
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-fourth meeting

Geneva, 1–3 July 2020 (virtual/online) and 28-29 October 2020 (on-site/hybrid at the Palais des Nations in Geneva)
Item 8 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, 29 October, 12.00 p.m.–1 p.m. and 3–4.40 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Laura Michel

Introduction

Timing: 12.00-12.10

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) Promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in the international trade negotiations; and
- (b) Promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) processes.

In addition, the Working Group will consider any recent developments (e.g. related to the issue of geoengineering and implications linked to COVID-19 pandemic)³. Further, based on written submissions, the Working Group will consider any updates with regard to items discussed at previous thematic sessions, including:

- (a) Climate-related processes with the focus on lessons learnt from the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-25) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and preparations for COP-26;
- (b) Policies on access to information and on stakeholder engagement of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme;
- (c) Policies and activities of international financial institutions;
- (d) Sustainable Development Goals-related processes.

Documentation:

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

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>.

³ See statements by non-governmental organizations on agenda item 8 (tab: PPIF session):
<https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=54526>

I. Promotion of the Convention's principles in the international trade negotiations

Timing: 12.10-13.00 and 15.00-15.20

This item will be organized in the format of a panel presentation and round-table discussion. The focus of this session is to review the promotion of the Convention's principles in the international trade negotiations. The Working Group will consider in this regard a number of issues, including how Aarhus Parties have promoted the principles of the Convention in the international trade negotiations; what are the benefits of public participation at national and international level; ways to increase transparency of the processes and good available practices that could be used as model examples for improving ongoing or future negotiation processes; as well as possible challenges. The discussion is expected to address issues related to national and international levels of trade negotiations; and national coordination mechanisms and other measures by Parties in the context of international trade negotiations.

Panellists:

- *Ms. Nino Gokheshvili*, Head, Sustainable Development Division, Environment and Climate Change Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
- *Mr. Bernard Kuiten*, Head of External Relations, World Trade Organization
- *Ms. Olga Ponizova*, European ECO Forum; Chair, Eco-Accord - Center for Environment and Sustainable Development

Open discussion

II. Promotion of the Convention's principles in the International Civil Aviation Organization processes

Timing: 15.20 – 16.00

This item will be organized in the format of a panel presentation and round-table discussion. The focus of this session is to review the promotion of the Convention's principles in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) processes. During this session, the Working Group will consider how Aarhus Parties have promoted the principles of the Convention in the ICAO processes; what are ways to increase transparency of the processes, and what are good practices and possible challenges in this regard.

Panellists:

- *Ms. Marie-Pierre Meganck*, Conseillère Environnement-Transport, Mission Permanente de la France auprès des Nations-Unies à Genève et des autres organisations internationales en Suisse
- *Mr. Gilles Dufrasne*, Policy Officer, Carbon Market Watch; Representative for International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation (ICSA)

Open discussion

III. Update on items considered at previous thematic sessions and consideration of recent developments

Timing: 16.00 - 16.30

The Working Group will review any recent developments brought to its attention by participants (e.g. related to the issue of geoengineering and implications linked to COVID-19 pandemic). Based on the written submissions, the Working Group will be also informed about updates on the promotion of the Convention principles in international forums with the focus being on: the *lessons learnt from COP-25 to the UNFCCC and preparations for COP-26; policies on access to information and on stakeholder engagement of the United Nations Environment Assembly* of the United Nations Environment Programme; *policies and activities of international financial institutions (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), European*

Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Investment Bank (EIB) and the World Bank); and Sustainable Development Goal-related processes.

IV. Concluding remarks by the Chair of the thematic session

Timing: 16.30-16.40

The Chair of the thematic session will make concluding remarks.
