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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 to the Convention
(Third meeting, Geneva, 1-3 November 2004)
(Item 12 of the provisional agenda)

**REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP
ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS**

**Prepared by the Chairman in consultation with the Expert Group and with the assistance
of the secretariat**

1. At its first meeting, the Working Group of the Parties agreed to establish a small ad hoc expert group on the topic of public participation in international forums (MP.PP/WG.1/2003/2, para. 47). The expert group was charged with the task of considering the scope, format and content of possible guidelines on public participation in international forums and the appropriate process for their development.
2. The first meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Public Participation in International Forums took place in Geneva on 3 to 4 June 2004.
3. The meeting was attended by a number of experts designated by governments and by intergovernmental, international, regional and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as a number of independent academics. Experts participated in their personal capacities, without prejudice to any positions that their governments or organizations might take on the issues under discussion. The list of participants is available at www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.htm.
4. Prof. Attila Tanzi (Italy), having accepted the invitation of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to chair the Expert Group, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He recalled the mandate of the Expert Group and expressed the hope that it would be able to present clear proposals initially to the Bureau and eventually to the Working Group of the Parties so that

the latter would be in a position to present draft guidelines, should it so decide, for possible adoption at the second meeting of the Parties (Almaty, Kazakhstan, May 2005).

5. The Director of the UNECE Environment and Human Settlements Division, Mr. Kaj Bärlund, reminded participants of the key events which had led to the establishment of the Expert Group, notably the adoption of the Lucca Declaration, which recognized the need for guidance on promoting principles of the Aarhus Convention and consideration of the possibility to develop guidelines for possible adoption at a future meeting of the Parties. He invited the Expert Group to consider exploring the possibility of a phased approach, whereby any such guidelines would be applied within the context of UNECE legally binding instruments before reaching out to a broader audience on an international level.

I. RELEVANT ACTIVITIES, EXPERIENCES AND DEVELOPMENTS

6. The Chairman invited discussion on relevant experiences, activities and developments related to stakeholder participation in international environmental decision-making processes and within the framework of international organizations. Participants drew attention to the experiences with, inter alia, the following organizations and processes:

- (a) The Aarhus Convention itself and European ECO Forum, the umbrella organization under which public participation in the negotiation and implementation of the Convention had been organized;
- (b) The Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean;
- (c) The Commission on Sustainable Development within the context of preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development;
- (d) The Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the River Danube and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) Public Participation Strategy;
- (e) The North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation;
- (f) The Organization of American States Summit of the Americas and Hemispheric Civil Society Forum;
- (g) The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat;
- (h) The "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conferences;
- (i) The UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes;
- (j) The European Union Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC);
- (k) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- (l) The United Nations Environment Programme;
- (m) The fifth Global Civil Society Forum preceding the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, 2004 (GC/GMEF);
- (n) The World Bank Inspection Panel;
- (o) The Secretary-General's Panel of Eminent Persons on Civil Society and United Nations Relationships.

7. It was agreed that all of these were relevant and that in particular the work of the Secretary-General's Panel of Eminent Persons on Civil Society and United Nations Relationships (Cardoso Panel) would be taken into account by the Expert Group.

8. A number of publications were also considered to be particularly relevant to the issues under consideration by the Expert Group and it was agreed to take these into account in the further work (see annex).

II. POSSIBLE SCOPE OF GUIDELINES

Bodies to which the proposed guidelines should be addressed

9. There was broad agreement that the proposed guidelines should primarily be addressed to the Parties to the Convention. Some experts felt that, having in mind article 18 of the Vienna Convention¹, they could also be addressed to Signatories, whereas others felt that Signatories should only be addressed in 'softer' language than Parties. Other non-Party States might also be addressed in softer language than that used in relation to Parties (e.g. 'invited to take note of ...').

10. There was no support for addressing the guidelines to international bodies or processes directly, or their secretariats. Any influence on those bodies or processes would be through the Parties. However, the guidelines could identify some issues related to organizational and capacity needs of secretariats in order for them to be able to facilitate public participation in international forums.

