Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums

Cross-cutting Issues

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

Results of the Survey for Parties and Stakeholders in Preparation for the Thematic Session on Promoting the Principles of the Convention in international Forums

BACKGROUND

A survey was carried out prior to the twenty-third meeting of the Working Group of the Parties. The survey intended to assist Parties in reporting to the Working Group on the promotion of the Convention’s principles in international forums. It consisted of two parts. Part I focused on Parties’ progress in promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in the policies of international financial institutions (IFIs), part II on (a) identifying additional cross-cutting issues and (b) effective tools and practices that Parties use or are planning to use, to help address these cross-cutting issues in order to improve the public’s access to information and participation in international forums. Each Party was invited to complete the online questionnaire by 17 May 2019.

In addition to the survey for Parties, stakeholders were invited to identify (a) additional cross-cutting issues and (b) effective tools and practices that stakeholders use, are planning to use or would suggest using to address these cross-cutting issues. Moreover, stakeholders were asked an additional question in relation to the implementation of such effective tools and/or practices by Parties. Stakeholders were invited to complete the online questionnaire by 17 May 2019.

The surveys were made available via an online survey platform to promote the use of electronic information tools. A version of the surveys as word document was shared to help coordinate responses with colleagues. One Party responded to the survey after the deadlines by submitting the word file. The responses were manually added by the secretariat to the online survey to facilitate analysis of the responses.
Raising Awareness of Governmental Delegations regarding the Principles and Obligations of the Aarhus Convention
“Civil society is to a great extent the only reliable motor for driving institutions to change at the pace required.”

IPCC Special Report on 1.5ºc (2018)
Promoting Public Participation in International Forums

A Snapshot on the Almaty Guidelines to the Aarhus Convention

The UNFCCC, with its associated protocols and instruments, provides a framework for international cooperation on climate change. The Aarhus Convention, on the other hand, provides a framework for the participation of the public in the process of decision-making on environmental matters.

The Almaty Guidelines on Public Participation in International Environmental Law provide a comprehensive approach to the involvement of non-state actors in the process of decision-making on environmental matters. These guidelines identify the role of public participation in decision-making as a fundamental principle of international environmental law.

The guidelines recommend that public participation should be participatory, transparent, and inclusive. They emphasize the importance of ensuring that the public has access to information, and that their views are taken into account in the decision-making process.

The guidelines also recommend that public participation should be structured and facilitated through the use of mechanisms such as public hearings, consultation processes, and stakeholder dialogues.

These mechanisms should be accessible to all members of the public, regardless of their background or level of expertise. They should also be designed to ensure that the views of vulnerable and marginalized groups are taken into account.

In conclusion, the Almaty Guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for the involvement of the public in the process of decision-making on environmental matters. They emphasize the importance of ensuring that the public has access to information, and that their views are taken into account in the decision-making process.

The guidelines also recommend that public participation should be participatory, transparent, and inclusive. These mechanisms should be accessible to all members of the public, regardless of their background or level of expertise. They should also be designed to ensure that the views of vulnerable and marginalized groups are taken into account.
Hosting International Events related to the Environment
Hosting international events

- Host countries of UN Secretariats
- Host country of specific events

- Much good practice - including some already reporting through the Aarhus Convention (Paris 2015...)

- What support / knowledge sharing to contribute to the planning of future events?
Participation of the PUBLIC

Rightsholders & Stakeholders
Almaty Guidelines – Para. 15:

Where members of the public have differentiated capacity, resources, socio-cultural circumstances or economic or political influence, special measures should be taken to ensure a balanced and equitable process.

Processes and mechanisms for international access should be designed to promote transparency, minimize inequality, avoid the exercise of undue economic or political influence, and facilitate the participation of those constituencies that are most directly affected and might not have the means for participation without encouragement and support.
Participation of the Public, Rightsholders & Stakeholders

Participation of members of the public **should**:

- Ensure that representatives of impacted communities can share their experience and voice their concerns
- Empower representatives of communities to have their say in decision-making, not only in the international process but also more broadly
- Be designed so as to implement guideline 15 – ensuring that all segments of society can participate

Participation of members of the public **should not** involve:

- Selection of members of the public without consultation with civil society organizations and structures
- The use of the participation of the members of the public to validate outcomes / to promote agendas
Thank You for Your Attention

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