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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-fourth meeting

Geneva, 1–3 July 2020

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth meeting

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on
Wednesday, 1 July 2020*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Status of ratification of the Convention.
3. Substantive issues:
 - (a) Access to justice;
 - (b) Access to information;
 - (c) Public participation in decision-making;
 - (d) Genetically modified organisms.
4. Procedures and mechanisms:
 - (a) Compliance mechanism;
 - (b) Reporting mechanism;
 - (c) Capacity-building and awareness-raising.
5. Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages.
6. Implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021, including financial matters.

* Information on registration for the meeting and other practical arrangements will be made available on the meeting web page at www.unece.org/index.php?id=53323.



7. Preparations for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties:
 - (a) Future work programme;
 - (b) Future strategic plan;
 - (c) Accession by States from outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region;
 - (d) Future financial arrangements;
 - (e) Agenda of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties;
 - (f) Hosting of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.
8. Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums.
9. Other business.
10. Adoption of outcomes.

II. Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda

Timing: Wednesday, 1 July, 10–10.10 a.m.

The Working Group of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) will be invited to adopt the agenda for its twenty-fourth meeting, as set out in the present document.¹

2. Status of ratification of the Convention

Timing: Wednesday, 1 July, 10.10–10.20 a.m.

The secretariat will provide the Working Group with an overview of the status of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with respect to the Aarhus Convention. Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments in this regard. The Working Group is expected to take note of these developments.

3. Substantive issues

(a) Access to justice

Timing: Wednesday, 1 July, 10.20 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–4 p.m.

The item will be comprised of a thematic session on access to justice (10.20 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–3.10 p.m.) and a discussion on the future work in the next intersessional period (3.10–4 p.m.).

The thematic session on access to justice will be organized in the format of panel presentations, followed by a general discussion. The subjects for discussion are based on decision VI/3 (ECE/MP.PP/2017/2/Add.1), adopted by the Convention's Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session (Budva, Montenegro, 11–14 September 2017), and the key outcomes of the work of the Task Force on Access to Justice. The Working Group will be invited to consider the role of public interest litigation. The topic will provide an opportunity to discuss achievements and barriers regarding the following key issues: (i) standing; (ii)

¹ All documentation for the session will be made available at the following website: www.unece.org/index.php?id=53323.

scope of review; (iii) assistance mechanisms and costs; (iv) timeliness; (v) remedies; and (vi) protection against harassment and other forms of retaliation. The Working Group will also consider synergies with relevant activities under other international forums and cooperation between ministries of the environment and ministries of justice. Representatives of ministries of justice, judges, representatives of other judiciary and of environmental public interest lawyers will be invited to join the session. The detailed programme for the thematic session will be made available on the meeting web page in due course.

Furthermore, the Working Group is expected to consider the future activities in this area, including the priority issues for the next intersessional period.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/4)

Note by the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice (AC/WGP-24/Inf.3)

Provisional programme of the thematic session on access to justice (AC/WGP-24/Inf.5)

(b) Access to information

Timing: Wednesday, 1 July, 4–5.15 p.m.

The Working Group will be informed about the outcomes of the sixth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information (Geneva, 2–4 October 2019) and preparations for the next meeting. The Working Group will be invited to consider draft updated recommendations on the electronic information tools. It is expected that the draft updated recommendations will be finalized, in the light of the comments to be provided at the meeting and thereafter, for submission and approval at the twenty-fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties in 2021, with a view to their possible adoption at the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties (scheduled for October 2021).

Delegations will be invited to provide additional information on relevant developments. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and consider the future activities in this area, including the priority issues for the next intersessional period.

Documentation

Report of the sixth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/3)

Note by the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Information (AC/WGP-24/Inf.1)

Draft updated recommendations on the electronic information tools (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/14)

Accompanying document for the draft updated recommendations on the electronic information tools (AC/WGP-24/Inf.12)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/4)

(c) Public participation in decision-making

Timing: Wednesday, 1 July, 5.15–6 p.m.

The Working Group of the Parties will be informed about the preparations for the ninth meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (Geneva, 29 and 30 October 2020). Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and consider the future activities in this area, including the priority issues for the next intersessional period.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/4)

Note by the Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (AC/WGP-24/Inf.2)

(d) Genetically modified organisms

Timing: Thursday, 2 July, 10–10.30 a.m.

The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the status of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with respect to the amendment to the Convention providing for public participation in decisions on the deliberate release into the environment and placing on the market of genetically modified organisms. Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments in this regard. The Working Group will be informed about the outcomes of the third Joint Global Round Table on Public Awareness, Access to Information and Public Participation regarding Living Modified Organisms/Genetically Modified Organisms (Geneva, 16–18 December 2019). The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and consider the future activities in this area.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/4)

Report on the third Joint Global Round Table on Public Awareness, Access to Information and Public Participation regarding Living Modified Organisms/Genetically Modified Organisms (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/6)

4. Procedures and mechanisms

(a) Compliance mechanism

Timing: Thursday, 2 July, 10.30–11.20 a.m.

The Working Group will be informed about the outcomes of the recent meetings of the Compliance Committee and other relevant matters since the twenty-third meeting of the Working Group of the Parties (Geneva, 26–28 June 2019). The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided.

Documentation

Report of the Compliance Committee on its sixty-fourth meeting (ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2019/5)

Report of the Compliance Committee on its sixty-fifth meeting (ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2019/8)

Report of the Compliance Committee on its sixty-sixth meeting (ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2020/2)

Note on the membership of the Compliance Committee (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/9)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/4)

(b) Reporting mechanism

Timing: Thursday, 2 July, 11.20–11.45 a.m.

