

**21st Meeting of the Working Group to the Aarhus Convention
(Geneva, 4-6 April 2017)**

Agenda item 7: Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

Norway

Thank you Chair,

We commend the NGOs for their proposed amendments to the draft decision on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international fora, which we have now had the time to thoroughly consider.

We support the proposal made to add in the preamble references to resolution 32/31 of the Human Rights Council on the civil society space and to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association in the context of multilateral institutions. We consider them to be both important and highly relevant to this draft decision.

We also support the proposal to add international processes on chemical management to those major ongoing international processes mentioned in the preamble.

We furthermore support the proposed addition to paragraph 4 *litra* (d) concerning the review of the relevance of the Aarhus principles to ongoing international processes in advance of the meetings, as we have experienced that this may improve knowledge and use of the principles.

We are however reluctant to support the proposed changes to paragraph 6. This is linked to the financial restraints and the fact that resources provided through the current interim financial scheme are limited and have to be prioritized. This has led to the proposal to increase the number of years between the Meetings of the Parties and to decrease the number of Task Force meetings.

We could nevertheless support two of the changes. The first one is the proposed changes to para 6 *litra* (a) with some minor amendments; in paragraph 6 *litra* (a), we could support the proposed deletion of the words "*on a needs basis*". This para 6 *litra* (a) would then read; "*Requests the Working Group to convene regularly a thematic session.....*". We do not really see the need for the wording "*on a needs basis*". It has been demonstrated clearly during previous PPIF-sessions, including earlier today, that the need to discuss and share the experiences of the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international fora, is not decreasing. On the contrary, it rather seems to be increasing.

The second change that we could support is the addition of chemicals in *litra* (c).