

Third Meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums, 8-9 November 2007

Chair's paper on future options

1. At its sixth meeting on 5-7 April 2006 the Working Group of the Parties approved the work plan of the Task Force on Public Participation on International Forums.¹ Over the last eighteen months, the Task Force has completed the activities envisaged in the work plan, save for the task of reviewing the outcomes of the consultation process on the Almaty Guidelines and reporting to the Meeting of the Parties. The Task Force will review the outcomes of the consultation process at its third meeting and will report to the Parties at their third meeting to be held in Riga, Latvia in June 2008.
2. In its task of reviewing the outcomes of the consultation process, the Task Force has the following documents to consider:
 - a. The responses of international forums to the written questionnaire on the Almaty Guidelines and the issues they address;²
 - b. The paper prepared by the secretariat synthesising the responses received from international forums to the written questionnaire;³
 - c. The report of the meeting of representatives of international forums⁴
 - d. Additional material received in connection with the workshop?
 - e. Comments received from Parties, Signatories, other interested States, non-governmental organizations, interested international forums and other relevant actors on their experience regarding the application of the Almaty Guidelines.⁵
 - f. The paper prepared by the secretariat synthesising the comments received from Parties and other States, NGOs and other stakeholders on experiences with the application of the Almaty Guidelines.⁶
3. In addition to its task of reviewing the outcomes of the consultation process, the Task Force has been invited by the Working Group of the Parties to assist it in its task of reviewing the Guidelines and making recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by the Parties at their third ordinary meeting.⁷ The Working Group has confirmed its understanding that the review of the Guidelines does not necessarily entail their revision.
4. The purpose of this paper is to set out a range of options that the Task Force may wish to consider with respect to assisting the Working Group in its task of

¹ ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2006/2/Add.1

² Available at <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif-response.htm>

³ ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.2, ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.2/Add.1, ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.2/Add.2, ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.2/Add.3, ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.2/Add.4, ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.2/Add.5 available at <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.htm>

⁴ ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.8 available at <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.htm>

⁵ Available at <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.htm>

⁶ Available at <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.htm>

⁷ ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/2, paragraph 30.

reviewing the Guidelines and making recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by the Parties at their third ordinary meeting. The paper is proposed as an aid to reflection and is not intended as an exhaustive list.

5. Some possible options that the Task Force might wish to consider include:
- a. Whether, in light of the outcome of the consultation process, to recommend that the Almaty Guidelines should be amended.
 - b. Whether, in light of paragraphs 63 (b) and (d) and 64(1) of the Report of the Meeting of Representatives of International Forums,⁸ to recommend to the Working Group that it recommend the Meeting of the Parties to request each Party to make special efforts to increase the awareness and understanding of those of its representatives involved in other international forums dealing with matters relating to the environment, including international financial institutions, with respect to article 3, paragraph 7 and the principles of the Convention more generally.
 - c. Whether, in the context of the reporting obligations contained in decisions I/8⁹ and II/10¹⁰, to recommend to the Working Group that it recommend the Meeting of the Parties to request each Party to provide a comprehensive overview of measures it has taken to implement the principles of the Convention in other international forums dealing with matters relating to the environment, including:
 - i. Its special efforts under sub-paragraph 5(b) above; and
 - ii. Whether, and if so how, it has used the Almaty Guidelines to assist it to promote the principles of the Convention in other international forums.
 - d. Whether the Task Force should itself undertake further activities to assist Parties in the implementation of article 3, paragraph 7. Alternatively, whether the Task Force should complete its work at the third meeting of the Parties in June 2008.

Possible further activities that the Task Force might undertake could include:

- i. The design of a questionnaire inviting Parties to share good practices and challenges regarding their special efforts to increase the awareness and understanding of their representatives involved in other international forums. The Task Force might meet approximately half-way through the next inter-sessional period to prepare such a questionnaire. A

⁸ ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2007/L.8

⁹ ECE/MP.PP/2/Add.9

¹⁰ ECE/MP.PP/2005/2/Add.14

timeframe of approximately six months might then be allowed for Parties to respond to the questionnaire. Thereafter a synthesis of responses might be prepared by the secretariat for consideration by the Task Force at a further meeting to be held approximately six months before the fourth meeting of the Parties. Following its consideration of the responses to the questionnaire, the Task Force might prepare recommendations to go to the Working Group of the Parties in advance of the fourth meeting of the Parties.

- ii. In light of the interest expressed during the consultation process by secretariats of several international forums to collaborate further with the Aarhus Convention on the issue of public participation in international forums, to explore possibilities for such collaboration with a small number of these interested international forums. Collaborative activities might be on a bilateral or small multilateral basis. One or more such activities could be held back-to-back with the meetings of the Task Force in the next inter-sessional period suggested above.