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**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 to the Convention  
(Second meeting, Geneva, 3-4 May 2004)

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE MEETING**

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, 3 May 2004<sup>1</sup>

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Status of ratification of the Convention and signing of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs).
3. Pollutant release and transfer registers.
4. Genetically modified organisms.
5. Access to justice.
6. Electronic information tools.

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<sup>1</sup> New accreditation procedures have been introduced for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to duly complete the attached registration form, also available from the web site of the Aarhus Convention at <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/wgp.htm>, and then to transmit it to the Aarhus Convention secretariat, **at the latest two weeks prior to the meeting**, either by fax +41 22 917 0107 or by e-mail to the following address [public.participation@unece.org](mailto:public.participation@unece.org). Prior to the meeting, delegates are requested to present themselves at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Villa Les Feuillantines, 13 Avenue de la Paix (a map is attached) to pick up their identification badge. In case of difficulty, please contact the Aarhus Convention secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 4226 or 917 1502.

7. Capacity-building activities and clearing-house mechanism.
8. Compliance mechanism.
9. Reporting requirements.
10. Public participation in strategic decision-making.
11. Public participation in international forums.
12. Financial arrangements.
13. Overview of contributions and expenditures in 2003.
14. Preparations for the second ordinary meeting of the Parties.
15. Any other business.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

At their first meeting (Lucca, Italy, 21-23 October 2002), the Parties to the Convention established the Working Group of the Parties as an open-ended subsidiary body which would oversee the implementation of the work programme (decision I/14). According to the decision, the Working Group should prepare the meetings of the Parties, oversee and direct the activities of subsidiary bodies established by the Meeting of the Parties, keep under review the need for amending the Convention and prepare proposals to this end for the Meeting of the Parties, and make such proposals and recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties as it considers necessary for achieving the purposes of the Convention. The first meeting of the Working Group was held on 23-24 October 2003 (see MP.PP/WG.1/2003/2).

### Item 1 Adoption of the agenda

The Working Group of the Parties is invited to adopt the agenda as set out in the present document.

### Item 2 Status of ratification of the Convention and signing of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs)

The secretariat will give the Working Group an overview of the status of ratification of the Convention and signing of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs). Delegations will be invited to report on any recent developments with respect to the ratification of the Convention and the signing of the Protocol in their respective countries.

### Item 3 Pollutant release and transfer registers

At their extraordinary meeting (Kiev, 21 May 2003), the Parties adopted the Protocol on PRTRs and established a new Working Group on PRTRs to undertake the necessary activities pending the entry into force of the Protocol and the first session of its Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.PP/4, para. 23). The Working Group of the Parties is expected to discuss the outcome of the first meeting of the new Working Group on PRTRs, scheduled for 16-18 February 2004 (see MP.PP/AC.1/2004/2).

### Item 4 Genetically modified organisms

The Working Group on Genetically Modified Organisms was established by decision I/4 of the Meeting of the Parties with a primary focus on exploring and developing possible legally binding options for further developing the application of the Convention to genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The Chairman of the Working Group on GMOs, Mr. Helmut Gaugitsch (Austria), will report on the outcome of the third meeting of the Working Group on GMOs (24-26 March 2004 - see MP.PP/AC.2/2004/2, if available). The Working Group of the Parties will be invited to take note of the progress achieved and to comment as appropriate.

### Item 5 Access to justice

The Task Force on Access to Justice was established under the authority of the Working Group of the Parties by decision I/5 of the Meeting of the Parties to continue and further develop

the work on the examination of good practices and to identify further activities to support the implementation of article 9, paragraphs 3, 4 and 5, of the Convention, among other things. The Chairman of the Task Force, Mr. Marc Pallemmaerts (Belgium), will report on its activities, in particular the outcome of its second meeting (November 2003), and on plans for further work (MP.PP/WG.1/2004/3). The Working Group will be invited to take note of these activities and plans and to comment as appropriate.

#### Item 6 Electronic information tools

The Task Force on Electronic Information Tools was established under the authority of the Working Group of the Parties by decision I/6 of the Meeting of the Parties to continue and develop the work of the earlier task force in advancing the use of electronic information tools to further the objectives of the Convention. The Chairperson of the Task Force, Ms. Svetlana Zhekova (Bulgaria), will present the report of its second meeting (Geneva, January 2004, MP.PP/WG.1/2004/4) and describe the next steps planned by the Task Force. The Working Group will be invited to take note of these activities and plans, in particular the progress made in preparing draft recommendations of the Meeting of the Parties, and to comment as appropriate.

