

24th WGP Meeting – Agenda Item 3c) Public Participation in Decision- Making (1 July 2020)

Statement by the European EcoForum (Anke Stock)

We want to thank the Chair for the report, and the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-Making for the preparatory work that has been done on the issue of environmental rights defenders. The special session under last year's meeting of the WGP sparked the discussion to establish a Rapid Response Mechanism to protect environmental defenders which we very much welcome. Details will be discussed under Agenda Point 4.

We welcome the focus of the next meeting of Task Force in the current intersessional period on participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups. Here we would recommend a focus on the increased importance of the use of digital means to allow for participation (as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic – issues on safety and access, including the digital divide) and its challenges and opportunities for the participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups as already pointed out under agenda item 3b).