11. Nor was it considered that the guidelines should directly be addressed to NGOs, though, as with secretariats of international bodies and processes, it was suggested that the guidelines might include some recognition of the needs of NGOs to have sufficient capacity and to organize themselves in a certain way to facilitate the implementation of article 3, paragraph 7. Issues that could be flagged in this context might include transparency, legitimacy, breadth of representation, coordination, preparation for meetings, consultation with constituencies and the need for funding. These issues were recognized to have a bearing on the effectiveness of participation and the extent to which it improved the quality of decision-making. However, there were felt to be some risks in having guidelines that went too far into issues of how NGOs organize themselves, given that they would be adopted by governments. Some experts felt that for the proposed guidelines to give too much prominence to this issue might be straying outside the remit of article 3, paragraph 7, and that the main role of NGOs would be in supporting the implementation of guidelines. The idea of NGOs drawing up their own code(s) of conduct in parallel with the preparation of guidelines for the Parties was raised and considered to have merit, but was regarded as a matter for the NGOs themselves.

Bodies and processes within which the guidelines would apply

12. There was general agreement that the range of bodies and processes within which the guidelines would apply should be strictly determined by the language of article 3, paragraph 7. This means that they should apply not only to environmental bodies and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) but also to other bodies and processes whose decisions significantly affected the environment, which in the view of some experts could extend to international financial institutions, to certain dispute settlement processes, or to partnerships and 'Type II' initiatives. There could be borderline cases where the environmental component was

quite a minor aspect. In such cases, it would be for each Party to decide whether or not the guidelines applied, on a case-by-case basis. Any attempt to make a list of bodies or processes falling within the scope of article 3, paragraph 7, would be difficult and might not even be desirable.

13. There was little support for the idea of incorporating a phased or differentiated approach to '3.7-type' bodies and processes within the guidelines themselves, whereby different procedures would be recommended for different categories of such bodies and processes. However, the idea of a phased approach in seeking endorsement for the guidelines, starting with bodies or processes more likely to be supportive (e.g. the governing bodies of other UNECE environmental conventions, within which it could be expected that a large and growing proportion of the States represented would be Parties to the Aarhus Convention), was seen as useful.

14. Both formal and informal processes were considered by the Expert Group to be important in international decision-making processes. Informal processes or mechanisms (howsoever defined) should not be excluded from the scope simply because they were informal. Some of the best practices in public participation in international forums, notably in the preparation of the Aarhus Convention itself, involved participation in informal processes or in informal stages in a formal process, and sometimes the informal stages in a decision-making process were far more important (in terms of their impact on the content of the final decision) than the formal stages. However, it was noted that formal participation mechanisms had the advantage of generally being more predictable and transparent, with the input from the different stakeholders being on the public record.

15. It was agreed that whether or not the members of international bodies or participants in international processes served in a personal capacity (rather than as delegates of their government or organization) should not be a criterion for excluding such bodies or processes from the scope of the proposed guidelines. Similarly, both permanent and non-permanent bodies should fall within the scope, as non-permanent bodies might often be responsible for environmentally significant international decision-making processes that could benefit from enhanced public participation.

16. There was some discussion on whether certain stages of international decision-making processes should not be open to public participation. It was suggested that any judgment on whether a process should be open to participation might involve some weighing of interests analogous to that implicit in the 'tails' of paragraphs 3 and 4 of article 4 of the Convention. For example, it might be necessary in some cases to weigh the benefits of public participation against public security interests or against the practical feasibility of public involvement.

17. There was general agreement that participation in national and regional preparatory processes related to the relevant international decision-making processes was crucial, not just in the international meetings themselves, and that the proposed guidelines should address this. The principle of 'early public participation' (Convention, art. 6, para. 4) was no less valid at the international level, as many decisions that ended up being adopted at high-level international meetings were shaped early on in the preparatory processes.

18. The distinction between 'public participation' and 'stakeholder involvement' was noted (see also paras. 44 to 49 below). The former term was seen as being broader, whereas the latter could be particularly relevant in the international context.

