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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

Eleventh meeting
Geneva, 8–10 July 2009

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE ELEVENTH MEETING

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 8 July 2009¹

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.

¹ New accreditation procedures have been introduced for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to complete the registration form available on the Convention's website (www.unece.org/env/pp/practical.htm), and to transmit it to the Convention secretariat no later than two weeks before the meeting – namely, by 24 June 2009 – either by fax (+ 41 22 917 0634) or by e-mail (public.participation@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the Convention's website). In case of difficulty, please contact the Convention secretariat by telephone at + 41 22 917 2682 / 2722.

3. Recent and forthcoming developments relevant to the Convention or Protocol.
4. Pollutant release and transfer registers, including preparations for the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.
5. Genetically modified organisms.
6. Electronic information tools and the clearing-house mechanism.
7. Public participation.
8. Access to justice.
9. Promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums.
10. Reporting requirements.
11. Compliance mechanism.
12. Capacity-building.
13. Financial arrangements.
14. Implementation of the work programme during 2008, including the financial report.
15. Implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011.
16. Updating of the Implementation Guide.
17. Preparation of a communication strategy.
18. Preparations for the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties.
19. Any other business.

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

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

Item 2: Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

The secretariat will provide the Working Group with an overview of the status of ratification of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs). Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments with respect to the ratification of these instruments in their respective countries. The Working Group is expected to take note of these developments.

Item 3: Recent and forthcoming developments relevant to the Convention or Protocol

The secretariat will report on recent and forthcoming developments relevant to the Convention or the Protocol on PRTRs not covered elsewhere in the agenda, including relevant meetings attended by secretariat staff. Delegations will be invited to provide additional information on relevant events or developments not covered elsewhere in the agenda, including with respect to activities at the international, regional, subregional and national levels. The Working Group is expected to take note of these activities.

Item 4: Pollutant release and transfer registers, including preparations for the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol

The Chairperson of the Working Group on PRTRs, Mr. Michel Amand (Belgium), will present the report of the sixth meeting of the Working Group on PRTRs (Geneva, 24–26 November 2008). The Chairperson and the secretariat will be invited to report on relevant developments in the field of PRTRs, including regarding the preparations for the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. The Working Group of the Parties will be invited to take note of a draft declaration prepared by the Bureau of the Working Group on PRTRs, taking into account comments from members of the latter Working Group. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group of the Parties is expected to take note of any such developments and to consider any implications for the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol and the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention.

Item 5: Genetically modified organisms

The secretariat will present the report on the international expert meeting on access to information, public participation and access to justice regarding genetically modified organisms (Cologne, Germany, 19–20 May 2008; ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/3), and will report on other relevant developments related to genetically modified organisms. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the report and of these developments.

Item 6: Electronic information tools and the clearing-house mechanism

The Chairperson of the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools, Mr. Chris Jarvis (United Kingdom), together with the secretariat, will present the report on the seventh meeting of the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools (Geneva, 11–12 December 2008;

ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/4). The secretariat will report on other relevant activities undertaken since the previous meeting of the Working Group, including in relation to the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy, as well as the preparations for the eighth meeting of the Task Force, scheduled to be held on 5 and 6 October 2009 in Tirana, and the preparations for a workshop on electronic information tools likely to be held back-to-back with the Task Force meeting. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of these activities.

Item 7: Public participation

At its third session, the Meeting of the Parties agreed to establish an Expert Group on Public Participation, which was given a mandate, *inter alia*, to advise the Working Group on terms of reference for a Task Force on Public Participation through decision III/9 (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.17). The Chairperson of the Expert Group on Public Participation will report on the outcome of the Expert Group's first meeting (Geneva, 7–8 July 2008), and will present a draft proposal for terms of reference for the future Task Force on Public Participation, prepared in consultation with the Bureau and with the assistance of the secretariat (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/L.1), together with the comments from the Expert Group on the draft proposal. The Working Group is expected to review the draft proposal, revise it as necessary, and forward it for consideration and possible adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its next session. The Working Group is expected to consider whether an extraordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties should be held in 2010, back-to-back with the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs, for this purpose.

