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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Working Group of the Parties

Twenty-first meeting
Geneva, 4–6 April 2017
Item 8 (a) of the provisional agenda
Other substantive preparations for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties: agenda of the sixth session

Draft provisional agenda for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties

Prepared by the Bureau

Summary

The outline contained herein, prepared by the Convention Bureau, presents a draft provisional agenda for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, as well as a proposal for the organization of work of the session. As the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention will be held back to back with the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention's Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, the Bureau of the Protocol was also consulted on the proposed organization of work (see section II), prior to its consideration by the Working Group of the Parties to the Convention at its twentieth meeting (Geneva, 15–17 June 2016).

The document was prepared in accordance with the work programme for 2015–2017[1] adopted by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its fifth session.

[1] See ECE/MP.PP/2014/2/Add.1, decision V/6, annex I, sect. X; available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/mop5_docs.html#/.

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The outline aims to facilitate the Working Group's discussion on the organization of work and agenda for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties. There was an opportunity for an open-ended consultation among national focal points and stakeholders on the agenda prior to and after the twentieth meeting of the Working Group. Parties and stakeholders supported the proposal.

The Protocol's Bureau submitted the suggested organization of work for the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. The organization of work for the third session was prepared in the light of both the outcomes of the twentieth meeting of Convention's Working Group of the Parties and the draft provisional agenda for third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, approved by the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol at its fifth meeting (Geneva, 23–24 November 2016).

The Convention's Working Group is expected to consider and approve the draft provisional agenda contained herein for submission to the Convention's Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session (Budva, Montenegro, September 2017).

I. Dates and venue

1. The sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers will be held back to back during the week of 11 September 2017 in Budva, Montenegro.[2]

II. Organization of work

2. The proposed allocation of time for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and the associated meetings are set out in the table below.

Date	*Convention/Protocol body*
Sunday, 10 September	Convention Compliance Committee (full day; could continue in parallel with the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, as required), Convention Bureau (afternoon)
Monday, 11 September (9 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–5.30 p.m.)	Sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (preparatory segment)[a]
Tuesday, 12 September (10 a.m.–6 p.m.)	Sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (general segment)
Wednesday, 13 September (10 a.m.–6 p.m.)	Sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (general segment)
Thursday, 14 September (10 a.m.–6 p.m.)	Joint high-level segment of the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers
Friday, 15 September (10 a.m.–6 p.m.)	Third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (general segment)

[a] The purpose of the preparatory segment is to finalize any pending documents that may be required. Late afternoon/evening is reserved for the finalization and translation of possible revised documents, as well as for possible coordination meetings.

III. Elements of the agenda

3. For the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention it is suggested that: (a) the agenda should be, in general, similar to the agenda for the fifth session; (b) the agenda should cover all substantive areas of work under the Convention; and

[2] The seventy-second regular session of the United Nations General Assembly will convene at United Nations Headquarters on Tuesday, 12 September 2017. The General Debate will open on Tuesday, 19 September 2017.

(c) discussions should address good practices, achievements, lessons learned, challenges and obstacles in relation to implementing the Convention. Representatives of Governments and stakeholders could be invited to deliver keynote addresses under specific agenda items, as was done at the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties. It was agreed that the high-level segment will feature a thematic session on the role of the Convention and its Protocol in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. A concise, theme-specific joint declaration (i.e., with the Protocol's Parties) will be developed for consideration by high-level officials at the segment.

4. Thus, the agenda of the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention could include the following items:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Status of ratification of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.
4. Substantive issues:
   (a) Access to information, including electronic information tools;
   (b) Public participation in decision-making;
   (c) Access to justice;
   (d) Genetically modified organisms;
5. Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention:
   (a) Implementation reports;
   (b) Compliance mechanism;
   (c) Capacity-building.
6. Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages:
   (a) Accession to the Convention by States from outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region;
   (b) Promotion of the Convention's principles;
   (c) Synergies between the Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements;
   (d) Global and regional developments on issues related to Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development;
   (e) Update on United Nations Environment Programme initiatives on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters.
7. Programme of work and operation of the Convention:
   (a) Implementation of the work programme for 2015–2017;
   (b) Future work programme;
   (c) Financial arrangements.
8. Report on credentials with regard to the Convention's Parties.
9. Election of officers and other members of the Bureau.

10. Date and venue of the seventh ordinary meeting.

11. Any other business.

Joint High-level Segment (subject to the decision of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol)

1. Opening.

2. Report on credentials with regard to the Protocol's Parties.

3. Thematic session on the role of the Convention and its Protocol in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. Discussion and adoption of the Declaration.

5. Review and adoption of decisions by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention.

6. Closure of the Joint High-level Segment.