

Speaking note regarding Ireland's funding of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision Making

Good morning and thank you Mr Chair for extending to the Irish delegation this opportunity to speak very briefly to the Aarhus family gathered here today.

Ireland ratified the Convention, its GMO amendment and the Protocol in June 2012, so this is our first opportunity to address the MoP as a Party and it is with great pride that we do so. Ratification was a lengthy process in Ireland, however our commitment to the Convention and our belief in its importance is longstanding.

Demonstrative of this commitment, in 2008, at the Meeting of the Parties in Latvia, Ireland offered to lead the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Public Participation. In 2010 the ad hoc expert group evolved into the Task Force on Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making.

Over the past six years, a substantial body of excellent work has been undertaken by the Ad Hoc Expert Group and the Task Force culminating in the draft Maastricht recommendations on promoting effective public participation in decision-making.

Regrettably Ireland is no longer in a position to lead this Task Force. As a relatively recently ratified Party we must now prioritise our allocation of resources and increase our focus on the National Level, in particular on awareness raising and practical on-the-ground implementation.

Ireland wishes to thank the Parties for having extended to us the opportunity to lead this Task Force for the last number of years.

We hope that the momentum of this work and the output of this Task Force will be carried forward into the future. Irish officials will continue to participate to the fullest extent possible at meetings of the Task Force.

I would like to conclude by thanking Mr Phil Kearney, our nominated Chair, for his dedication to achieving the ambitions of the Task Force over the last 6 years.

And by also commending our hosts on their organisation of such a dynamic gathering and I am confident that that MOP 5 will be remembered as a fruitful and memorable event.

Thank you