

Economic Commission for Europe
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-third meeting

Geneva, 26–28 June 2019

Item 5 of the provisional agenda:

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

**Promotion of the principles of the Convention on Access to Information,
Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in
Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) in international forums¹**

Provisional programme for the thematic session²
to be held on Thursday, 27 June 2019, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Laura Michel

Introduction

Timing: 11.00–11.05 a.m.

The Chair of the session will introduce organization of work during the thematic session and the main topics for discussion. The thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums will include panel presentations and round table discussion on:

- (a) recent developments related to the promotion of the principles of the Convention in the policies of international financial institutions; and
- (b) cross-cutting issues to improve the public's access to information and participation in international forums.

In addition, the Working Group will consider new emerging issues and the progress made with regard to items discussed at previous thematic sessions. This includes:

- (a) climate-related processes with the focus on lessons learnt from the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and preparations for COP-25; and on promotion of the Convention's principles in the International Civil Aviation Organization processes;

¹ This document was not formally edited.

² Background information on work area on promoting the principles of the Convention in international forums is available from: <https://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.html>.

- (b) the policy on stakeholder engagement of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme;
- (c) Sustainable Development Goals-related processes.

I. Promotion of the Convention's principles in international financial institutions

Timing: 11.05 a.m.–1 p.m.

This item will be organized in the format of a panel presentation and round-table discussion. The focus of this session is to review recent developments and results achieved by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Investment Bank (EIB) and the World Bank in promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in the processes, policies and projects of these institutions. This will include:

- update on the current status and plans regarding policies on access to information and stakeholder's engagement;
- update on the current status and plans regarding practical material and/or capacity building activities to promote policies on access to information and stakeholder's engagement;
- information on main challenges that Banks identified in implementing the policies and opportunities to address them; and
- potential support from Governments and stakeholders as identified by Banks.

The Chair will also present the results of a survey circulated among the Aarhus national focal points to collect information on the involvement of the public in the policies of international financial institutions.

The Working Group will consider in this regard a number of issues, including how Aarhus Parties have promoted the principles of the Convention in international finance institutions meeting bodies; official policies; projects, including where relevant, any projects carried out in an Aarhus Party; and compliance review mechanism.

Panellists:

- *Ms. Michaela Bergmann*, Principal Social Development Specialist, AIIB
- *Ms. Anna Samolis*, Office of the Secretary General and *Mr. Mikko Venermo*, Environmental and Sustainability Department, EBRD
- *Mr. Roberto Rando*, Senior Complaints Officer, EIB
- *Ms. Una Meades*, Lead Environmental and Social Standards Specialist and *Ms. Patricia Miranda*, Senior Counsel, Legal Vice Presidency, the World Bank
- *Ms. Suada Numić*, Head of Department for Pollutant-Release and Transfer Registers, Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- *Ms. Catalina Radulescu*, Bankwatch Romania and representative of the European ECO Forum

Open discussion

Documentation³

Results of the survey for Parties (AC/WGP-23/Inf.4)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018-2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/5)

Promoting the application of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums (Almaty Guidelines; ECE/MP.PP/2005/2/Add.5)

³ Documents for the thematic session on promoting the principles of the Convention in international forums are available from: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50755>.

Additional information and documentation on IFIs policies on access to information and stakeholder's engagement is annexed.

1–3 p.m. *Lunch break*

II. Cross-cutting issues to improve the public's access to information and participation in international forums

Timing: 3–3.45 p.m.

This item will be organized in the format of a panel presentation and round-table discussion. During this session, the Working Group will consider cross-cutting issues to enhance access to information and/or public participation in international forums, such cross-cutting issues include, among others:

- a) Different modalities for engaging stakeholders;
- b) Self-organization of stakeholders;
- c) Hosting an international event; and
- d) Identification of the public.

The Chair will also present the results of a survey circulated among the Aarhus national focal points and stakeholders to collect information on cross-cutting issues and innovative way to improve the public's access to information and participation in international forums.

Panellists:

- *Ms. Marguerite Camilleri*, Unit Manager International Affairs, Environment and Resources Authority, Malta
- *Mr. Sébastien Duyck*, Senior Attorney, Climate and Energy Programme, Center for International Environmental Law and representative of the European ECO Forum

Open discussion

Documentation

Results of the survey for Parties (AC/WGP-23/Inf.4)

III. Update on items considered at previous thematic sessions

Timing: 3.45–4.40 p.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider the *promotion of the Convention's principles in the climate change-related processes*. This will include lessons learnt from COP-24 to the UNFCCC and preparations for COP-25; and the promotion of the Convention principles in the International Civil Aviation Organization processes. With regard to the latter, Parties and representatives of the International Civil Aviation Organization and of International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation, along with other participants will be invited to share their views on how could ICAO make its work transparent and accessible to those not directly involved in the process, including by making available online its Council's agendas, decisions and other documents; and how can Parties ensure they meet their obligations under the Convention in relation to ICAO processes.

Furthermore, based on the written submissions, the Working Group will consider updates on the promotion of the Convention principles in international forums with the focus being on: *policy on stakeholder engagement of the United Nations Environment Assembly* of the United Nations Environment Programme and *Sustainable Development Goal-related processes*.

Documentation

Letter from the International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation and written statements on the above items will be made available online on the meeting's web page, as received by the secretariat

IV. Concluding remarks by the Chair of the thematic session

Timing: 4.40–5 p.m.

The Chair of the thematic session will make concluding remarks.

Annex

Additional information and documentation on IFIs policies on access to information and stakeholder's engagement:

International Financial Institution	Policies and Standards web page	Project assessments web pages
AIB	https://www.aiib.org/en/policies-strategies/ https://www.aiib.org/en/policies-strategies/framework-agreements/environmental-social-framework.html	Approved projects https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/approved/index.html Proposed Projects https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/proposed/index.html
EBRD	https://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/strategies-and-policies.html	Project Summary Documents https://www.ebrd.com/work-with-us/project-finance/project-summary-documents.html Project Summary Documents – Technical Cooperation https://www.ebrd.com/work-with-us/project-finance/technical-cooperation-project-summary-documents.html Environmental and Social Impact Assessments https://www.ebrd.com/work-with-us/project-finance/environmental-and-social-impact-assessments.html
EIB	https://www.eib.org/en/about/partners/cso/key-policies/index.htm	https://www.eib.org/en/about/partners/cso/access-information/index.htm
The World Bank	https://consultations.worldbank.org/	Projects & Operations http://projects.worldbank.org/ Consultations https://consultations.worldbank.org/
