

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

Thirteenth meeting
Geneva, 9–11 February 2011

DECISIONS AND MAJOR OUTCOMES¹
as adopted by the Working Group at its thirteenth meeting

Item 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2011/1.

Item 2. Status of Ratification of the Convention and the PRTR Protocol

The Working Group:

- (a) took note of the report by the secretariat on the status of ratification of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the PRTR Protocol.
- (b) took note of the initiative of the Chair of the Bureau to write a letter to Parties and Signatories that did not ratify the Convention or the amendment to the Convention to proceed with the ratifications as soon as possible.

Item 3: Substantive issues

(a) Public participation in international forums

The Working Group:

- (a) took note of the report by the Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums on the fifth meeting of the Task force and the associated workshop (Geneva, 29 June 2010) and of the preparations for the sixth meeting of the Task Force on PPIF and the associated workshop (Geneva, 23–24 February 2011);
- (b) revised the draft decision on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (AC/WGP-13/CRP.1)², approved it and forwarded it for consideration by the Convention's Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session (Chisinau, 29 June-1 July 2011).

(b) Access to Justice

The Working Group:

¹ This paper was not formally edited. The decisions and outcomes contained in the paper will be incorporated in the report of the meeting.

² Documents, as revised at the meeting, will be made available at: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/wgp.htm>

- (a) took note of the report by the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice on the outcome of the fourth meeting of the Task Force (Geneva, 7–8 February 2011);
- (b) revised the draft decision on promoting effective access to justice (AC/WGP-13/CRP.2), approved it and forwarded it for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.

(c) Electronic information tools and the clearinghouse mechanism

The Working Group:

- (a) took note of the report by the secretariat on the subregional workshop on electronic information tools (Skopje, 25-26 November 2010);
- (b) revised the draft decision on access to information (AC/WGP-13/CRP.3), approved it and forwarded it for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.

(d) Public participation in decision-making

The Working Group:

- (a) took note of the report by the Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making on the first meeting of the Task Force (Geneva, 25-26 October 2010);
- (b) approved the draft workplan for the Task Force and forwarded it for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.

(e) Genetically modified organisms

The Working Group took note of the report by the secretariat on the workshop organized jointly with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on the topic of genetically modified organisms, in conjunction with the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety held in Nagoya, Japan, on 8-9 October 2010.

Item 4: Procedures and mechanisms

(a) Compliance mechanism

The Working Group:

- (a) took note of the report by the secretariat on the activities of the Compliance Committee carried out since the previous meeting of the Working Group and of the note on election of the members of the Compliance Committee;
- (b) took note of the nomination by Armenia of a new candidate for the Compliance Committee;
- (c) took note of the statement by Slovakia regarding the Committee's findings regarding case ACCC/C/2009/41 concerning compliance by Slovakia.

(b) National implementation reports

The Working Group took note of the report by the secretariat on the status of submission of national implementation reports and agreed that those Parties that failed to submit their reports by the deadline should proceed with their submissions urgently, so as to ensure that national implementation reports would be taken into consideration during the preparation of the synthesis report.

(c) Reporting requirements

The Working Group revised the draft decision on reporting requirements (AC/WGP-13/CRP.4), approved it and forwarded it for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.

(d) Updating of the Implementation Guide

The Working Group took note of the report by the secretariat on the progress regarding the preparation of the updated version of the Implementation Guide, including procedural and timing aspects.

(e) Interagency coordination on capacity-building

The Working Group took note of the report by the secretariat on the sixth capacity-building coordination meeting (Geneva, 7 December 2010).

Item 5: Promotion of the Convention

(a) Accession to the Convention by States from outside the UNECE region

The Working Group considered and revised the draft decision on accession to the Convention by States from outside the UNECE region (AC/WGP-13/CRP.5), approved it and forwarded it for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.

(b) Awareness-raising activities and communication

The Working Group took note of the draft communication strategy, provided comments and agreed that Parties and stakeholders would send their comments on the draft to the secretariat by 20 February 2011. The draft Strategy would then be revised to incorporate the comments and sent to the Expert Group for further comments, before being finalized by the secretariat and submitted to the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties for its consideration.

Item 6: Programme of work and operation of the Convention

(a) Implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011, including in relation to the Strategic Plan 2009-2014

The Working Group took note of the overview of implementation of the work programme for 2009-2011 prepared by the secretariat.

(b) Work programme for 2012-2014

The Working Group discussed the draft decision on the work programme for 2012-2014 and agreed to consider, at its next meeting, a proposal by the European Union on the prioritisation of activities, to be reflected in the Annex I to the draft decision. The Working Group approved, as revised, the draft decision on the work programme for 2012-2014 (AC/WGP-13/CRP.6) and forwarded it for consideration by the Working Group at its fourteenth meeting and the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.

(c) Possible expert/advisory service under the Convention

The Working Group took note of the paper prepared by the secretariat on a possible country-specific advisory service.

(d) Financial matters

The Working Group:

- (a) took note of the overview of financial contributions received (for use) in 2010 and 2011 and expenditures incurred in 2010 and projected for 2011, prepared by the secretariat;
- (b) shared information on expected contributions for 2011;
- (c) approved, as revised, the draft decision on financial arrangements (AC/WGP-13/CRP.7), and forwarded it for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.

Item 7. Preparations for the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties

(a) Declaration

The Working Group considered the draft outline of a declaration and decided:

- (a) to develop a short and concise declaration of a political nature focusing on the role of the Convention in promoting sustainable development, as a contribution to the Rio+20 process;
- (b) to invite Parties, Signatories, and other stakeholders to submit proposals to the secretariat regarding the substance of the declaration by 25 February 2011;
- (c) to mandate the Bureau to prepare a first draft of the declaration, which will be then distributed to Parties, Signatories, and other stakeholders for comments before being finalized by the Bureau and submitted for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.

The delegation of Uzbekistan proposed to have an address of the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the secretariat will explore possibilities for such an address.

(b) Future Strategic Plan

The Working Group revised the draft decision on strategic planning (AC/WGP-13/CRP.8), approved it and forwarded it for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.

(c) Agenda of the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties

The Working Group revised the draft provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (AC/WGP-13/CRP.9), approved it and forwarded it for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.

(d) Practical arrangements for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties

The Working Group took note of the information provided by the Republic of Moldova and the secretariat regarding preparations for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Item 8. Any other business

A member of the public expressed concern at a statement by the EU that it's not appropriate for members of the public not affiliated to an organization to express their views on the internal proceedings of the EU, referring to the charter adopted by the EU concerning researchers.

Adoption of decisions and outcomes

The Working Group adopted the major outcomes and decisions presented by the Chair at the meeting and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and incorporate these adopted outcomes and decisions.
