

Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

Fifteenth meeting

Geneva, 3–5 September 2012

Item 6 of the provisional agenda:

Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

**Questionnaire for delegates for thematic session
to be held Tuesday, 4 September 2012, 15.00-18.00**

This questionnaire will serve as the basis for the discussion during the thematic session on public participation in international forums to be held on Tuesday afternoon, 4 September 2012. In order to ensure that the discussion is as rich and fruitful as possible, all national focal points and stakeholders are invited to prepare answers to the questionnaire in advance of the session. Brief answers are sufficient, and the answers should, for the most part, already be within the knowledge of government delegates in particular. Delegates do not need to submit written answers to the questionnaire in advance of the session (though they are of course welcome to do so) but all delegates should be in a position to address each question orally during the session.

SESSION 1: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION BEFORE, AT AND AFTER RIO+20

In the lead-up to the Rio+20 conference:

1. Were (i) the Chisinau Declaration and (ii) the Almaty Guidelines disseminated to government officials, including those from other ministries, in the lead-up to the Rio+20 conference? If so, how?
2. Did your government establish a special committee, forum or process for consulting with the public in the lead-up to the Rio+20 conference?
If yes:
 - a. What was the structure of the committee/forum/process?
 - b. Who designed and led the process?
 - c. Did delegates from various ministries participate in the process?
 - d. Was the process open to all members of the public to participate or selected civil society representatives?
 - i. If the process was open to selected civil society representatives only, how were the representatives of civil society selected and how many took part?
 - ii. If the process was open to all members of the public, how was the public informed of its opportunities to participate and how were its views collected and fed into the process?
 - e. How were the outcomes of this process taken into account in your government's contribution to the Rio+20 conference?
3. What other measures did your government take, individually or collectively with other governments, to promote the involvement of the public in the preparations for the conference at either the national or international level?

During the Rio+20 conference:

4. Was the committee/forum/process for involving civil society representatives and/or the wider public continued during the Rio+20 conference itself, and if so, in what form?
5. What other measures did your government take, individually or collectively with other governments, to promote public participation during the Rio+20 conference itself, including in the negotiating process for the "The Future We Want" outcome document?
6. What steps did your government take, individually or collectively with other governments, to promote the principles of the Convention in the text of "The Future We Want" outcome document?

After the Rio+20 conference:

7. Is it intended that the committee/forum/process for involving civil society representatives and/or the wider public will continue now that the Rio+20 conference has finished? If so, what will be its purpose?
8. What other mechanisms exist or are envisaged at the national level to involve the public in the follow-up to the Rio+20 conference?
9. Please briefly evaluate the public participation process in the lead-up to and during the Rio+20 conference:
 - a. Did the process provide useful input to the government's official contribution?

- b. Has the process helped to build a closer relationship between the government and the public with respect to environmental/sustainable development issues in your country?
- c. Do you think that the public participation process put in place in the lead-up to and during the Rio+20 conference could be used for involving the public in other international forums?

SESSION 2: MEASURES TAKEN AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL TO SYSTEMATICALLY PROMOTE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

10. A number of Parties state in their national implementation reports that they do not yet have measures in place to systematically promote the principles of the Convention across all international forums.¹ If your government does indeed have such measures in place, for the benefit of other Parties, please outline these measures, including:
 - a. How did your government go about identifying all the international forums in which it participates that are within the scope of paragraph 4 of the Almaty Guidelines²?
 - b. How does your government ensure that officials in other ministries/departments promote the principles of the Aarhus Convention in those international forums under their competency?
 - c. What measures has your government put in place to ensure that all officials taking part in such international forums receive training in how to take practical steps to implement their obligation under article 3, para. 7³?
 - d. How does your government ensure on a systematic basis, that all officials taking part in such international forums do indeed take practical steps to implement their obligation under article 3, para. 7?
 - e. Which of the above measures have worked well, and which have worked less well?
11. If your government does not yet have measures in place to systematically promote the principles of the Convention across all international forums in which it takes part within the scope of paragraph 4 of the Almaty Guidelines:
 - a. What factors have prevented systematic measures being put in place so far?
 - b. What might a plan for your government to systematically promote the principles of the Convention in all international forums in which it take part look like?
 - c. What concrete steps would the plan need to include?
 - d. What kind of timeframes would be realistic to include in the plan?
 - e. What further assistance would be needed to ensure the successful implementation of the plan, and at what governmental level (for example, in order to ensure that other ministries/departments promote the principles of the Convention in relevant international forums under their competency)?

SESSION 3: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN IFI-FUNDED PROJECTS

12. Which international financial institutions (IFIs) is your government a member of?
13. What specific steps has your government taken in the last two years, either individually or collectively with other governments, to promote the principles of the Convention in these IFIs with respect to the following:
 - (i) The IFIs' meetings and bodies;
 - (ii) The IFIs' official policies;
 - (iii) The IFIs' projects, including where relevant, any projects to be carried out in your country;
 - (iv) The IFIs' compliance review mechanism.
14. What concrete possibilities could you foresee for your government to promote the principles of the Convention, either individually or collectively with other governments, in the above respects in the coming two years?

¹ See background document 2 "Extracts from the national implementation reports on article 3, para. 7", available online at <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/public-participation/meetings-and-events/public-participation/public-participation/2012/fifteenth-meeting-of-the-working-group-of-the-parties-to-the-aarhus-convention/acwgp15.html>

² The Almaty Guidelines, annexed to Decision II/4 on promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums, are available online at <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mop2/mop2.doc.html>

³ Article 3, para. 7 provides: "Each Party shall promote the application of the principles of this Convention in international environmental decision-making processes and within the framework of international organizations in matters relating to the environment."