

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
Nineteenth meeting
Geneva, 17-19 June 2015
Item 5 of the provisional agenda:
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
to be held on Thursday, 18 June 2015, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
and from 3 p.m. to 4:30p.m.**

Introduction

The thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums will be organized in the format of panel presentations and round-table discussions. The session will focus primarily on the promotion of public participation in the lead up to and at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Paris, 30 November–11 December 2015). Participants will also consider stakeholder engagement in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) processes. Other issues for discussion include the promotion of the universal application of the Convention's principles when developing, implementing and monitoring the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and in international trade negotiations. In connection with the thematic session, a short survey regarding public participation in the UNFCCC processes and in trade negotiations was sent to national focal points. A preliminary summary of the results of the survey will be presented by the Chair and will also be made available on the UNECE website prior to the meeting.²

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the Convention's work programmes for 2012–2014 and 2015–2017 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2015/5)³

Promoting the application of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums (Almaty Guidelines; ECE/MP.PP/2005/2/Add.5)⁴

¹ This document was not formally edited.

² The programme for the session is available from: [http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp19.html#/
\(see tab on PPIF session\)](http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp19.html#/)

³ Available from: [http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp19.html#/
\(see documents tab\)](http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp19.html#/)

10 a.m.–10.10 a.m. Item 1: Opening

- Welcoming by Ms Monika Linn, Principal Advisor, Office of the UNECE Executive Secretary
- Introduction by Mr Etienne Ballan, Chair of the thematic session

10.10 a.m.–12.30 p.m. Item 2: Public participation in the UNFCCC processes on the road to Paris

In view of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (Paris, 30 November–11 December 2015), the Working Group will discuss good practices, innovative initiatives and challenges in promoting access to information and public participation in the UNFCCC process with particular focus on: (a) relevant actions at international level in relation to UNFCCC process; and (b) national coordination mechanisms and other measures by Parties in the UNFCCC process.

Speakers:

- Representatives of France – Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment
- Ms Megumi Endo, Observer Organizations Liaison Officer, UNFCCC secretariat
- Mr Zaal Lomtadze, Chief of Section, Environment for Europe and Sustainable Development Section, UNECE
- Mr Sébastien Duyck, European ECO-Forum

Questions/discussion

Coffee break: 11.15 -11.30 – subject to time requirements

Speakers:

- Ms Edlira Dersha, Public Relation Officer, Ministry of Environment of Albania
- Ms Nino Gokhelashvili, Head of International Relations Division, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia
- Mr Bjorn Bedsted, Danish Board of Technology

Questions/discussion

Conclusions by the Chair

⁴ Available from: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.html>

12.30 p.m. – 1 p.m. Item 3: Update on stakeholder engagement and access to information policies of the UNEP

The Working Group of the Parties is expected to receive up-to-date information on the subject and to discuss ways to promote effective access to information and stakeholder engagement at UNEP.

Speakers:

- Mr Alexander Juras, Chief, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, UNEP
- Ms Barbara Ruis Legal Officer, UNEP Regional Office for Europe

Questions/discussion

Conclusions by the Chair

3 p.m. – 4 p.m. Item 4: Promotion of the Convention's principles in trade negotiations

The Working Group will discuss promotion of the Convention's principles in trade negotiations highlighting the benefits of public participation at national and international level, exploring ways to increase transparency of the process and shedding light on best available practices that could be used as model examples for improving ongoing or future negotiation processes as well as possible challenges. The discussion will focus on: (a) public participation at the national and international levels regarding trade negotiations; and (b) national coordination mechanisms and other measures by Parties in the context of international trade negotiations.

Speakers:

- Mr Stefan Amarasinha, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the European Union to the World Trade Organization
- Mr Bernard Kuiten, Head of External Relations, World Trade Organization
- Ms Gita Parihar, European ECO-Forum

Questions/discussion

Conclusions by the Chair

4 p.m. – 4:25 p.m. Item 5: Promotion of the Convention’s principles through developing, implementing and monitoring implementation of SDGs

The Working Group will consider mechanisms and practices that promote the Convention’s principles when developing, implementing or monitoring of SDGs, and will identify possible challenges and opportunities for further promotion of the Convention’s principles.

Speakers:

- Mr Michael Kunz, Sustainable Development and Gender Unit, Office of the Executive Secretary, UNECE

Questions/discussion

Conclusions by the Chair

4:25 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Item 6: Closing

Concluding remarks by the Chair
