

6th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

Budva, Montenegro 11-13 September 2017

Agenda item 9(c): Financial arrangements

Norway

Norway would like to thank the Bureau and Secretariat for its eminent support to the in preparing the draft decisions, including this one on financial arrangements.

As many of the Parties probably are aware of from previous discussions at the 5th Meeting of the Parties in Maastricht and subsequent meetings of the Working Group, Norway prefers establishing a mandatory financial scheme based on adjusted UN scale of assessed contributions. We believe this would be the best solution based on the principles of an equitable sharing of the burden, stable and predictable sources of funding, accountability and sound financial management.

The Parties to the Aarhus Convention have a collective responsibility to contribute to the effective functioning and follow-up of the Convention, in order to achieve its goals. Although contributions can be and are made in different ways, stable, predictable and fairly shared financial contributions are a necessary foundation.

Effective functioning and follow-up of the Convention is important for several reasons. It contributes to the fulfilment of procedural human rights and good governance in the environmental field, which in turn contribute to safeguarding the environment and thus also to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Increased cost efficiency is important but will mainly contribute to reducing the amount of funding needed. Requesting UNECE to explore the possibility to allocate more resources to the Aarhus Convention could produce similar results. Differentiating between operational costs and costs of non-operational activities might enable us to prioritize the use of the contributions received and possibly conclude that they cover a minimum of operational costs.

Neither of these measures would in themselves lead to a fair burden sharing of the costs that would still remain, or predictable sources of funding.

We therefore regret that there is at present insufficient support for the establishment of a general mandatory scheme of contributions.

We are however aware that the Parties operate under budget constraints.

We are also aware that we need to come to an agreement on this decisive issue.

Judging from these previous discussions and the intervention made by the EU, the prospect of changes in the position of those opposed to the introduction of a mandatory scheme during these few days of the MoP, the few months left before the upcoming sixth Meeting of the Parties is bleak. If we had thought that there was even a faint possibility of convincing those opposed through discussions at the Meeting of the Parties, we would have insisted on keeping the two options at the table. We have however come to the conclusion that this is not the case.

It is clear from the last preambular paragraph and stated in paragraphs 13 and 14 of the draft decision that the Parties agree to review the operation of the financial arrangements at the 7th session of the MoP and that the Bureau and the Working Group of the Parties are mandated to explore options for more predictable, stable and equitably shared funding. The EU has not proposed to amend or delete these paragraphs. These paragraphs are important to us in light of our aim to secure more predictable, stable and equitably shared funding of the activities under the Convention.

We are therefore willing to compromise in the short term and support the draft decision with the amendments proposed by the EU to contribute to consensus and enable the MoP to concentrate on other important, outstanding issues.

We are however not giving up on our aim, and intend to pursue possible ways to ensure stable, predictable and fairly shared contributions, including through a strengthened funding mechanism.

Thank you Chair