III. POSSIBLE CONTENT OF GUIDELINES

General points and principles

19. The Expert Group discussed a number of general points or principles, some of which could possibly be referred to in a preamble of the proposed guidelines.
20. It was considered useful to spell out the reasons for seeking to promote public participation in international forums. These included:
- (a) Public participation in international forums contributed to good governance at the international level;
 - (b) Public participation in international forums generally contributed to better quality of decision-making at the international level; and
 - (c) Public participation in international forums generally contributed to better implementation of decisions taken at the international level.
21. An additional reason cited by some experts was that the public had rights of access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice in international processes in the same way that it had such rights with respect to national and subnational processes. These experts felt it important that, like the Convention, any guidelines should explicitly recognize these rights in the context of international decision-making processes. Others on the other hand expressed doubts about using rights-based language in this context. Some of these preferred to refer to an emerging set of core standards and principles rather than a set of rights.
22. It was noted that the opening sentence of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (“Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level”), which had been adopted at the global level, could be taken to apply to the international level. This and other relevant global or regional declarations or agreements could be referred to in a preamble.
23. Capacity-building was agreed to be important, both for NGOs and for secretariats responsible for servicing international bodies or processes. Enhancing civil society involvement in international forums implied investment of resources, so the issue of funding would need to be addressed. Capacity-building in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition was considered to be of particular importance (as well as for the Convention generally). Specific reference was made to the need to build the capacity of stakeholders who were new to international forums or processes.
24. Several experts expressed concern that excessive formalization of participation procedures could be counterproductive and could result in a step backwards for stakeholder participation. This was seen as particularly true with respect to accreditation of participants.
25. The importance of an appropriate regulatory framework at national level was mentioned by some experts. Public participation in international forums could be especially important for the public in countries where civil society involvement in national processes was rather limited.
26. The Expert Group decided to address each of the three pillars of the Convention in turn. After an initial exchange of views, it used as a basis for its discussion the ‘lessons learned’ set out in paragraphs 17 to 52 of the document ‘Access to information, public participation, and

access to justice in international forums' prepared for the first meeting of the Parties (MP.PP/2002/18). These were generally considered to be pertinent and to provide a useful basis for further work, subject to the comments and additions summarized in the following paragraphs. The bullet points contained in paragraphs 32, 48 and 52 were considered to contain relevant principles.

27. The Expert Group considered the idea of examining each provision of the Convention in turn to see to what extent it could be applied to international bodies and processes falling within the scope of article 3, paragraph 7, but it was not possible to embark on this exercise within the time available.

Access to information

28. Information overload was recognized to be a potential problem. A major challenge was to provide information in a meaningful, accessible form, without excessive jargon, so that access to information could translate into an increase in knowledge. Ideally, both raw and processed data should be available. The question of languages and translation of materials was also identified as important and worthy of further discussion.

29. Live audiovisual broadcasting of events through the Internet was an important method of ensuring transparency in the proceedings of international meetings and making them open to a wide audience around the world. This could be specifically emphasized in the proposed guidelines. A clearing house was another useful information tool but the costs in both cases should be borne in mind.

30. Examples of information that should be publicly accessible (MP.PP/2002/18, para. 21) should encompass the written contributions of participants in decision-making processes. Agendas and other meeting documentation should be made available in electronic form in a timely manner.

31. In the case of working documents, electronic access to drafts of such documents would increase opportunities for public comment and participation in their further development (see also para. 37 below).

32. With respect to paragraph 24 of document MP.PP/2002/18, giving public notice of opportunities should involve active notification of members of the public having asked to receive such notification, not just placing of notices on a web site.

Public participation

33. There was general agreement that, as at the national level (arts. 6 to 8 of the Convention), 'public participation' did not imply voting or becoming a decisionmaker. Rather it was a question of bringing opinions and expertise to the process and ensuring an appropriate degree of accountability. The forms of participation might vary according to the nature and phase of the process, the type of meeting (expert, negotiation, etc.) and so on, distinguishing according to the three pillars of the Convention.

34. The reference in paragraph 39 of document MP.PP/2002/18, to 'democratic structure and accountability' might at the very least need further clarification, and might not always be relevant or desirable to include as a criterion for participation. For example, representatives of

academic institutions might bring important expertise to a process that was sufficient to justify their involvement. The idea of requesting participants to complete a simple questionnaire indicating their principal sources of funding, with the information being included on a public register, was mentioned as a tool for promoting transparency.

35. It was important to strike the right balance between openness to newcomers and continuity of participation. The reference to 'selection criteria' in that same paragraph 39 prompted some experts to note that selection would be relevant only to some elements of participation. For example, the right to receive information about meetings could be open to all whereas the right to participate in a small drafting group would certainly not. Furthermore, selection criteria might need to be applied differently according to the type of decision-making process or the stage in the decision-making process.

