



Economic Commission for Europe**Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on
Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers
to the Convention on Access to Information,
Public Participation in Decision-making and
Access to Justice in Environmental Matters****First session**

Geneva, 20–22 April 2010

Item 13 of the provisional agenda

Preparation of the draft Geneva Declaration**Draft Geneva Declaration¹**

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation from Parties and Signatories, together with representatives of other States, international, regional and non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians and other representatives of civil society from throughout the UNECE region and beyond, gathered here in Geneva at the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, affirm the following:

I. Promoting implementation of the Protocol and advancing sustainable and environmentally sound development

1. The entry into force of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers marks a milestone in the advancement of public access to information about sources of environmental pollution in the UNECE region. Its effective implementation is expected to facilitate public access to information on global environmental issues and public participation in environmental decision-making and to contribute to the prevention and reduction of pollution of the environment, thereby promoting sustainable and environmentally sound development and corporate accountability.

¹ The present document was prepared by the Bureau of the Working Group on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers established under the auspices of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, pursuant to the request of the Working Group at its sixth meeting (ECE/MP.PP/AC.1/2008/2, paragraph 32).

2. We commit ourselves to taking the necessary measures, within our respective capacities and sphere of competence, to achieve and maintain full and effective implementation of the Protocol.

3. We call upon Signatories to ratify, approve or accept the Protocol at the earliest opportunity and to apply the provisions of the Protocol in the interim.

4. We invite all other interested Member States of the United Nations which are not yet party to the Protocol to accede to the Protocol. In the meantime, we encourage them to participate actively in the work under the Protocol so that the standards contained in the Protocol are recognized and applied by as many States as possible and widely reflected in effective rules and regulations at national level.

5. We recognize that adequate stable and predictable funding of the activities under the Protocol is necessary for its implementation. We therefore welcome the establishment of the voluntary scheme of financial arrangements based on shares as a first step to meet this need and urge Parties and others in a position to do so to contribute financially to the Protocol in accordance with the scheme as soon as possible.

6. We urge Governments to support and promote the efforts of facilities to monitor, calculate or estimate releases and transfers of pollutants through the preparation of guidance materials, information campaigns and training exercises.

7. We are committed to strengthening international cooperation with a view to establishing and/or maintaining national and regional pollutant release and transfer registers in all Parties and Signatories to the Protocol, recognizing the urgency and importance of the issues addressed by article 16 of the Protocol and the needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in particular.

II. Capacity-building partnerships and coordination

8. We encourage business and industry organizations to assist facility owners and operators with reporting obligations under the Protocol within their respective sectors in using pollutant release and transfer registers as tools for encouraging improvements in environmental performance and demonstrating progress in reducing pollution. The UNECE Guidelines on Strengthening Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises² provide useful guidance in this regard.

9. We welcome the significant contribution of civil society organizations and regional environmental centres to raising awareness of pollutant release and transfer registers and building capacity for implementation at national level. Such efforts further enhance the implementation of the Protocol and merit the support of donor institutions.

10. We note with appreciation the Global Environment Facility project, POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants) Monitoring, Reporting and Information Dissemination using Pollutant Release and Transfers Registers, being implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, which seeks to assist 13 countries with the development of national pollutant release and transfer registers in support of implementation of the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, as a concrete example of international cooperation and synergy between the Protocol and that Convention.

² Contained in *Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises: Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*, United Nations, 2007. New York and Geneva (ECE/CEP/141).

11. We welcome the adoption of European Community Regulation 166/2006 concerning the establishment of a European pollutant release and transfer register³ as a major step toward achieving the objective of the Protocol in the countries concerned.

12. We welcome also the publication of the UNECE Guidance on Implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers⁴ and invite countries to translate this guidance into their national languages.

III. Synergies with relevant multilateral environmental agreements and other international initiatives

13. We recognize that the commitments undertaken at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development to achieve sound management of chemicals by the year 2020 are supported through implementation of the Protocol. We welcome the adoption by the International Conference on Chemicals Management⁵ of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and its Global Plan of Action, which recognize the role of pollutant release and transfer registers in support of SAICM, and note with appreciation the activities of the SAICM Quick Start Programme in support of the design of national pollutant release and transfer systems in countries which may significantly contribute to implementation of the Protocol.

14. We further recognize that national pollutant release and transfer registers, when appropriately designed, can help countries meet their obligations under other multilateral environmental agreements and international initiatives concerning pollutants and waste while furthering their implementation. We call for cooperation with such international agreements and initiatives, including the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution and its eight protocols, the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the global initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme on mercury and [invite][urge] Parties to explore possible synergies between these instruments and the Protocol.

15. Recalling the right of a Party to maintain or introduce a more extensive pollutant release and transfer register, as provided through article 3, paragraph 2, of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, and taking into account the decision to extend the list of pollutants covered by the Stockholm Convention, we [recommend][invite consideration of] the inclusion in pollutant release and transfer register systems of the pollutants covered by the Stockholm Convention that are not yet covered by the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.

16. We invite the Parties to the Protocol to explore the possible contribution of greenhouse gas emission data collected in accordance with the Protocol to the reporting of

³ Regulation (EC) No. 166/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 January 2006 concerning the establishment of a European Pollutant and Transfer Register and amending Council Directives 91/689/EEC and 96/61/EC.

⁴ *UNECE Guidance on Implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers*, 2008. New York and Geneva (ECE/MP.PP/7).

⁵ At its first meeting, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 4 to 6 February 2006.

national inventories of greenhouse gas emissions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

17. We recognize the work of the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Coordinating Group, in particular its efforts to coordinate capacity-building activities of the United Nations and regional organizations in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, as a contribution to the implementation of the Protocol.

IV. Cooperation to implement priority activities

18. We pledge to keep the implementation [and[, at a later stage,] the development] of this Protocol under continuous review in order to ensure its appropriateness and relevance to meeting the objectives of the Protocol. We seek to ensure that the periodic evaluation of further pollutants or activities for inclusion in the Protocol is undertaken, while avoiding duplication of work with relevant processes.

19. We welcome the scoping study of the pollutant-specific and waste-specific approaches undertaken by the Task Force on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in partnership with the Parties to the Protocol. We believe that an exchange of information on the experience gained in reporting transfers using the pollutant-specific and waste-specific approaches would facilitate review of that experience by the Meeting of the Parties at its second session.

20. We recommend that, in order to improve interoperability among national systems, Governments, regional economic integration organizations and international organizations should use geographical information systems and online mapping of pollutant releases and transfers to assist the public with accessing and visualizing pollutant release and transfer register data and that current standards of inter-operability be considered in such work.

21. We welcome the further development of PRTR.net, the global portal on pollutant release and transfer registers, launched in 2007 under the auspices of the OECD Task Force on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, and invite donors to provide support for this important information resource.

22. We pledge to keep under review technical assistance needs, so that the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol may consider whether a separate technical assistance mechanism is needed to assist Parties, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

23. Noting that the Protocol builds upon the basic obligation⁶ set out in the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters to establish progressively a nationwide system of pollution inventories or registers, we consider that synergies between these instruments should be maintained and promoted, inter alia through joint awareness-raising activities and exchange of information on implementation between their respective Parties.

⁶ Contained in article 5, paragraph 9, of the Convention.

V. Conclusion

24. We express our gratitude to the Governments of the Czech Republic and Belgium for leading the Working Group of the Protocol during the preparatory period leading up to the first session of the Meeting of the Parties.

25. We welcome and accept the offer of the Government of [...] to host the second session of the Meeting of the Parties in [...] of [...].