Item 8: Access to justice

The Chairperson of the Task Force on Access to Justice will present a report on the outcome of the workshop for senior members of the judiciary from South-Eastern Europe (Tirana, 17–18 November 2008; ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/5), as well as other relevant activities undertaken since the previous meeting of the Working Group, including preparations for the next meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice, likely to be held in the fall of 2009. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the report and of these developments.

Item 9: Promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums

The Chairperson of the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums, together with the secretariat, will report on the fourth meeting of the Task Force, scheduled to be held on 6 July 2009 in Geneva, and will report on other relevant activities undertaken since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the report and of these developments.

Item 10: Reporting requirements

The secretariat will present a draft revised format for national reporting on implementation of the Convention, prepared in consultation with the Bureau to incorporate reporting on implementation of the amendment to the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/L.2). The Working Group is expected to review the draft revised reporting format, revise it as necessary and adopt it for use by Parties in preparing their implementation reports for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties, pending its review and formal endorsement by the Meeting of the Parties. The secretariat will also present a discussion paper, prepared in consultation with the Bureau, on options for addressing various problems for the secretariat with respect to the workload and resource demands posed by the current system of national reporting on implementation (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/6). Through decision III/5, the Working Group of the Parties was requested to review these matters in the context of a general review of the reporting system (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.7, paras. 20–21). The Working Group is expected to review the paper and explore ways of finding a practical solution.

Item 11: Compliance mechanism

The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the outcome of the meetings of the Compliance Committee held since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties, including with regard to follow-up activities to the decisions relating to compliance of individual Parties adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its third session.

Item 12: Capacity-building

The secretariat will present a paper on capacity-building activities related to the Convention, including a summary of the outcomes of the fifth capacity-building coordination meeting (Geneva, 27 November 2008; ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/7). Delegations will be invited to report on capacity-building activities carried out since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties. Delegations will also be invited to provide information on capacity-building needs. The Working Group will be invited to take note of the various developments and activities as well as the needs described, and to provide suggestions for strengthening work in this field.

Item 13: Financial arrangements

Through decision III/7, the Working Group of the Parties was requested to continue in-depth discussions on possible future schemes of financial arrangements that meet the goals of stability, predictability and equity, including schemes that combine elements of the two options presented to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session. The Working Group was further requested to make recommendations concerning one or more options for a scheme of financial arrangements with a view to their adoption at the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.15). The Chairperson of the Working Group will present a paper outlining various options for future schemes of financial arrangements, prepared by the Bureau with the assistance of the secretariat (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/L.3). The Working Group is expected to review the paper and begin discussions on possible recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties regarding a future scheme of financial arrangements.

Item 14: Implementation of the work programme during 2008, including financial report

The secretariat will present a report on implementation of the work programme during 2008, providing an overview of financial contributions received in 2008 and early 2009 and the expenditures incurred in 2008 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/8). The Working Group will be invited to take note of this information.

Item 15: Implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011

The secretariat will report on the implementation of the work programme during the first half of 2009 and will provide an overview of financial contributions received for 2009. Delegations will be invited to provide information on their contributions for the remainder of 2009. The Working Group will be invited to take note of the financial situation and to consider any implications for implementation of the 2009–2011 work programme.

Item 16: Updating of the Implementation Guide

The secretariat will report on progress made with respect to preparing an updated version of the Implementation Guide, including procedural and timing aspects. The Working Group will be invited to take note of this information.

Item 17: Preparation of a communication strategy

Through decision III/9, the Meeting of the Parties agreed to develop a communications strategy for the Convention as part of activities in the area of awareness-raising and promotion of the Convention and the Protocol (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.17). The secretariat will present a paper outlining a procedure for the development and adoption of a communications strategy for the Convention, prepared in consultation with the Bureau (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2009/L.4). On the basis of the paper, the Working Group is expected to agree upon steps to be taken towards the development of a communications strategy, including the establishment of an Expert Group on a Communications Strategy, as was mandated by the Meeting of the Parties at its third session.

Item 18: Preparations for the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties

With the secretariat, the representative of the Republic of Moldova, as host country of the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, will report on preliminary preparations for the session, including a provisional orientation on themes to be addressed. The Working Group will be invited to take note of this information.

Item 19: Any other business

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