36. Within the context of paragraph 44 of document MP.PP/2002/18, the potential benefits of multi-stakeholder dialogues were emphasized.

37. The elements of participation referred to in paragraph 45 of that same document – the right to propose agenda items, speak at meetings and circulate written statements - were considered to be crucial and to require further elaboration. There were different views as to whether the right to make submissions should be open to the entire public or just to relevant stakeholder groups. Some experts felt that if there were too many submissions, they would not all be read, and that it was more important for the decisionmakers to hear from representative groups of stakeholders; whereas others considered that examples of national consultative processes where many thousands of individually submissions were received and taken into account could apply to the international level, even though it should also be taken into account that some submissions came from large representative federations and others from individuals. Some experts felt that the issuing of reasoned decisions showing how the public input had been taken into account was important, while acknowledging that it could be difficult to apply at the international level.

38. The impact of the participation on the decision-making process, including on the final decision, referred to in paragraph 46 of document MP.PP/2002/18, and addressed through article 6, paragraph 8, of the Convention, was considered to be no less important at the international level.

39. The need for adequate resources –especially for public-interest NGOs and for international secretariats - was flagged as an important issue that should be addressed in the proposed guidelines, possibly in a final section dealing with implementation of the guidelines. With respect to paragraph 48 of document MP.PP/2002/18, the role of governments in providing financial support to stakeholders, including by channelling it through international secretariats, should be given more emphasis. NGOs needed support not only to be able to attend international meetings but also for the corresponding NGO preparatory processes.

40. The Expert Group noted the useful role played by coalitions, referred to in that paragraph 48. There was general agreement that the existence of coalitions could have benefits not only for the organizations making up the coalition but also for international secretariats and governments. Positions negotiated inside coalitions or constituency groups would tend to be representative of a wider group of organizations and could therefore be regarded by governments as really reflecting the view of the stakeholder category in question. Coalitions could also prioritize the use of limited resources to ensure the most effective representation of the stakeholder group in question. It was noted that not all coalition-building had been successful. Some MEA secretariats

encouraged prospective meeting participants to work through coalitions or constituency groups but did not require it. Some experts mentioned that coalitions should not be unduly exclusive but should rather allow for the possibility of new members joining the process.

41. The practice of governments inviting representatives of civil society to participate in national delegations could be given more emphasis and promoted as a good practice.

Access to justice

42. The Expert Group briefly discussed what it would mean to apply the principles underlying article 9 of the Convention to the international level. Promoting public involvement in the compliance mechanisms of international treaties was seen by some experts as the approach which would most reflect the spirit of article 9, paragraph 3.

43. International or regional mechanisms allowing for citizens' submissions on enforcement matters or petition for review of administrative decisions were also seen by some experts as providing relevant models for consideration, e.g. articles 14 and 15 of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation and the World Bank Inspection Panel.

Identifying the 'public' and the 'public concerned' in the international context

44. The issue of how to define civil society was discussed, taking into account background documents such as those prepared for the Cardoso Panel. The definitions of 'the public' and 'the public concerned' in the Convention were considered to be sufficiently broad and flexible to apply at the international level. It was noted that the scope of civil society involvement would probably need to be differentiated according to the three pillars. For the information pillar, the concept of the public would generally be applicable in the same way as at the national level. However, for the participation pillar, participation would generally take the form of participation by representative bodies, representing different stakeholders. The stakeholders relevant to any given process might be different, but the 'public concerned' definition was considered to provide the necessary flexibility. For the access to justice pillar, there might be cases where provision of access to justice might be justified both for individuals and for organizations.²

45. The possibility of including provisions recognizing and addressing the needs of certain categories of potentially disadvantaged stakeholders, such as indigenous people - as a supplement to rather than a substitute for the Convention's definitions of 'the public' and 'the public concerned' - was considered worth exploring. For example, guidelines could recommend provision of legal advice to disadvantaged stakeholders. Active outreach to engage the participation of minority groups in international processes could also be promoted. Speaking slots could be offered to stakeholders in a balanced way even if in practice the possibilities for stakeholders to avail of those opportunities were unequal.

