

## **Economic Commission for Europe**

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

### **Working Group of the Parties**

#### **Second meeting**

Geneva, 20 and 21 November 2012

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

## **FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE PROTOCOL<sup>1</sup>**

### **Note by the Bureau**

The document contains general matters and possible options in relation to financial arrangements under the Protocol. The major issues for consideration by the Parties include:

- (a) whether the scheme of financial arrangements should be mandatory or voluntary; and
- (b) whether any scale of assessments should apply to contributions.

### **Introduction**

1. Recalling article 17, paragraph 2(h) of the Protocol, which states that the Meeting of the Parties may consider establishing financial arrangements on a consensus basis to facilitate the implementation of this Protocol.
2. Recalling also decision I/6 of the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, through which an interim voluntary scheme of contributions was established and the scheme is to be sustained by contributions from Parties, Signatories and other States having opted to participate in the scheme;
3. Recognizing the need to a) ensure that sufficient resources are available for implementing the Protocol's work programme; b) establish a scheme of financial contributions which is transparent and accessible to all Parties, Signatories and other States and organizations wishing to contribute; c) establish financial arrangements under the Protocol based on the principles of a fair sharing of the burden, stable and predictable sources of funding, accountability and sound financial management.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was not formally edited.

4. Noting that the amounts contributed under the interim voluntary scheme have fallen short of the estimated costs of implementing the work programme and that the financial burden has not been evenly distributed, with significant numbers of Parties and Signatories not contributing at all.

5. Believing that the financial arrangements in place under the Protocol will need to be kept under periodic review by the Meeting to ensure that they continue to meet the goals of stability, predictability and a fair sharing of the burden.

### **I. General considerations**

6. Below are general considerations in relation to the financial arrangements under the Protocol:

- (a) The Parties should collectively ensure that the costs of the activities of the work programme that are not covered by the United Nations regular budget are covered through an effective scheme of contributions;
- (b) Contributions shall be made in cash and shall not be earmarked for a particular activity;
- (c) Additional contributions may be made in cash or in kind and may be earmarked for a particular activity;
- (d) Contributions in cash shall be made through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Trust Fund for Local Technical Cooperation (Aarhus Convention/PRTR Protocol project);
- (e) Contributions for a given calendar year should be made by the end of the preceding year, so as to secure staff costs for the smooth functioning of the secretariat, as a priority, and the timely and effective implementation of the priority activities of the respective programme of work;
- (f) Signatories, other interested States and organizations are invited to contribute, in cash or in kind, towards covering the costs of the work programme;
- (g) Parties that have historically contributed generously are encouraged to maintain their previous levels of contribution;
- (h) Parties pledge, prior to the adoption of a work programme by the Meeting of the Parties, expected annual financial and in-kind contributions (the pledges show whether the implementation of the work programme is feasible). Signatories, other interested States and organisations may wish to indicate their expected contributions as well.
- (i) Those Parties that have not made contribution to the trust fund to support implementation of the work programme will receive a letter from the secretariat between the meetings of the Working Group of the Parties, inviting them to provide the contributions.

- (j) The secretariat, in accordance with the financial rules of the United Nations, will monitor the expenditure of the funds and prepare annual reports for review by the Working Group of the Parties in order to ensure that the level of contributions matches the level of funding needed for the implementation of the work programme;
- (k) The Working Group of the Parties will consider, in the light of these annual reports, whether changes would be required to the content or timeframe of the work programme, in the event that the level of actual and/or pledged contributions does not match the level of funding needed;
- (l) The secretariat will prepare a comprehensive report for each session of the Meeting of the Parties, including information on how much Parties and other participating States and organizations contributed to the budget of the Protocol in cash and in kind, and on how the contributions were spent;
- (m) The operation of the scheme of financial arrangements will be reviewed at the next session of the Meeting of the Parties.

## **II. Proposed options**

### Option A

7. To continue maintaining a voluntary scheme of contributions without distributing the burden of covering the costs of the activities among the Parties and Signatories to the Protocol in proportion to the United Nations scale of assessments. In addition, no Party and Signatory will be required to contribute less than 200 United States dollars.

### Option B

8. To establish a voluntary scheme of contributions with distributing the burden of covering the costs of the activities among the Parties and Signatories to the Protocol based on the following principles:

“Little” donors are expected to contribute between USD 200 and USD 5 000

“Middle” donors are expected to contribute between USD 5 000 and USD 30 000

“Big” donors are expected to contribute not less than USD 30 000

### Option C

9. To establish a mandatory scheme of contributions aimed at covering the costs of activities under the work programme that are not covered by the United Nations regular budget, based on the following principles:

“Little” donors are expected to contribute between USD 200 and USD 5 000

“Middle” donors are expected to contribute between USD 5 000 and USD 30 000

“Big” donors are expected to contribute not less than USD 30 000

#### Option D

10. To establish a mandatory scheme of contributions aimed at covering the costs of activities under the work programme that are not covered by the United Nations regular budget, based on the following principles:

- (a) the burden of covering the costs of the activities shall be distributed among the Parties and Signatories to the Protocol in proportion to the United Nations scale of assessments ;
- (b) The scale of assessments shall be adjusted so that no Party and Signatory are required to contribute more than 20 per cent of the estimated costs to be covered by the scheme;
- (c) Each Party and Signatory shall contribute each year, as a minimum, the amount derived from applying the adjusted scale of assessments referred to in subparagraph (b) above to the total estimated costs of the activities;

11. The secretariat will circulate to the Parties and Signatories each year during the month of October an updated version of the table for the following calendar year, indicating contributions contained in the annex, reflecting any changes to

- (a) The estimated costs of activities for the next calendar year,
- (b) The composition of the Parties, or
- (c) The United Nations scale of assessments.

which will take effect for the following calendar year and supersede the previous version;

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