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
Twenty-third meeting
Geneva, 26–28 June 2019
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-third meeting

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 26 June 2019*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Status of ratification of the Convention and the amendment to the Convention.
3. Substantive issues:

* As part of the accreditation procedures for meetings at the United Nations Office at Geneva, delegates are requested to register online before 1 June 2019 through the following link: https://unctsdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=DVrQ8y. Participants requiring a personal invitation letter for visa purposes should click on the “visa required” option and register for the meeting as early as possible, taking into account the period required to obtain the visa. Participants applying for financial support should register before 10 May 2019 and submit the completed financial support form to the secretariat by email (public.participation@un.org) before the same date. On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe website, http://www.unesc.org/meetings/practical.html). In case of difficulty, please contact the Convention secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 2650.
(a) Thematic session on public participation in decision-making;
(b) Access to information;
(c) Access to justice;
(d) Genetically modified organisms.

4. Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention:
   (a) Compliance mechanism;
   (b) Reporting mechanism;
   (c) Capacity-building and awareness-raising.

5. Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums.

6. Promotion of the Convention and other relevant developments and interlinkages.


8. Preparations for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.

9. Any other business.

10. Adoption of outcomes.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

   Timing: Wednesday, 26 June, 10–10.15 a.m.

   The Chair of the Working Group will make an introductory statement. The Working Group will thereafter be invited to adopt the agenda for its twenty-third meeting as set out in the present document.¹

   Documentation
   Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-third meeting (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/1)

2. Status of ratification of the Convention and the amendment to the Convention

   Timing: Wednesday, 26 June, 10.15–10.20 a.m.

   The secretariat will provide the Working Group with an overview of the status of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with respect to the Aarhus Convention and the amendment to the Convention. Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments concerning ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with respect to these instruments. The Working Group is expected to take note of these developments.

¹ All documentation for the meeting will be made available on a dedicated web page on the Convention’s website, http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50755.
3. **Substantive issues**

(a) **Thematic session on public participation in decision-making**

*Timing: Wednesday, 26 June, 10.20 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–4 p.m.*

A thematic session on public participation in decision-making will be organized in the format of an interactive panel discussion followed by a general discussion on the basis of several selected questions. The topics for discussion will include a number of issues related to different types of decision-making within the scope of articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Convention, such as:

1. Identification and notification of the public concerned, including vulnerable and marginalized groups;
2. Early public participation;
3. The taking of due account of the outcome of public participation;
4. Innovative practices that facilitate more effective public participation;
5. The role of private actors and project developers in carrying out public participation procedures;
6. Public participation in decision-making related to changes to or extensions of existing activities;
7. Public participation in a transboundary context; and
8. Protection of persons exercising their rights in conformity with the provisions of the Convention.

It is expected that the examples discussed will illustrate public participation in decision-making in different sectors. The detailed programme for the thematic session will be made available on the meeting web page in due course.

**Documentation**

Report of the eighth meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/3)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/5)

(b) **Access to information**

*Timing: Wednesday, 26 June, 4–4.30 p.m.*

The Working Group of the Parties will be informed about the recent activities and future plans regarding access to information. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and may offer further guidance on the planned activities.

**Documentation**

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/5)

(c) **Access to justice**

*Timing: Wednesday, 26 June, 4.30–5 p.m.*

The Working Group will be informed about the recent activities and future plans in this area. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments.

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2 The listed topics are based on: decision VI/2, adopted by the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention at its sixth session (Budva, Montenegro, 11–14 September 2017); the key outcomes of the work of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (see https://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppdm.html); and the issues of a systemic nature addressed through the work of the Compliance Committee.
The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and may offer further guidance on the planned activities.

Documentation

Report of the twelfth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/4)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/5)

(d) Genetically modified organisms

Timing: Wednesday, 26 June, 5–5.15 p.m.

The Working Group will consider relevant developments with regard to genetically modified organisms since the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties. In particular, it will discuss the issue of ratification of the amendment to the Convention providing for public participation in decisions on the deliberate release into the environment and placing on the market of genetically modified organisms. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and may offer further guidance on the planned activities.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/5)

4. Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention

(a) Compliance mechanism

Timing: Wednesday, 26 June, 5.15–6 p.m.

The Working Group will be informed about the outcomes of the recent meetings of the Compliance Committee and other relevant matters since the twenty-second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided.

Documentation

Report of the Compliance Committee on its sixty-first meeting (ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2018/4)

Report of the Compliance Committee on its sixty-second meeting (ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2018/6)

Report of the Compliance Committee on its sixty-third meeting (ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2019/2)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/5)

(b) Reporting mechanism

Timing: Thursday, 27 June, 10.00–10.10 a.m.

The secretariat and delegations will provide information on the status of submission of national implementation reports since the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information.
(c) **Capacity-building and awareness-raising**

*Timing: Thursday, 27 June, 10.10–11.00 a.m.*

The secretariat and delegations will provide information on capacity-building activities carried out since the twenty-second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties. The Working Group is expected to take note of the developments and may discuss the future work in this area.

**Documentation**

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/5)

5. **Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums**

*Timing: Thursday, 27 June, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–5 p.m.*

A thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums will be organized in the format of panel presentations and round-table discussions. The session will focus primarily on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in the policies of international financial institutions and also on cross-cutting issues, such as innovative practices, different modalities for engaging stakeholders, self-organization of stakeholders, hosting an international event and identification of the public. Additional topics will include: a relevant update on the processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the policy on stakeholder engagement of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme; and the high-level political forum on sustainable development and Sustainable Development Goal-related processes. The detailed programme for the thematic session will be made available on the meeting web page in due course.³

**Documentation**

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/5)

6. **Promotion of the Convention and other relevant developments and interlinkages**

*Timing: Thursday, 27 June, 5–5.30 p.m.*

The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided by the secretariat and delegations regarding promotion of the Convention in other regions and about cooperation with other organizations on relevant subjects.

**Documentation**

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/5)

³ The listed topics are based on decision VI/4, adopted by the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention at its sixth session (Budva, Montenegro, 11–14 September 2017).
7. Implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021, including financial matters

Timing: Thursday, 27 June, 5.30–6 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to take note of the reports by the secretariat on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 and on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of this work programme, taking into consideration the discussion under the previous agenda items. Delegations will be encouraged to notify the Working Group of their planned financial contributions.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/5)

Report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the Convention’s work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/6)

8. Preparations for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties

Timing: Friday, 28 June, 9.30–11.00 a.m.

The Working Group will consider issues related to substantive preparations for the seventh ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, including the future Strategic Plan, and potential proposals by Parties willing to host the seventh session.

Documentation

Proposal on the Strategic Plan for 2022–2030 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2019/7)

9. Any other business

Timing: Friday, 28 June, 11.00–11.05 a.m.4

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

10. Adoption of outcomes

Timing: Friday, 28 June, 11.40 a.m.–12.30 p.m.

The Working Group will discuss and adopt the outcomes of its twenty-third meeting.5

4 Coffee break from 11.05–11.40 a.m. to prepare the list of outcomes and decisions.

5 With a view to ensuring equal opportunities for English, French and Russian-speaking delegations and reducing the amount of paper used for printing of the draft report, the meeting will result in a list of decisions and outcomes that will be projected on the screen approximately 30–40 minutes before the close of the meeting, and presented by the Chair verbally, thereby allowing for interpretation. The list of decisions will be distributed to participants by email after the meeting.