46. The idea of having differentiated provisions for different classes of stakeholders was generally considered to be too complicated and not necessarily useful. The differentiation would mainly occur in the application of the guidelines, in the sense that the concerned stakeholders would be different in each case. However, some differentiation might be needed in the guidelines themselves. For example, the question of financial support and capacity-building would be more relevant to public-interest organizations and stakeholders coming from less developed countries. There was some support for distinguishing for certain purposes between public-interest NGOs

and business organizations. The notion of balanced representation of all interested stakeholders was considered to be important and worth emphasizing in any guidelines.

47. It was noted that it might be important to have certain thresholds in applying the 'public concerned' concept to the international level. For example, individuals, individual businesses and local NGOs would generally not participate in intergovernmental meetings in their own capacities, but would instead be represented through higher-level coalitions or federations (though there might be some scope for their involvement in the preparatory phases of an international decision-making process). It was also noted that this feature was not unique to international processes: in many national processes, some aspects of participation were only available to representative organizations, not to individuals. However, the tendency for public participation to take the form of stakeholder participation tended to increase the more international the process in question was.

48. The role of the business sector was discussed. There were differing views as to how to classify this sector: most experts preferred a tripartite approach, with business interests being recognized as something distinct from government and civil society; some others preferred a bipartite approach with industry being broadly grouped under the umbrella of civil society. There were also differing views as to whether guidelines should promote equality in the participation rights of business interests vis-à-vis public-interest NGOs, or whether they should reflect a differentiated approach along the lines of that contained in parts of the Convention and certain decisions adopted under it (e.g. decision I/1 on rules of procedure and decision I/7 on review of compliance).

49. These differences of opinion notwithstanding, there was general agreement that there were important differences between the role of business and the roles played by (other) non-governmental actors. Business NGOs were generally perceived to have relatively good access to governments. The risk that the regulated sector might use public participation procedures to exercise improper influence over regulatory processes was mentioned and it was suggested that some formalization of participatory processes could help to render the input from business interests more transparent.

IV. POSSIBLE FORMAT OF GUIDELINES

50. The Expert Group did not engage in detailed discussion on the format of possible guidelines, it being recognized that this would flow to a certain extent from further discussions on the content. It was however provisionally agreed that the guidelines could be structured along the lines of the three pillars of the Convention, preceded by a preamble setting out some general principles. A final section could address implementation of the guidelines, and it was considered that it might be useful to append to the guidelines some concrete examples of good practices.

51. Some experts preferred the guidelines to adopt a normative approach prescribing a minimum standard, albeit in recommendatory rather than binding language. Others preferred a more flexible and descriptive approach, whereby good practices would be listed as a menu of options that could be chosen from according to the context. The possibility of combining these options was mentioned. Some experts emphasized the point that no single set of procedures would be applicable across all forums, but rather that different forums would be more suited to particular procedures and that the procedures applied in a particular forum should depend upon the circumstances involved.

V. POSSIBLE USES OF GUIDELINES

52. Following their adoption by the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, guidelines could:

- (a) Provide guidance to Parties, acting individually or in a coordinated way, in the context of 3.7-type decision-making bodies and processes in relation to the development or modification of relevant rules governing those bodies and processes (e.g. rules of procedure covering issues such as transparency, accreditation, etc.);
- (b) Provide guidance to Parties, acting individually or in a coordinated way, in the context of 3.7-type decision-making bodies and processes in relation to the treatment of relevant substantive issues within those bodies and processes; or
- (c) Be presented for endorsement by other interested bodies or processes, possibly starting with bodies or processes largely or wholly made up of Parties or Signatories to the Aarhus Convention e.g. the other UNECE environmental conventions.

VI. NEXT STEPS

53. The Expert Group agreed, subject to the agreement of the Bureau at its meeting on 8 July 2004, to hold a further meeting on 9-11 November 2004. In order to prepare for that meeting, it was agreed that the Chairman, with the assistance of a small group of experts and the secretariat, would prepare a draft of possible guidelines which would form the basis for further discussions in the Expert Group. The following experts, drawn from governments, international and regional organizations, NGOs and academia, were nominated to participate in the small group: Ms. Anne Charlotte Becker (Germany), Mr. Jolyon Thomson (United Kingdom), Ms. Donata Rugarabamu (Basel Convention secretariat), Ms. Magda Tóth Nagy (Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe), Mr. John Hontelez (European Environmental Bureau/European ECO Forum) and Mr. Eric Dannenmaier (Tulane University, United States).