#### Item 7 Capacity-building activities and clearing-house mechanism

The secretariat will report on the implementation of capacity-building measures and the development of the clearing-house mechanism for the Convention, for which the Parties expressed their support through decision I/10. The Working Group will be invited to encourage Parties, Signatories and other States and other relevant bodies to continue to support these activities, in particular by undertaking to provide to the secretariat the information identified as being necessary or desirable for inclusion in the national nodes of the clearing house and, in the case of donor countries, by continuing to provide financial support for capacity-building activities.

#### Item 8 Compliance mechanism

The Compliance Committee was established under decision I/7 of the Meeting of the Parties. The Chairman of the Compliance Committee, Mr. Veit Koester, will report on the activities of the Committee, in particular the outcome of its third meeting (January 2004, MP.PP/C.1/2004/2). The Working Group will be invited to take note of the results of the work of the Committee and to comment as appropriate.

#### Item 9 Reporting requirements

Decision I/8 of the Meeting of the Parties established, pursuant to article 10, paragraph 2, of the Convention, certain requirements on Parties to report on measures taken to implement the Convention. It also invited Signatories and other States, as well as international, regional and non-governmental organizations, to report, as appropriate, on their relevant activities. Mr. Koester, as Chairman of the Compliance Committee, will report on the Committee's deliberations on the links between the compliance mechanism and the reporting regime under the Convention, and will present some recommendations from the Committee on the question of reporting. The secretariat will present a possible timetable for the preparation of national reports. The Working Group will be invited to consider issues related to the practical implementation of

decision I/8, taking into account the recommendations of the Compliance Committee and the proposal of the secretariat, to comment as appropriate and to address, in particular, the Committee's recommendations to the Working Group of the Parties (MP.PP/C.1/2004/2, para. 35).

#### Item 10 Public participation in strategic decision-making

At their first meeting, the Parties recognized the need to consider, in the light of the content of the new Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Espoo Convention, if further work would be needed under the Aarhus Convention on the issue of public participation in strategic decision-making (Lucca Declaration, para. 28). At its first meeting, the Working Group of the Parties discussed a paper on public participation in strategic decision-making, prepared by the secretariat at the request of and in consultation with the Bureau (MP.PP/WG.1/2003/5), and decided that further work was needed with respect to sharing experiences and exchanging information through electronic and other means. The Working Group will be invited to give consideration to further activities in this area, taking as a basis for discussion a paper prepared by the secretariat (MP.PP/WG.1/2004/5).

#### Item 11 Public participation in international forums

The Meeting of the Parties recommended that consideration should be given to the possibility of developing guidelines on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international environmental decision-making processes and within the framework of international organizations in matters relating to the environment. At its first meeting, the Working Group of the Parties decided to establish a small ad hoc expert group to consider the scope, format and content of possible guidelines and the appropriate process for their development. The Working Group will be invited to take note of the progress in preparation for the first meeting of the expert group, which will be held in Geneva on 3-4 June 2004.

#### Item 12 Financial arrangements

Decision I/13 of the Meeting of the Parties established a task force on financial arrangements under the authority of the Working Group of the Parties. The Chairman of the Task Force, Mr. Olivier Martin, will report on the outcome of its first meeting, held on 23 March 2004. The Working Group is expected to take note of the progress made by the Task Force and to comment as appropriate.

#### Item 13 Overview of contributions and expenditures in 2003

The secretariat will present a paper on the financial contributions received and the expenditures incurred in the implementation of the work programme in 2003 (MP.PP/WG.1/2004/6). The Working Group will be invited to take note of this paper and to consider its implications for further implementation of the 2004-2005 work programme. The Working Group may also take note of additional information that delegations may wish to make on the financial contributions to the implementation of the work programme which was not given at the first meeting.

Item 14 Preparations for the second ordinary meeting of the Parties

At its first meeting, the Working Group of the Parties asked the secretariat to further explore with Kazakhstan the practical and organizational aspects for the second ordinary meeting of the Parties. The secretariat will present an outline for the agenda with a list of documentation for the second ordinary meeting of the Parties (MP.PP/WG.1/2004/7). The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and to decide as appropriate upon the further steps to be taken in the preparatory process.

Item 15 Any other business

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



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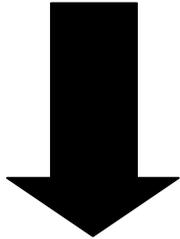
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