under the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.

Documentation

Report on implementation of the work programme during 2009, including the financial report (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2010/7)

Item 7: Financial arrangements

Through decision III/7, the Working Group of the Parties was requested to continue in-depth discussions on possible future schemes of financial arrangements that meet the goals of stability, predictability and equity, including schemes that combine elements of the two options presented to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session. The Working Group was further requested to make recommendations concerning one or more options for a scheme of financial arrangements with a view to their adoption at the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.15). The Chair will present a draft decision containing one or more options for a future scheme of financial arrangements, prepared by the Bureau with the assistance of the secretariat. The Working Group is expected to review the draft decision and revise it as appropriate, with a view to its eventual transmission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties.

Documentation

Draft decision on financial arrangements (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2010/L.1)

Item 8: Cooperation with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, including matters arising from the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol

The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers will be invited to present the report of the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Geneva, 20–22 April 2010), drawing attention to any matters having particular relevance for the activities under the Convention, and, together with the secretariat, to report on other relevant developments in the field of pollutant release and transfer registers. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on

relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the report and of these developments.

Documentation

Report of the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2)

Item 9: Preparations for the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties

- (a) Update by the host country and the secretariat

The Republic of Moldova, as host country for the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, and the secretariat will report on preparations for the session, including the practical arrangements. The Working Group will be invited to take note of this information.

- (b) Discussion on possible elements of the provisional agenda

The Working Group is expected to hold a first discussion on the main themes of the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties and to agree upon the procedure and schedule for preparation of the main documentation for the session, such as the provisional agenda, declaration and draft work programme for the following intersessional period, as well as its general content.

Item 10: Recent and forthcoming developments relevant to the Convention or Protocol

The secretariat will report on recent and forthcoming developments relevant to the Convention not covered elsewhere in the agenda, including relevant meetings attended by secretariat staff. Delegations will be invited to provide additional information on any such events or developments, including activities at the international, regional, subregional and national levels. The Working Group is expected to take note of these activities.

Item 11: Other business

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