VII. ADOPTION OF REPORT AND CLOSURE OF MEETING

54. It was agreed that a draft of the report of the meeting would be circulated to the full group for comments, and that the Chairman would finalize the report with the assistance of the secretariat in time for it to be circulated to the Bureau before its meeting on 8 July 2004.

55. The Chairman thanked all participants for their active and constructive participation and the secretariat for its support. He then closed the meeting.

Note

1/ According to article 18, '[a] State is obliged to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of a treaty when it has signed the treaty or has exchanged instruments constituting the treaty subject to ratification, acceptance or approval, until it shall have made its intention clear not to become a party to the treaty ..'.

2/ The Aarhus Convention's own compliance mechanism, while not a redress procedure as such, was seen as being an example of how the access to justice pillar might be applied at the international level. In that case, individuals are able to trigger the mechanism.

Annex

**PUBLICATIONS OF PARTICULAR RELEVANCE TO
THE WORK OF THE EXPERT GROUP**

"Public Participation in International Forums", UNECE, MP.PP/WG.1/2003/6
12 August 2003.

"Access to information, public participation and access to justice in international forums,"
UNECE, MP.PP/2002/18, 12 September 2002.

"Access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in international forums. Addendum. Survey of selected access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice rules and practices in international forums", UNECE, MP.PP/2002/18/Add.1, 12 September 2002.

"Enhancing the application of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development", UNEP Governing Council 22/17 II b, 3-7 February 2003.

"Participation of Non-Governmental Organisations in International Environmental Co-operation. Legal Basis and Practical Experience. Summary of a report by Ecologic Institute for International and European Environmental Policy together with foundation for International Environmental Law and Development". Richard G. Tarasofsky with Sebastian Oberthuer, et. al., Ecologic Centre for International & European Environmental Research, Berlin, XIII, Berichte des Umweltbundesamtes, Band 11/02, 2002.

"Multi-Stakeholder Processes for Governance and Sustainability - Beyond Deadlock and Conflict", Minu Hemmati, with contributions from Felix Dodds, Jasmin Enayati & Jan McHarry, London, Earthscan Publications Ltd., <http://www.earthsummit2002.org/msp/book.htm>
2002.

"Strategic Partnership: Challenges and Best Practices in the Management and Governance of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships Involving UN and Civil Society Actors", Background paper prepared by Carmen Malena for the Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on Partnerships and UN-Civil Society Relations, Pocantico, New York, February 2004.

“Report of the Fifth Global Civil Society Forum”, Jeju, Republic of Korea, 27–28 March 2004, (UNEP/GCS/5/1), 28 April 2004.

Secretary-General’s Panel of Eminent Persons on Civil Society and United Nations Relationships (Cardoso Panel)

“UN System and Civil Society – An Inventory and Analysis of Practices: Background Paper for the Secretary-General's Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations Relations with Civil Society”, May 2003.

“Civil Society and Global Governance”, High Level Panel on UN-Civil Society, Contextual paper prepared by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Chairman of the Secretary-General's Panel of Eminent Persons on Civil Society and United Nations Relationships, 13 June 2003.

“Keynote Speech”, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Chair of the Secretary-General’s Panel of Eminent Persons – Civil Society and United Nations Relationships, DPI – NGO Annual Conference, New York , 8 September 2003.

“The diversity of actors within the UN system”, Secretary-General's Panel of Eminent Persons on Civil Society and United Nations Relationships, 2003.

“Interaction between Civil Society and the United Nations”, Speech by Ms. Birgitta Dahl, Member of UN Secretary-General’s Panel of Eminent Persons on Civil Society and UN Relationships, European Conference on the Role of NGOs and Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Dublin, 31 March–2 April 2004.

Sectoral and regional perspectives

“A Citizen’s Guide to the World Bank Inspection Panel” (2nd Edition), Dana L. Clark Center for International Environmental Law, October 1999.

“Strengthening Public Participation and Access to Information in the Americas”, Working Draft Environmental Law Institute/ Center for Human Rights and Environment, April 2004.

“Major groups participation in CSD-12 official sessions”, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development, April 2004.

“TWN Inputs for Meeting on Aarhus Convention, Geneva, 3-4 June 2004”, Saradha Iyer, Third World Network.

"Public Participation, Access to Information and Development Banks in the UNECE Region", CEE Bankwatch Network.