The secretariat and delegations will provide information on the status of submission of national implementation reports since the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties and on the preparation of national implementation reports for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/4)

(c) Capacity-building and awareness-raising

Timing: Thursday, 2 July, 11.45 a.m.–12.15 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided by the secretariat and delegations on capacity-building activities carried out since the last meeting of the Working Group and to discuss the future work in this area.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/4)

5. Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages

Timing: Thursday, 2 July, 12.15–12.40 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided by the secretariat and delegations regarding promotion of the Convention in other regions and cooperation with other organizations on relevant subjects.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/4)

6. Implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021, including financial matters

Timing: Thursday, 2 July, 12.40–1 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to take note of the reports by the secretariat on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 and on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the work programme, taking into consideration the discussion under the preceding agenda items. Delegations will be encouraged to notify the Working Group of their planned financial contributions.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/4)

Report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the Convention's work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/5)

7. Preparations for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties**(a) Future work programme**

Timing: Thursday, 2 July, 3–4.30 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to consider draft elements of the work programme for 2022–2025 and a draft note on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3.8 of the Aarhus Convention. It is expected that the draft documents will be finalized, as appropriate, in the light of the comments to be provided at the meeting and thereafter, for

submission and approval at the twenty-fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, with a view to their possible adoption at the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Documentation

Draft elements of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/7)

Draft note on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3.8 of the Aarhus Convention (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/13)

Overview of major relevant mechanisms that cover, or may potentially cover, the rights of environmental defenders under other treaties and organizations (AC/WGP-24/Inf.7)

Accompanying document for the draft elements of the work programme for 2022–2025 (AC/WGP-24/Inf.11)

(b) Future strategic plan

Timing: Thursday, 2 July, 4.30–5.15 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to consider the draft Strategic Plan for 2022–2030. It is expected that the draft document will be finalized, in the light of the comments to be provided at the meeting and thereafter, for submission and approval at the twenty-fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, with a view to its possible adoption at the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Documentation

Draft Strategic Plan for 2022–2030 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/11)

Self-assessment of Parties regarding implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 (AC/WGP-24/Inf.8)

Accompanying document for the draft Strategic Plan for 2022–2030 (AC/WGP-24/Inf.9)

(c) Accession by States from outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

Timing: Thursday, 2 July, 5.15–6 p.m.

The Working Group of the Parties is expected to consider a note on the expression of intention by Guinea-Bissau to accede to the Convention. Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments in this regard. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and consider the future activities in this area.

Documentation

Expression of intention by Guinea-Bissau to accede to the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/12)

(d) Future financial arrangements

Timing: Friday, 3 July, 2.30–3 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to consider draft elements of possible financial arrangements under the Convention. It is expected that the draft document will be finalized, in the light of the comments to be provided at the meeting and thereafter, for submission and approval at the twenty-fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, with a view to its possible adoption at the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Documentation

Draft elements of possible financial arrangements under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/8)

Accompanying document for the draft elements of possible financial arrangements under the Convention (AC/WGP-24/Inf.10)

(e) Agenda of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties*Timing: Friday, 3 July, 3–3.30 p.m.*

The Working Group of the Parties is expected to consider draft elements of the provisional agenda of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties. It is expected that the draft document will be finalized, in the light of the comments to be provided at the meeting and thereafter, for submission and approval at the twenty-fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, with a view to its possible adoption at the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Documentation

Draft elements of the provisional agenda of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/10)

(f) Hosting of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties*Timing: Friday, 3 July, 3.30–4 p.m.*

The Working Group will be informed about hosting matters.

8. Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums*Timing: Friday, 3 July, 9.30 a.m.–12.30 p.m.*

The item will be comprised of a thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums (9.30–11.50 a.m.) and a discussion on the future work in the next intersessional period (11.50 a.m.–12.30 p.m.).

The thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums will be organized in the format of panel presentations, followed by a general discussion. The topics for discussion are based on decision VI/4, adopted by the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention at its sixth session (Budva, Montenegro, 11–14 September 2017) and the outcomes of the previous thematic sessions. The current session will focus on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international trade negotiations and in International Civil Aviation Organization processes. Additional topics will include: a relevant update on the processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the policy on stakeholder engagement of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme; and the Sustainable Development Goal-related processes. The detailed programme for the thematic session will be made available on the meeting web page in due course.

Furthermore, the Working Group is expected to discuss the future work in the next intersessional period.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/4)

Provisional programme of the thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums (AC/WGP-24/Inf.6)

Note by the Chair of the thematic session on public participation in international forums (AC/WGP-24/Inf.4)

9. Other business*Timing: Friday, 3 July, 4–4.05 p.m.*

Delegates wishing to propose points under this item are requested to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

10. Adoption of outcomes

Timing: Friday, 3 July, 4.30–5.30 p.m.²

The Working Group is expected to consider and adopt the outcomes of its twenty-fourth meeting.

² With a view to ensuring equal opportunities for English-, French- and Russian-speaking delegations and saving paper, the meeting will result in a list of decisions and outcomes that will be projected onto a screen before the close of the meeting. The decisions and outcomes will be presented by the Chair verbally, thereby allowing for interpretation. There will then be a coffee break (4.05–4.30 p.m.) to allow for finalization of the list of decisions, which will be distributed to participants by email after the meeting.